



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA COUNCIL ORDER OF BUSINESS

CL 11-2021

Thursday, May 20, 2021

6:30 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 the efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 the Council Chamber will not be open to the public to attend Council meetings until further notice. To view live stream meeting proceedings, please visit: [niagararegion.ca/government/council](https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/council/)

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1. Addition of Items

2.2. Changes in Order of Items

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

4. PRESENTATIONS

5. CHAIR'S REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, REMARKS

6. DELEGATIONS

6.1. Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report (Minute Item 5.1,
Minutes PEDC 5-2021 (Agenda Item 9.6))

- 6.1.1. Rachel DeBon, Resident, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as
CL-C 32-2021.

9 - 10

11 - 12

- | | | |
|--------|---|---------|
| 6.1.2. | David Samis, Niagara Home Builders Association
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 33-2021. | |
| 6.1.3. | Annette Gibbons, Resident, Town of Grimsby
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 34-2021. | 13 - 16 |
| 6.1.4. | Charlotte Chan, Resident, City of St. Catharines
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 35-2021. | 17 - 18 |
| 6.1.5. | Dawoud Najmudin, Resident, City of Welland
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 36-2021. | 19 - 20 |
| 6.1.6. | Ken Kawall, Resident, Town of Lincoln
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 37-2021. | 21 - 36 |
| 6.1.7. | Kostyn Petrunick, Resident, Town of Lincoln
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 38-2021. | 37 - 38 |
| 6.1.8. | <i>Susan Murphy, Resident, Town of Lincoln</i>
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 39-2021. | 39 - 44 |
| | <i>This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.</i> | |
| 6.2. | <u><i>Withdrawal of Prohibition of Outdoor Recreation Activities (Agenda Item 11.2)</i></u> | |
| 6.2.1. | <i>April Arthur, Resident, Town of West Lincoln</i>
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 40-2021. | 45 - 46 |
| | <i>This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.</i> | |
| 6.2.2. | <i>Danielle Romanuk, Resident, City of St. Catharines</i>
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 42-2021. | 47 - 48 |
| | <i>This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.</i> | |

- 6.2.3. *Steffannie Hancharyk, Resident, City of Thorold* 49 - 50
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 43-2021.

This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.

6.3. 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (Agenda Item 11.3)

- 6.3.1. *Danielle Romanuk, Resident, City of St. Catharines* 51 - 52
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 41-2021.

This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.

- 6.3.2. *Steffannie Hancharyk, Resident, City of Thorold* 53 - 54
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 44-2021.

This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.

- 6.3.3. *Amanda Schilz, Resident, City of Niagara Falls* 55 - 56
The delegation submission is attached to this agenda item as CL-C 45-2021.

This delegation request was received after the deadline. The request must be considered by Council.

7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 7.1. Council Minutes CL 7-2021 57 - 63
Thursday, April 22, 2021 (Special Meeting)

- 7.2. Council Minutes CL 8-2021 64 - 78
Thursday, April 22, 2021 (Regular Meeting)

- 7.3. Council Minutes CL 9-2021 79 - 86
Thursday, April 29, 2021 (Special Meeting)

All of the above minutes are presented for errors and/or omissions only.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

- 8.1. Receive and/or Refer
None.

8.2. For Consideration

- 8.2.1. CSD 31-2021 87 - 91
Budget Amendment - Reinstatement of Waste Management
Free Container Exchange Program Budget
- 8.2.2. CL-C 47-2021 92 - 93
Regional Councillor Appointment to the Diversity, Equity and
Inclusion Advisory Committee

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS - OPEN SESSION

- 9.1. Committee of the Whole Disero 94 - 141
Minutes COTW 1-2021, Thursday, May 6, 2021
- 9.2. Audit Committee Rigby 142 - 319
Minutes AC 2-2021, Monday, May 10, 2021
- 9.3. Public Works Committee Rigby 320 - 403
Minutes PWC 5-2021, Tuesday, May 11, 2021
- 9.4. Public Health and Social Services Committee Chiocchio 404 - 485
Minutes PHSSC 5-2021, Tuesday, May 11, 2021
- 9.5. Corporate Services Committee Foster 486 - 618
Minutes CSC 5-2021, Wednesday, May 12, 2021
- 9.6. Planning and Economic Development Committee Huson 619 - 1095
Minutes PEDC 5-2021, Wednesday, May 12, 2021

10. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT(S)

- 10.1. CAO 8-2021 Butters 1096 - 1100
2 Billion Trees, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA)
Request For Information Submission
- 10.2. CAO 9-2021 Steele 1101 - 1108
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2021 Annual Conference

11. MOTIONS

- 11.1. Niagara's Agriculture Sector and Access to Untreated Water for Irrigation Witteveen 1109 - 1110
In accordance with the notice and submission deadline requirements of Sections 18.1(b) and 11.3, respectively, of Niagara Region's Procedural By-law, the Regional Clerk received from Councillor Witteveen a motion to be brought forward for consideration at the May 20, 2021, Council meeting respecting Niagara's Agriculture Sector and Access to Untreated Water for Irrigation.
- 11.2. Withdrawal of Prohibition of Outdoor Recreation Activities Zalepa 1111
In accordance with the notice and submission deadline requirements of Sections 18.1(b) and 11.3, respectively, of Niagara Region's Procedural By-law, the Regional Clerk received from Councillor Zalepa a motion to be brought forward for consideration at the May 20, 2021, Council meeting respecting Withdrawal of Prohibition of Outdoor Recreation Activities.
- 11.3. 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Huson 1112
In accordance with the notice and submission deadline requirements of Sections 18.1(a) and 11.3, respectively, of Niagara Region's Procedural By-law, the Regional Clerk received from Councillor Huson a motion to be brought forward for consideration at the May 20, 2021, Council meeting respecting 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

13. OTHER BUSINESS

14. CLOSED SESSION

- 14.1. Council Minutes - Closed Session
- 14.1.1. Closed Session Minutes CL 8-2021, Thursday, April 22, 2021 (Regular Meeting)
- 14.1.2. Closed Session Minutes CL 9-2021, Thursday, April 29, 2021 (Special Meeting)
- 14.2. Committee Reports - Closed Session
- 14.2.1. Public Health and Social Services Committee - Closed Session
- 14.2.2. Corporate Services Committee - Closed Session

15. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

16. BY-LAWS

- | | | |
|-------|---|----------------|
| 16.1. | <u>Bill 2021-31</u>

A by-law to accept, assume and dedicate part of township lot 141, in the City of Niagara Falls as part of Regional Road No. 20 (Lundy's Lane). | 1113 -
1114 |
| 16.2. | <u>Bill 2021-32</u>

A by-law to accept, assume and dedicate part of lots 1, 2 & 3, Plan 85 and part lot 1, Plan 207, in the City of Niagara Falls as part of Regional Road No. 49 (McLeod Road). | 1115 -
1116 |
| 16.3. | <u>Bill 2021-33</u>

A by-law to accept, assume and dedicate block 8, Plan 59M-487, in the City of Niagara Falls as part of Regional Road No. 98 (Montrose Road). | 1117 -
1118 |
| 16.4. | <u>Bill 2021-34</u>

A by-law to permit Lowe's Store located at 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls to be open on certain holidays for the maintenance or development of tourism. | 1119 -
1120 |
| 16.5. | <u>Bill 2021-35</u>

A by-law to adopt, ratify and confirm the actions of Regional Council at its meeting held on May 20, 2021. | 1121 |

17. 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).

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 13, 2021 3:05:56 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 13 May 2021 15:01:14 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Rachel DeBon

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Virgil

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Regional Official Plan

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

Yes

Presentation only new info

Yes

Presentation Details

Bringing forth opinions on the new Official Plan being proposed.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 13, 2021 3:51:39 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 13 May 2021 15:51:32 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

David Samis

Address

166 Main Street west

City

Grimsby

Postal

L3M1S1

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

dsamis@phelpshomes.com

Organization

Niagara Home Builders Association

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Regional official plan

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

Yes

Presentation only new info

Yes

Presentation Details

will be speaking with regards the the proposed official plan

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 13, 2021 5:15:37 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 13 May 2021 17:15:22 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Annette Gibbons

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Grimsby

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Natural Heritage System

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

The importance of a strong and resilient Natural Heritage System. Asking for the Very Best Protection possible.

Video Consent

Yes



Good evening Chair Bradley and Councillors. Thank you for allowing me to speak on this most important issue that you will be deciding on tonight: which of the Natural Environment System (NES) Options best serves the long-term goals of the Region and the interests of its citizens.

My name is Annette Gibbons and along with my husband own and operate an electrical contracting business in Grimsby. I have lived in Grimsby for 58 years, all my life, I was born at West Lincoln Hospital, the youngest of 8 children. My dad, James Long served with the RCAF as a tail gunner in the second world war, my mother, along with raising us also worked at the Red & White grocery store just to make ends meet & I am blessed to be able to say she is alive & well at 96 years old. My parents did the best they could to instill true values, one being to stand up and fight for what is right & just.

I am urging you all to vote for Option 3C. In fact, I wish it were possible for you to vote for the 3C+ option Liz Benneian outlined to the Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) last week because I have seen firsthand the price residents have to pay in terms of flooded basements when developers are allowed to build in urban areas without the proper environmental protections in place.

The argument has been made that 3B is a more “balanced” approach that allows more “flexibility” & is “less restrictive” for developers. Others have argued that 3B gives local municipalities more control. But it seems to me the balance is already tipped heavily in favour of developers and developers already have the flexibility they need to ride roughshod over local planning.

How much control do municipalities truly have now or in the future when developers threaten LPAT appeals if a municipality says no to their plans? Our Town simply can’t afford endless court costs and so, more often than not, they give in to developer demands.

Putting a robust natural environment system in place should be seen by municipalities as a tool they can use to direct growth to the right places, and if the NES, is put in place by the Region, it would put an end to some of the local development battles.

Local residents want our environment preserved. It has been heartbreaking for many of us to see so much greenspace gobbled up over the past few years. We are not against development, but a truly balanced approach would acknowledge how important a functioning ecosystem is to Niagara’s future, and would protect it, including in our urban areas, where most of Niagara’s residents live, with important natural features preserved, and then protected with linkages, buffers and enhancement areas — all of which 3C, and only 3C, allows. A healthy eco-system will help the entire Region adapt to climate change and improve people’s quality of life by having healthy, sustainable, and resilient communities.

To be a truly functioning system, the NES can't be created in a piecemeal fashion. Despite what was said by a Regional staff member last week, natural features and linkages do not stop at municipal borders. NES planning is the kind of work that Regional governments were created to do, addressing issues that cross municipal borders. If you have 12 municipalities making up their own rules, then you will not have a system and you will continue to have an uncoordinated planning policy across the Region.

There was also talk at the PEDC meeting about the increasing unaffordability of homes. Clearly that problem is not caused by the NES because that problem is occurring now and we don't have a NES. And it won't be solved by building still more homes that are priced out of many people's budgets. In a recent article in The Toronto Star a spokesperson from RBC noted that one of the best ways to solve the affordability crisis was to build different kinds of housing; more purpose-built rentals, stacked townhomes, triplexes and fourplexes termed as the "missing middle". The bottom line is we can't fix the problems we have now by building more unsustainable and unaffordable sprawl.

The article also noted that municipalities do have flexibility, now, in creating different housing types through zoning bylaws including using exclusionary zoning that would allow for secondary suites. None of that local control will be impacted by the NES.

It was noted during the PEDC meeting that Niagara is at least 10 years behind other municipalities in terms of Natural Heritage planning. Now is the time to address that by choosing the most forward-thinking Option, 3C.

As stewards of this land, we all have a duty to protect and enhance Niagara's remaining natural environment. Hard work needs to be done to combat the Climate Crisis and having the strongest and the very best protection is one key element. We need to protect what is left, before there is nothing left to protect. This is a pivotal moment and one you will be signing your name to, the choice you make on behalf of all its citizens human and non-human will inevitably affect future generations of all life within each municipality.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying the citizens of this Region made their views very clear during the public consultation process: they want the environment protected, they want access to green spaces, they want action taken on climate change and they want good urban planning. Niagara is yours to protect now. 3C best addresses the concerns of your citizens. Please vote for it. Thank You!

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 13, 2021 9:15:00 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 13 May 2021 21:14:54 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Charlotte Chan

Address

[REDACTED]

City

St. Catharines

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Natural Heritage System

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

Select option 3C.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 13, 2021 10:07:57 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 13 May 2021 22:07:52 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Dawoud Najmudin

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Welland

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Natural Environment System

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

I would like to encourage the regional council to vote on the most effective option with regards to the NES, and to ensure that the decisions made today will not harm my generation.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Friday, May 14, 2021 7:53:00 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Friday, 14 May 2021 07:52:52 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Ken Kawall

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Jordan Station

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

PEDC Report on Natural Environment System

Presentation includes slides

Yes

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

I would like to speak to the Planning and Economic Development Committee recommendation on the Natural Environment System. I would like to encourage Regional Council to support Option 3C.

Video Consent

Yes



**Delegation to Regional Council – May 20, 2021
Ken Kawall – Town of Lincoln**

Slide 1 – Niagara’s Natural Environment System

Good evening Chair Bradley and Regional Council. My name is Ken Kawall, a resident of Lincoln and I am here to address the decision you are being asked to make this evening on Niagara’s Natural Environment System.

To be specific, I am asking you to approve Natural Environment System Option 3C.

At last week’s PEDC meeting, a number of the delegations provided compelling arguments in support of Option 3C. My delegation this evening is to add to that discussion and address some of the concerns raised at the meeting.

Slide 2 – Where Are We Today?

Let me start with the challenge at hand. These are well-known to you but worth repeating as having a common starting point is critical to where we end up. As was stated by a project consultant, at the PEDC meeting, the Region of Niagara is 10 years or more behind other regions in natural environment planning – so, we are playing catchup and we have a tight timeline to deliver the Official Plan by July, 2022. Fortunately, Regional staff have provided you with a comprehensive set of natural environment system options and I want to thank them for the many reports and the extensive public consultation they have conducted.

Your decision tonight will define the character and uniqueness of our Region over the next 50 years.

Slide 3 – Regional Responsibility

At last week’s PEDC meeting concerns were expressed by some committee members that Option 3C amounted to the Region overstepping its responsibility and that developing the best options for a natural environment system should be left to local municipalities.

As Chair Bradley noted at the PEDC meeting, one of the reasons for creating Regional governments was for the purpose of regional planning. This slide is from the Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy report and speaks to the objectives of the Regional structure. It explicitly includes natural heritage planning as a Regional responsibility.

As well, determining where growth will and will not be directed is also a Regional responsibility.

Planning is at best a reductive process. By that I mean at each subsequent stage there are applications made to adjust and reduce higher levels of policy. Local municipalities cannot be expected to add higher levels of protection than what is required by Regional policy. They are already overloaded and don’t have the capacity or broader perspective that Regional Planning staff have. Success requires a standardized top-down approach.

Slide 4 – Natural Heritage System

Natural Heritage systems have been an integral part of municipal land use planning in Ontario for over a decade. There are well-established scientific based best practices and proven results that the Region can leverage.

Delegation to Regional Council – May 20, 2021**Ken Kawall – Town of Lincoln**

This slide is from the Region's Natural Environment Background Study and shows the definition of a Natural Heritage System in the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan. As these sources point out, the key to a natural heritage system is functional interconnectivity or recognizing linkages between natural heritage features. In addition, it points out that linkages could include lands that have the potential to be restored to a natural state.

With this as the baseline, I would like to examine what's being proposed in Options 3B and 3C

Slide 5 – Option 3B in not a Natural Heritage System

These illustrations show natural heritage features and other woodlands inside and outside of settlement areas.

Option 3B on the left supports buffers (light green) and medium and large linkages (shown in yellow) outside of the settlement area but not in settlement areas.

On the right is Option 3C that allows buffers around natural heritage features and small linkages in settlement areas and supporting buffers and small, medium and large linkages outside of settlement areas.

Ecological systems do not start or stop at the boundary of settlement area or at a municipal boundary. With the lack of linkages in settlement areas, Option 3B does not meet the definition of a natural heritage system. On the previous slide the PPS description of a natural heritage system did not allow for exceptions in settlement areas, so I am wondering whether Option 3B is compliant with the PPS, or how it exceeds the provincial minimums, as noted in the staff report?

So let me repeat this, in Option 3B there are no linkages or buffers in settlement areas. In fact, 3B looks similar to what is done today in settlement areas, just protecting isolated natural heritage features without interconnectivity. This is what we have experienced for the past several decades and has led to the current fragmented and degraded state of natural heritage.

At the PEDC meeting, in his response to Councillor Zalepa, Director Giles said that in recommending Option 3B it would be best to leave buffer protection in urban areas to local municipalities. In other parts of staff reports it notes that buffers do not need to be prescribed to significant features inside of settlement areas as Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority policies apply. However, the NPCA itself says that its wetland buffer policies are flexible and provides for exceptions to reduce the size of buffers. Furthermore, the NPCA does not regulate woodland buffers, that is a regional responsibility.

This patchwork and confusing set of policies will not protect our natural heritage features. This is exactly why the Region needs to set the standard, which it does in Option 3C, with linkages and buffers inside and outside of settlement areas.

Slide 6 – What's Required to Implement Option 3C?

So, what would it require to support Option 3C?

If you take nothing else away from my delegation, remember this slide. It shows the difference between Options 3B and 3C. You can think of it as the incremental cost of Option 3C or better yet, as the small investment needed to deliver a Natural Environment System. This investment is minor. It equates to

Delegation to Regional Council – May 20, 2021**Ken Kawall – Town of Lincoln**

1.5% of the total urban area. **Let me repeat that, for the small investment of 1.5% of our urban area you can deliver Option 3C.**

The argument has been made that the 1.5% is needed to provide lower tier municipalities with flexibility. Its difficult to understand how such a tiny percentage can create much or any significant flexibility.

I think your decision comes down to this – are your prepared to make the 1.5% investment in the future of Niagara.

Slide 7 – Public Participation

I would like to expand on another topic from the PEDC. Regional staff discussed the very extensive public consultation process to date. What wasn't addressed is what the public said – In the 2nd Point of Engagement Report, presented in February 2021 it notes, that the public, “prefer an approach with the highest number of optional features and areas be included” in the natural environment system, and that natural heritage and environmental protection need priority.

You asked for input from your citizens, and they provided it. It's important to give weight to their input.

Slide 8 – Maintain & Enhance Ecological Health and Biodiversity

The title and the text on this slide comes from the staff report and reminds us all that **Niagara is the most biodiverse region in Ontario.**

We are fortunate that we already have two systems-based approaches to natural heritage in our Region – the Greenbelt Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the first large scale environmental land use plan in Canada. We need to look at these not as impediments or constraints but a solid foundation to build on.

It is important to point out that with Option 3C regional staff are proposing the harmonizing of the planning regime across all three plans (GBP, NEP, NES) in order to streamline and standardize the development process.

Synchronizing a regional natural heritage system (i.e. Option 3C) with the other two provides an opportunity for protecting the natural environment for our community and future generations. You have the power to make this happen. As Chair Bradley noted at the PEDC meeting, “this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to protect our natural heritage”.

We can't afford to let this opportunity slip from our grasp.

Slide 9 - Conclusions

In the Natural Environment Work Plan, Technical Report #2 presented in June 2020, Staff identified Option 3C as the best option to Achieving the Vision, Goals and Objectives of the new Niagara Official Plan.

The Technical Report also identified Option 3C as the best option for ensuring the protection of a region-wide Natural Environment system, including within settlement areas.

Delegation to Regional Council – May 20, 2021
Ken Kawall – Town of Lincoln

At the PEDC meeting on May 12th, a number of delegations spoke to the benefits of Ecosystem services, and other valued contributions of Option 3C. This slide adds to those benefits in highlighting nine significant areas that Option 3C positively addresses.

I, as well as many others that you have heard from, support what staff have noted in the Technical Report – **3C this is the best option for achieving the Region's goals and protecting the Region's ecosystem.**

Slide 10 – Please Select Option 3C

My ask is that you please select Option 3C.

Thank You

Niagara's Natural Environment System

Niagara Regional Council

May 20, 2021

Ken Kawall, Lincoln

Where Are We Today?

- Natural Heritage Systems are well established critical infrastructure in Ontario municipalities for over a decade
- Niagara's natural heritage is fragmented and degraded
 - NPCA report cards show no improvement in past 10 years
- We are 10 years behind other municipalities
- Number of our municipalities are declaring climate emergencies and at the Region we have no climate change policies to support them
- Niagara has the second lowest amount of parkland per capita in the GTHA.
- Covid has exacerbated the demand for more greenspaces where people live
- Municipalities will have a critical role in meeting newly announced greenhouse gas emission reduction targets
- Today's decision will influence the next 50 years

Regional Responsibility

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 – Section 2. REGIONAL STRUCTURE

SUMMARY

The Regional Structure is the basis for growth management in Niagara. It provides direction on critical factors needed to allocate population and employment forecasts within Urban Areas and Rural Settlements.

The Regional Structure will **coordinate** and support a range of land use considerations, including: investments in infrastructure and public service facilities; the protection of employment areas and agricultural lands; the creation of sustainable and resilient communities; and the **preservation of key natural heritage and water resource systems**.

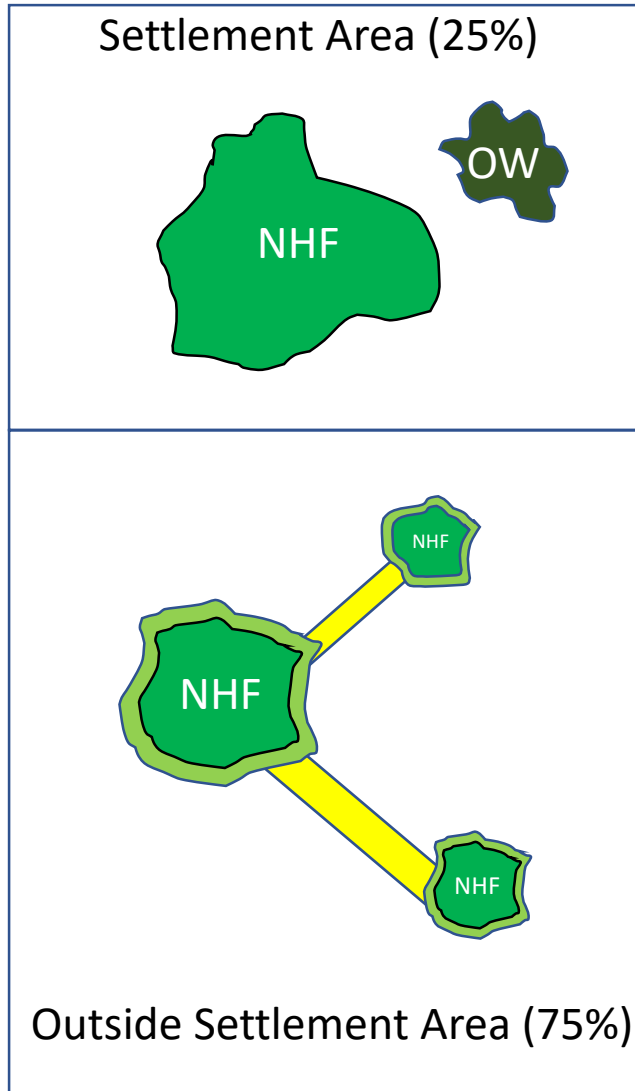
Schedule B identifies the land use components that comprise the Regional Structure, including Settlement Area boundaries. **The Regional Structure is used to determine where forecasted growth will and will not be directed.**

Natural Heritage System

P.P.S. 2014	Growth Plan 2017	Greenbelt Plan 2017
<p>NHS means a system made up of natural heritage features and areas and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. These systems can include natural heritage features and areas, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue.</p>	<p>The system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan, comprised of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. The system can include key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features and areas, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, associated areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue.</p>	<p>The Natural Heritage System includes core areas and linkage areas of the Protected Countryside with the highest concentration of the most sensitive and/or significant natural features and functions.</p>

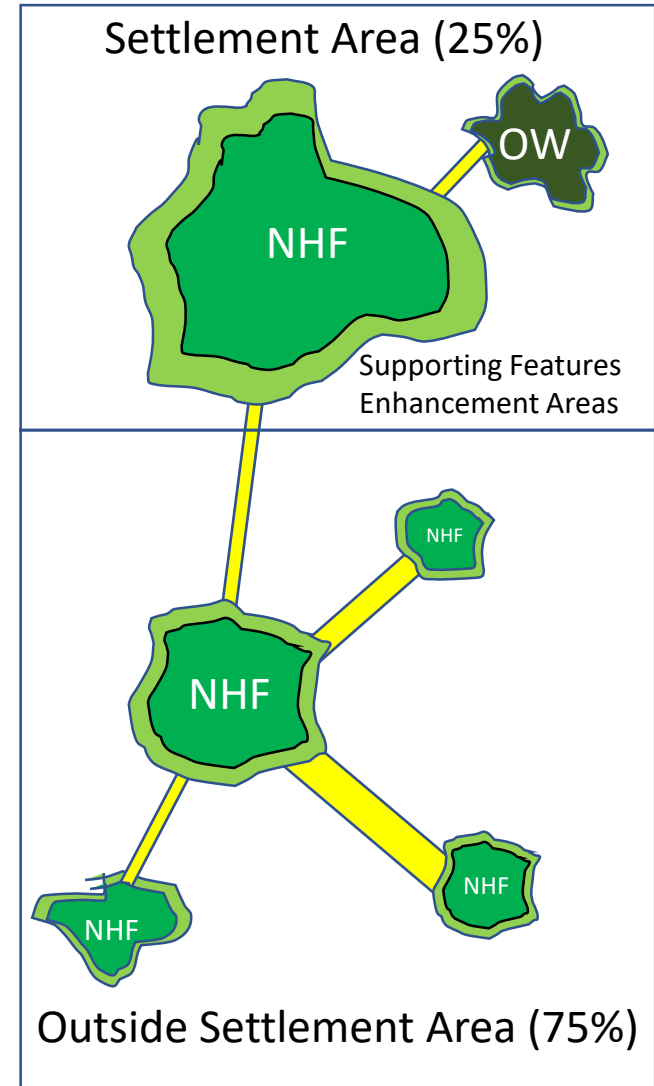
Option 3B is not a Natural Heritage System

Option 3B



NHF – Natural Heritage Feature; OW – Other Woodlands

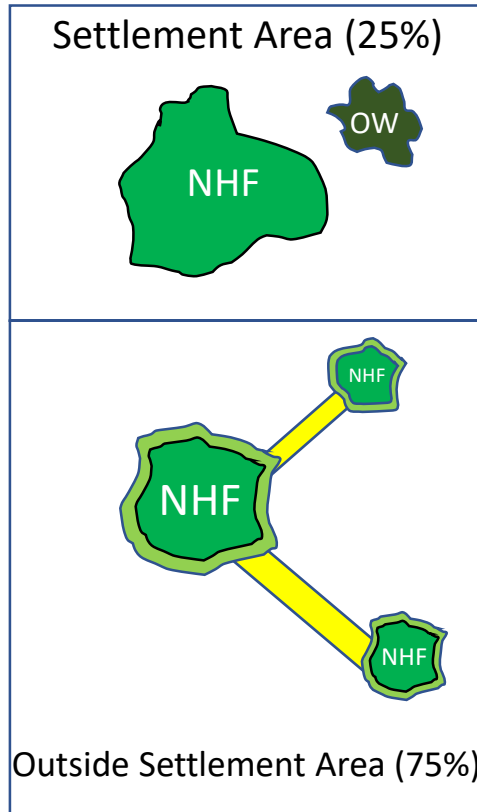
Option 3C



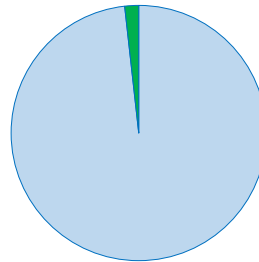
NHF – Natural Heritage Feature; OW – Other Woodlands

What's Required to Implement Option 3C?

Option 3B

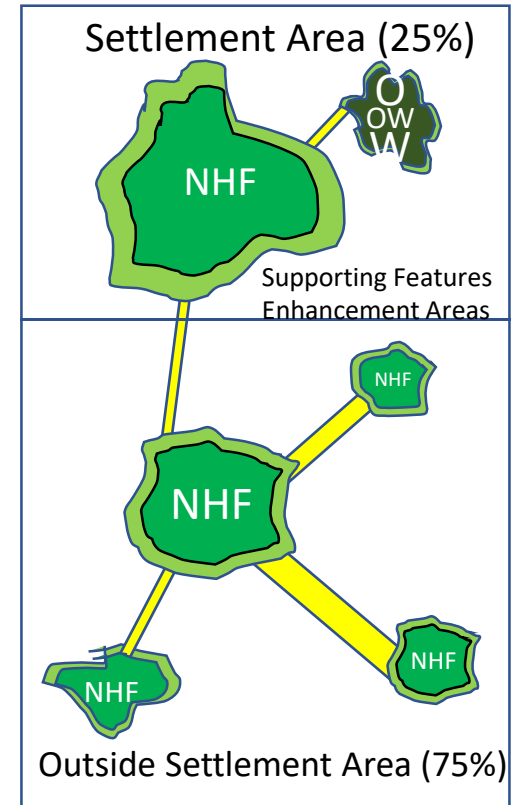


Investment in Option 3C



517 Hectares or
1.5% of Total
Urban Area

Option 3C



NHF – Natural Heritage Feature; OW – Other Woodlands

NHF – Natural Heritage Feature; OW – Other Woodlands

Public Participation

Official Plans

While a municipal Official Plan must be consistent with provincial legislation and policies, it is fundamentally the creation of a community and expresses the values of that community with respect to land use and land use management.

You asked for Public Input – Here it is

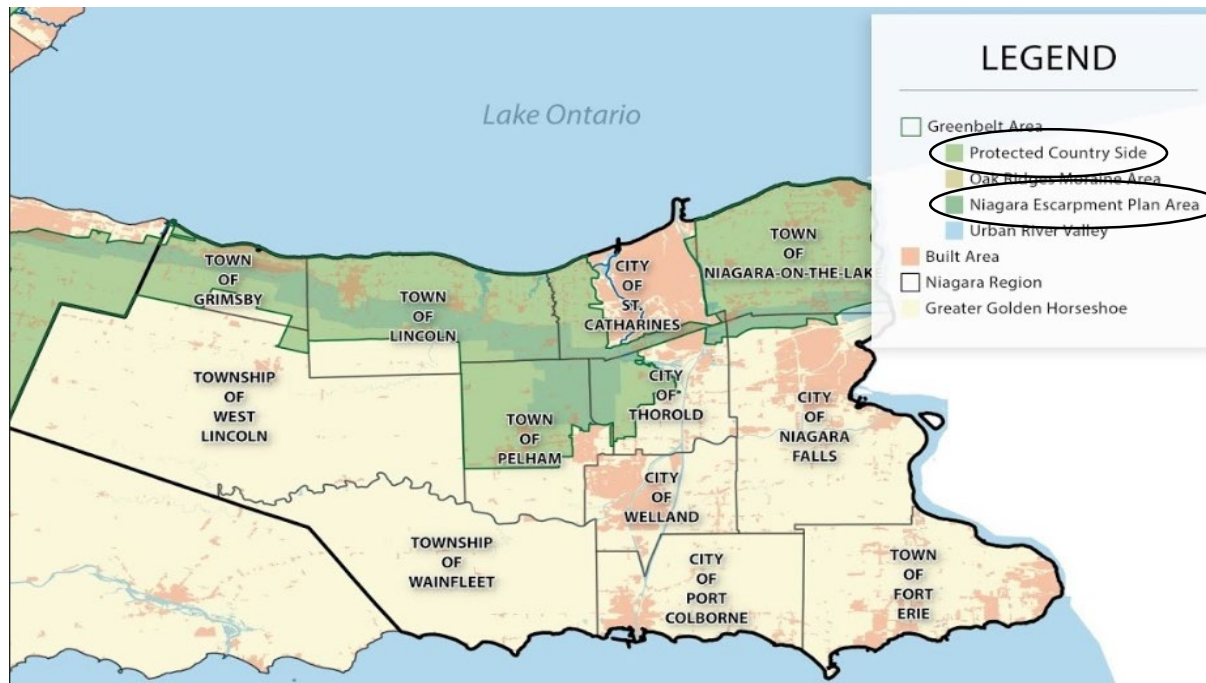
Environmental Stakeholder Groups:

- Prefer an approach which prioritizes natural heritage and environmental protection in the Region.
- Prefer an approach where natural environment planning in the Region is primarily a science-based exercise.

Public:

- Generally speaking, prefer an approach with the highest number of optional features and areas to be included in the NHS and WRS.
- Request for goals and objectives to be included as part of the final NHS and WRS.
- Biodiversity loss and climate change were identified as highly important issues.

Maintain & Enhance Ecological Health and Biodiversity



Already have two systems-based approaches to natural heritage planning at a Regional level

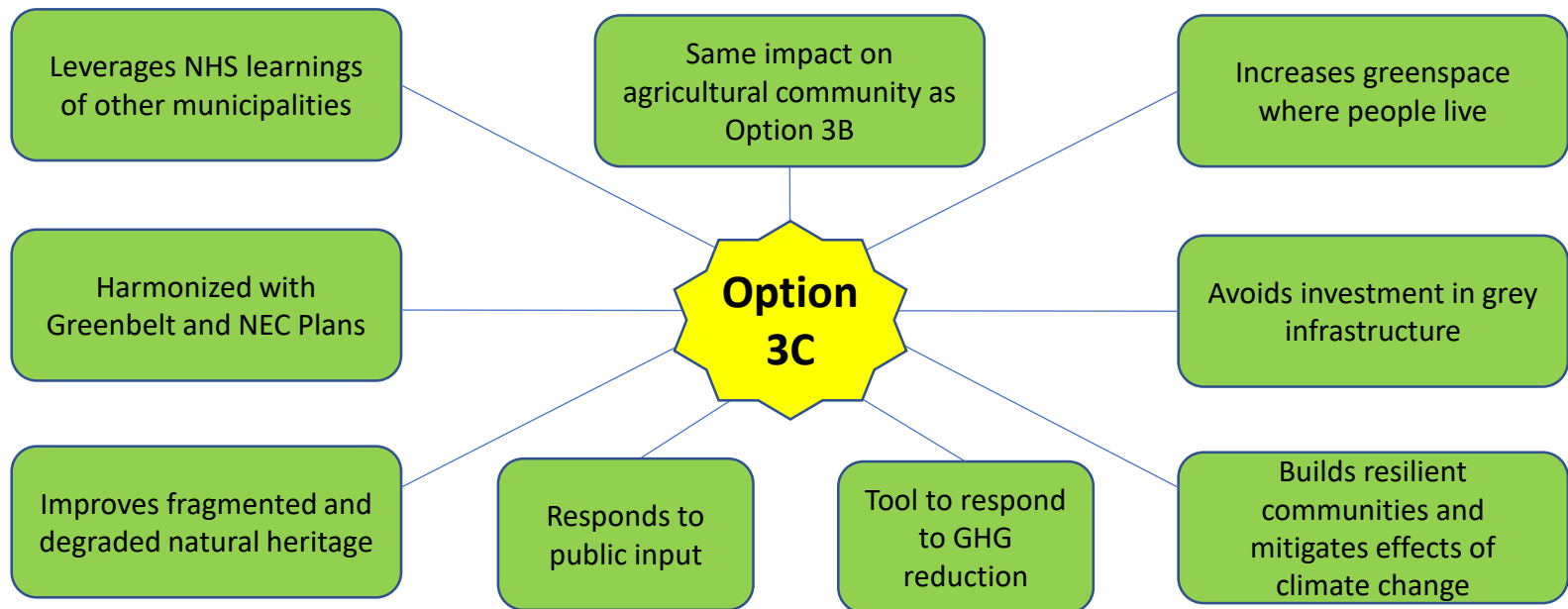
Adding Option 3C will provide an opportunity to protect this environment

Niagara is the **most biodiverse region in Ontario**. It is imperative that we protect our natural environment system for the overall health of our ecosystem, and to improve and maintain a high quality of life for our communities.¹

¹ CL 11-2021 Thursday, May 20, 2021 6.1. Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report (Minute Item 5.1, Minutes PEDC 5-2021 (Agenda Item 9.6)) Niagara Official Plan Review Presentation Side 20 (page 72 of overall package)

Conclusions

Option 3C best represents a forward-thinking systems approach since it includes additional linkages and features. Staff identified this as the **best option in Achieving the Vision, Goals and Objectives** of the new N.O.P., with consideration of Regional Council's strategic priorities.¹



Staff identified **Option 3C** as the best option for ensuring the protection of a region-wide N.H.S, including within settlement areas.¹

¹ NEW NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN Natural Environment Work Program: Technical Report #2: Identification and Evaluation of Options for Regional Natural Environment System(s) Options for Regional Natural Environment System – June 2020 page 4733

An aerial photograph of a suburban neighborhood. A river flows through the center of the image, surrounded by dense green trees. To the left of the river, a road runs vertically, with houses and parking lots on either side. The background shows more houses and fields under a clear sky.

Please Select Option 3C

Thank You

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Friday, May 14, 2021 8:58:28 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Friday, 14 May 2021 08:58:20 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Kostyn Petrunick

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Jordan Station

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

Extinction Rebellion Niagara (XRN)

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Natural Environment System

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

As a [REDACTED] resident of Niagara who grew up in the region, I wanted to speak a little bit about what the Natural Environment System plan means to me and ask Counsel to vote for Option 3C. I am a graduate student at Brock University and an active member of the community. Since environmental policy effects my life now and will permanently alter the future I live in, speaking to these issues is vital for me. I am eager to participate in regional democratic processes and hope to be able to make my case to counsel next Thursday. Thank you.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 9:32:48 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Tuesday, 18 May 2021 09:32:40 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Susan Murphy

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Vineland Station

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Natural Environment System

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

I will be speaking to the natural environment system and the options of 3B and 3C.

Video Consent

Yes



Hi everyone, My name is Susan Murphy, I'm a lifetime resident of Lincoln, I'm a registered nurse but I also owned and operated a business in Lincoln for 15 years. I was born on a farm in Beamsville along the lake. Even as a child I knew it was a very unique place. I love Niagara. I've travelled extensively through 20+ countries on 5 continents and there were opportunities to live and work in some of the most beautiful places in the world. But I choose to live in Lincoln because it's exceptional. I could easily speak to climate change and flooding, but due to time constraints I'm going to address the importance of protecting biodiversity and habitats in the Niagara Region.

Not many places can boast all that we have: being situated between two freshwater lakes, sandy beaches, the ability to grow tender fruit, natural waterfalls, rare species of animals and birds. We have the world renowned owl sanctuary here on Jordan Harbour, and we are home to the most diverse flora and fauna in the country. And all of this precariously mixed in with growth and development.

We're losing natural greenspaces and their ecosystems at breakneck speed. As of 2016, in huge part because of urban sprawl, less than 15% of the Carolinian Forest remains. In Niagara there are still hundreds of species of birds, fish, mammals, plants and trees in wetlands, woodlands, streams, rivers, and shorelines and other aquatic habitats. A whopping 58 of these ecosystem types are considered rare and each have a distinctive set of species. There are currently over 500 species at risk in all of Canada, and an astounding number of those species - one third - can be found here in the Carolinian Zone. You can see dozens and dozens of species that are on the provincial and national lists for being at risk, threatened, or endangered. We don't have to watch them be wiped out, we can be part of the solution to save them. It's to our advantage in all ways to do so.

https://caroliniancanada.ca/legacy/SpeciesHabitats_RareCommunities.htm

(Endangered, Threatened, At risk:)

[SpeciesHabitats_CC_SAR.htm](#)

We now know that when there are viable greenspaces throughout urban areas it leads to healthy and thriving communities. Greenspaces encourage year round outdoor activity, physical health, and wide scale social interaction. The World Health Organization in 2017 made it clear that healthy greenspace and healthy ecosystems "promote mental and physical health, and reduce morbidity and mortality in urban residents by providing psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, stimulating social cohesion, supporting physical activity, and reducing exposure to air pollutants, noise and excessive heat."

<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/urban-health/publications/2016/urban-green-spaces-and-health-a-review-of-evidence-2016>

So, by ensuring the healthy ecosystems for our wetlands and woodlands and aquatic systems, the health of our natural environment system, you're acting in the public's best interest here in Niagara. The strongest protection of these systems is necessary for the public's physical and psychological health and nothing less will do. I can't live in an area that doesn't have a healthy natural heritage system, it's not 'living' to me when an area isn't naturally and sustainably healthy.

It often comes down to money. In terms of finances it only makes sense if we opt for viable natural heritage systems. We have massive untapped potential for wealth through the world class ecotourism that's right at our fingertips. This revenue would far surpass any income from urban sprawl. Protecting our natural heritage systems is a win-win situation for the Region and the Public.

For just 4 weeks in May in Leamington, Ontario alone the revenue from birdwatching was approximately \$12 - \$14 million dollars. That's in only 28 days and that figure is from 2013. And again that's only for 4 weeks, during migration, and Niagara has the potential for triple that with not only Spring migration but for fall migration and winter gull and duck birding. *In 2011, birders in the US spent over \$29 Billion dollars just on food, lodging and travel. We have a ready made market in Toronto and the US.

<https://windsorstar.com/news/a-birding-app-for-windsor-essex>

<http://www.patagoniaalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2011-Birding-Economic-Report.pdf> *

Our backyard is a world class destination right now, but we have to reduce habitat loss and maintain, restore and improve natural heritage systems. The marshland in Jordan Harbour alone houses all the birds found in Leamington and Pelee Island, where these figures come from. We have egrets, heron, warblers, hawks, owls and many many more.

Birding is now so successful that Essex County has created a birding app highlighting not just local birds and the popular birdwatching spots, but local tourist attractions, museums, restaurants, wineries, and local businesses. They partnered with the National Parks Authority and Conservation Authority. We're talking tens of millions of dollars from just ONE source of proven ecotourism. One source. I don't have time here to get into the others but everyone knows our hiking trails have been packed during Covid.

<https://windsorstar.com/news/a-birding-app-for-windsor-essex>

What we have now, and what we have if we only vote for 3B, isn't a sustainable ecosystem, it's fractured and disconnected and won't survive. The only way to keep these wetlands and woodlands thriving and healthy means buffering them and providing linkages between them. My daughter and I watched a fox cut through a building site on the edge of an orchard in Vineland last Thursday, it trotted across Victoria Avenue and stood looking through the fence at the schoolyard. A perfect example of how desperately we need the linkages for the system to survive. Many of us see deer popping onto the road from orchards and vineyards, trying to get to the next small wooded lot. There are turtles crossing through subdivisions and on busy roads, many of which don't make it. But they all will use linkages. We need the system connected if the system is to survive.

****The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs provides a clear definition of what a Natural Heritage System is when it states:**

“Natural Heritage Systems are connected systems of natural features and areas and the lands and waters that link them together.”

*****The Provincial Policy Statement is also clear on what a Natural Heritage System is intended to do. It states:**

“The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.”

Neither of these government documents suggests linkages are optional in urban areas. 3C provides for these linkages in urban areas. 3B excludes linkages in urban areas and even small linkages outside of urban areas.

The Provincial Policy statement states: “Natural Heritage Areas should be maintained, restored or where possible improved.” The improvements to natural features are not possible with 3B in urban areas as it doesn't allow for the linkages vital to maintaining the significant features, or provide minimum buffers to protect them, or provide enhancement areas to help restore them. I don't understand how 3B can be compliant with the Provincial Policy Statement.

I know some members of Council are concerned with how a Natural Environment System would impact farmers. I grew up on a farm, protection of agricultural use is very important to me, too. But the Provincial Policy Statement makes it clear that, quote:

“Nothing in (Natural Heritage) policy 2.1 is intended to limit the ability of agricultural uses to continue.” Additionally, Councillor Zalepa asked staff what impact an NES would have on agricultural uses at the committee meeting and he was told, clearly, “none”.

I have also heard concerns expressed that 3C would place too much of a limit on developable land in urban areas. But the staff report says it would only require. .1% of land in urban areas to create linkages and another 1.4% to create buffers and enhancement areas.

A 1.5% difference in land usage between 3B and 3C. That seems like an insignificant price to pay, or a negligible one, to create a variable Natural Environment System.

Clearly, there is a private interest in opening up as much land for development as possible but there is also clearly a public interest in protecting a healthy Region-wide environmental system.

I don't understand why our elected officials would vote for a Natural Environment System Option that doesn't protect the Public interest. I encourage you to please vote for Option 3C and save our beautiful and rare environment, for the public. It won't be here for us or the next generation if we don't act now.

**

<http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/agsys-sum.htm>

Provincial Policy Statement

<https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-provincial-policy-statement-2020-accessible-final-en-2020-02-14.pdf>

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Monday, May 17, 2021 8:49:34 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Monday, 17 May 2021 20:49:27 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

April Arthur

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Smithville

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Speak to Motion 11.2 Withdrawl of Prohibition on Outdoor Activities

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

Support and Speak to Motion 11.2. Withdrawl to Prohibition on Outdoor Activities by Councillor. I would like the Regional Council to move forward with this motion.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 8:13:26 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 08:13:19 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Danielle Romanuk

Address

[REDACTED]

City

St Catharines

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Motion 11.2 Withdrawal of Prohibition of Outdoor Recreation Activities

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

I will speak about options to withdrawal that could be more effective than writing a letter.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 8:25:28 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 08:25:22 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

steffannie Hancharyk

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Thorold

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

Experience physical activity for life

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Item 11.2

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

Speak to Item 11.2 Withdrawal of Prohibition of Outdoor Recreation Activities

Video Consent

Yes

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 8:12:26 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 08:12:21 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Danielle Romanuk

Address

[REDACTED]

City

St Catharines

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Motion 11.3 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

I am seeking direction on how flag flying is directly related to reduction in violence, and I would like to offer my experience and suggestions as a biological woman who has escaped abuse.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 8:27:20 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 08:27:02 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Steffannie Hancharyk

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Thorold

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

10 [REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

Experience physical activity for life

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Item 11.3

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

Speak to Item 11.3, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Video Consent

Yes

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 19, 2021 11:33:03 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 19 May 2021 23:32:50 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Amanda Schilz

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Niagara Falls

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

11.3 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

Speaking as a woman with lived experience of domestic abuse to the statements made in this motion.

Video Consent

Yes



**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL COUNCIL
OPEN SESSION**

CL 7-2021

Thursday, April 22, 2021

Council Chamber / Video Conference

**Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber: Bradley (Regional Chair), Foster

Council Members Present via Video Conference: Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Chiocchio, Darté, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa

Absent/Regrets: Bellows

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer, R. Fleming, Senior Tax & Revenue Analyst, D. Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning & Development Services, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, M. Murphy, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

1. CALL TO ORDER

Regional Chair Bradley called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Whalen
Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That Council Agenda CL 7-2021, **BE ADOPTED.**

Carried

3. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. **PUBLIC MEETING TO HEAR A COMPLAINT UNDER SECTION 20 OF THE DEVELOPMENT CHARGES ACT, 1997**

4.1 **Development Charge Complaint - 260/270 Hunter Road, Grimsby**

The Regional Chair stated that the statutory public meeting was being held pursuant to section 20 of the *Development Charges Act, 1997*, as amended, to discuss a development charges complaint for the property located at 260/270 Hunter Road in the Town of Grimsby.

4.1.1 Opening Comments - Hearing Procedure

Donna Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Service, provided information respecting the process and proceeding for the Development Charges hearing.

4.1.2 Speakers to the Matter

4.1.2.1 Riccardo Persi, LiUNA, and Matt Johnston, Principal, Urban Solutions

Riccardo Persi, LiUNA, and Matt Johnston, Principal, Urban Solutions, appeared before Council with respect to a development charges complaint submitted respecting the development at 260/270 Hunter Road in the Town of Grimsby. Mr. Johnston advised that the complaint had been submitted on the basis that a portion of the development charges had been incorrectly determined as institutional when much of the industrial use will be retained.

4.1.3 Item for Consideration

4.1.3.1 CSD 26-2021

Regional Development Charges Complaint

Moved by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That Report CSD 26-2021, dated April 22, 2021, respecting Regional Development Charges Complaint, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the complaint filed with respect to the Regional Development Charges payable pursuant to Section 20 of the Development Charges Act, 1997, for the property located at 260/270 Hunter Road, Grimsby, **BE DISMISSED** by Regional Council.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (22): Butters, Campion, Chiocchio, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Foster, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Insinna, Ip, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugolini, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa.

No (7): Bylsma, Darte, Fertich, Gale, Jordan, Junkin, Villella.

Abstain (1): Huson.

Carried

4.2 Adjournment of the Public Hearing

The public hearing adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

5.1 For Information

5.1.1 CL-C 28-2021

Responsibilities of the Board of Health

Moved by Councillor Zalepa
Seconded by Councillor Heit

That Correspondence Item CL-C 28-2021, being a memorandum from D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services and A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, dated April 22, 2021, respecting Responsibilities of the Board of Health, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

5.2 For Consideration

5.2.1 CHR 2-2021

Options for Consideration in regards to CL-C 28-2021

Moved by Councillor Darte

Seconded by Councillor Butters

That Regional Council **DIRECT** the Regional Chair to submit a code of conduct complaint to the Integrity Commissioner to investigate whether the participation of a Councillor (namely Councillor Bylsma) in the public protest that took place in St. Catharines on April 10, 2021, during the provincial stay at home order was in contravention of the Region's Code of Conduct; and provide a report to Council with his findings and recommendations.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (29): Butters, Campion, Chiocchio, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa.

No (1): Bylsma.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Campion

That Regional Council **ENDORSE** the issuance of the formal public statement below which reaffirms Council's commitment to the code of conduct, the need to follow and respect all federal, provincial and municipal statutes and recognition of the role and influence that municipal leaders have in the community:

As required by the Municipal Act, 2001, Niagara Regional Council has a formal code of conduct that each member committed to following when being sworn into office. The code spells out what is considered acceptable conduct and the expectation is that every member will follow it closely. We believe that the standards outlined in our code serve to enhance the public's confidence in the Region, as well as ensure members conduct themselves with integrity.

As Regional Councillors, we are required to accurately communicate the decisions of council, even if we may disagree with the outcome. All members are expected to be mindful of the importance of their duties, and the influence they have in the community. Those who hold elected office are seen as leaders within their municipalities and should conduct themselves in a way that maintains and promotes the public's trust.

We take breaches of the code seriously. Councillors are entitled to due process under the Municipal Act and we rely on the services of an Integrity Commissioner to provide us with advice before taking any actions. When a Councillor is found to have contravened our code of conduct by the Integrity Commissioner, it reflects poorly on that individual member, on Regional Council and ultimately on our entire community.

In our role as Niagara's Board of Health, we are committed to supporting all Public Health directives and fostering an environment where the public can have confidence in Ontario's health system. We are responsible for upholding all relevant provincial legislation, as well as ensuring the community's health needs are being met.

Finally, all members of council, without exception, are expected to follow all federal, provincial and municipal statutes at all times. Members are expected to educate themselves on all relevant policies and legislation, and conduct themselves in a way that does not contravene the law.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (29): Butters, Campion, Chiocchio, Dart, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugolini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa.

No (1): Bylsma.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Butters
Seconded by Councillor Huson

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa Integrity Commissioner found that a Member of Ottawa City Council engaged in “incomprehensible incidents of harassment” involving job candidates and staff;

WHEREAS the Municipal Act, 2001 does not provide a mechanism to have a Councillor vacated from their seat despite any acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa has sent correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001 to address such acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the Women’s Advisory Committee is supportive of requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001 to address these matters;

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has opened a formal consultation process to invite members of public and municipalities to provide comments on ways to strength codes of conduct; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has released a position statement regarding this consultation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions be made to the Municipal Act, 2001, that would provide for the vacating of the seat of a member of council who has been found on clear and convincing evidence to have committed serious misconduct;
2. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** AMO’s position in regards to this matter; and
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to actively participate, on behalf of Regional Council, in the ongoing provincial consultation on this matter.

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That the motion respecting Code of Conduct revisions **BE REFERRED** to the Corporate Services Committee meeting being held on May 12, 2021.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Ugulini
Seconded by Councillor Ip

That Memorandum CHR 2-2021, being a memorandum from Regional Chair Bradley, dated April 22, 2021, respecting Options for Consideration in regards to CL-C 28-2021, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

6. BY-LAWS

6.1 Bill 2021-22

Moved by Councillor Insinna
Seconded by Councillor Steele

That Bill 2021-22 being a by-law to adopt, ratify and confirm the actions of Regional Council at its special meeting held on April 22, 2021, **BE NOW READ** and **DO PASS**.

Carried

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL
OPEN SESSION**

**CL 8-2021
Thursday, April 22, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Niagara Regional Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber:	Bradley (Regional Chair), Foster
Council Members Present via Video Conference:	Bellows, Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Chiocchio, Darté, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugolini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa
Staff Present in the Council Chamber:	D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Staff Present via Video Conference:	B. Brens, Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis, H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer, S. Crocco, Legal Counsel, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, D. Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning & Development Services, C. Habermehl, Director, Waste Management Services, T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, J. Kearon, Resident Physician, Public Health & Preventive Medicine, B. Landry, Manager, Economic Research & Analysis, B. Menage, Director, Procurement & Strategic Acquisitions, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, B. Wilson, Legal Counsel, D. Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Regional Housing, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works
Others Present via Video Conference:	D. Jeffries, Rae Christen Jeffries LLP, External Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Regional Chair Bradley called the meeting to order at 6:44 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2.1 Addition of Items

Moved by Councillor Bylsma
Seconded by Councillor Gale

That Danielle Romanuk **BE PERMITTED** to appear before Council respecting the motion regarding Support Local Journalism and News Media.

Carried

2.2 Changes in Order of Items

There were no changes in the order of items on the agenda.

Moved by Councillor Bellows
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

That Council Agenda CL 8-2020, **BE ADOPTED**, as amended.

Carried

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Councillor Gale declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the portion of the Public Health and Social Services Committee Minutes PHSSC 4-2021 (Agenda Item 9.3) concerning Report COM 8-2021, respecting Long-term Care Home Redevelopment Project Update: Preliminary Master Plans (Minute Item 6.1) as his daughter is an employee at a long-term care home in the City of Niagara Falls.

Councillor Edgar declared a direct pecuniary interest with respect to the portion of the Public Health and Social Services Committee Minutes PHSSC 4-2021 (Agenda Item 9.3) concerning Report COM 6-2021, respecting Managing the Licensed Child Care System During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Minute Item 6) as his wife is the Director of Children's Services.

Councillor Redekop declared an indirect pecuniary interest with respect to the portion of the Corporate Services Committee Minutes CSC 4-2021 (Agenda Item 9.4) concerning the presentation respecting Niagara Health - Partnering Together for the Future South Niagara Hospital (Minute Item 3.1) as his daughter conducts contract work for Niagara Health.

See Minute Item 9.4.

4. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

5. CHAIR'S REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, REMARKS

The Regional Chair provided an update respecting activities within the Region and the efforts of Niagara Region with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. DELEGATIONS

6.1 Managing the Licensed Child Care System During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Minute Item 6, Minutes PHSSC 4-2021(Agenda Item 9.3))

6.1.1 Grace Eldajani, Vice Chair, Women in Niagara Council (WIN)

Grace Eldajani, Vice Chair, Women in Niagara Council (WIN), appeared before Council to provide information respecting the impact of the ongoing pandemic on women in Niagara, and key considerations for the removal of barriers for women to re-enter the workforce. She spoke in support of the need for a comprehensive childcare policy.

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Foster assumed the Chair.

6.2 Support Local Journalism and News Media (Agenda Item 11.1)

6.2.1 Danielle Romanuk, Some Assembly Required News Media

Danielle Romanuk, Some Assembly Required News Media, spoke in opposition to the motion respecting Support for Local Journalism and News Media.

At this point in the meeting, Chair Bradley assumed the Chair.

7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Minutes CL 5-2021, Thursday, March 25, 2021

Minutes CL 6-2021, Wednesday, March 31, 2021 (Special Meeting)

Moved by Councillor Huson

Seconded by Councillor Steele

That Minutes CL 5-2021 being the Open and Closed Session minutes of the Regional Council meeting held on Thursday, March 25, 2021, and Minutes CL 6-2021, being the Open and Closed Session minutes of the Special Regional Council meeting held on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, **BE ADOPTED.**

Carried

8. **CORRESPONDENCE**

8.1 **Receive and/or Refer**

There were no correspondence items to receive and/or refer.

8.2 **For Consideration**

8.2.1 CSD 17-2021

2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report

Moved by Councillor Gibson

Seconded by Councillor Ugulini

That Report CSD 17-2021, dated March 10, 2021, respecting 2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the unaudited summarized financial results of the Niagara Region as detailed in Appendix 1 of Report CSD 17-2021, **BE RECEIVED**;
2. That the 2020 year-end operating surplus for levy-supported programs including agencies, boards and commissions of \$37,306 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** as follows:
 - \$69 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** from the Accumulated Sick Leave Reserve as per NRPS recommendation to their Board in Appendix 8 of Report CSD 17-2021
 - \$2 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** from the Ontario Police Video Training Alliance (OPTVA) Reserve as per NRPS recommendation to their Board in Appendix 8 of Report CSD 17-2021
 - \$6,600 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Hospital Contribution Reserve (to be formally established in CSD 19-2021) to fund the committed contribution to the new West Lincoln Hospital
 - \$230 thousand related to the Niagara Foreign Trade Zone (NFTZ) and Foreign Direct Investment activities **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Taxpayer Relief Reserve to fund the 2021 NFTZ and investment attraction activities in collaboration with Team Niagara
 - \$30,547 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Taxpayer Relief Reserve

3. That the 2020 year-end operating surplus for rate-supported programs of \$4,222 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to reserves as follows:
 - \$1,493 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve
 - \$1,863 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Wastewater Stabilization Reserve
 - \$500 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Water Capital Reserve
 - \$366 thousand **BE TRANSFERRED** to the Water Stabilization Reserve
4. That encumbrances of \$16,275 thousand (Appendix 2 of Report CSD 17-2021) **BE RECEIVED** for information and that the deferral of these expenditures be included in the 2021 operating budget; and
5. That the transfers of \$10,394 thousand from the capital variance projects to Capital Reserves **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS - OPEN SESSION

9.1 Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment Committee

Minutes CAORC 4-2021, Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Moved by Councillor Witteveen
Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That Minutes CAORC 4-2021 being the Open Session minutes of the Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment Committee meeting held on Tuesday, April 6, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

9.2 Public Works Committee

Minutes PWC 4-2021, Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That Minutes PWC 4-2021 being the Open and Closed Session minutes of the Public Works Committee meeting held on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein **BE APPROVED**, save and except the Minute Items respecting Confidential Report PW 19-2021.

Carried

9.3 Public Health and Social Services Committee

Minutes PHSSC 4-2021, Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Moved by Councillor Greenwood
Seconded by Councillor Chiocchio

That Minutes PHSSC 4-2021 being the Open Session minutes of the Public Health & Social Services Committee meeting held on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

9.4 Corporate Services Committee

Minutes CSC 4-2021, Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Minutes CSC 4-2021 being the Open and Closed Session minutes of the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein **BE APPROVED**.

Councillor Gale declared an indirect pecuniary interest respecting the presentation, Niagara Health - Partnering Together for the Future South Niagara Hospital (Minute Item 3.1), as his son is employed by Niagara Health.

Councillor Steele declared an indirect pecuniary interest respecting the presentation, Niagara Health - Partnering Together for the Future South Niagara Hospital (Minute Item 3.1), as his wife is employed by Niagara Health.

Councillor Sendzik declared an indirect pecuniary interest respecting the presentation, Niagara Health - Partnering Together for the Future South Niagara Hospital (Minute Item 3.1), as a member of his family is employed by Niagara Health.

The Regional Chair called the vote on the motion and declared it,

Carried

Councillor Information Request(s):

Provide a report respecting the Regional contribution to the future South Niagara Hospital to the Corporate Services Committee meeting being held June 16, 2021. Councillor Diodati.

9.5 Planning and Economic Development Committee

Minutes PEDC 4-2021, Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Moved by Councillor Huson

Seconded by Councillor Witteveen

That Minutes PEDC 4-2021 being the Open Session minutes of the Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting held on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

10. **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT(S)**

10.1 CAO 5-2021

Regional Nomination to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Moved by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Report CAO 5-2021, dated April 22, 2021, respecting Regional Nomination to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Council **ENDORSE** Councillor Diana Huson as Niagara Region's representative to stand for election on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) National Board of Directors (Ontario) for the period starting June 2021 and ending June 2022; and
2. That Council **CONFIRM** it will assume all costs associated with the representative's attendance at FCM's Board of Directors meetings and Annual Conference.

Carried

At this point in the meeting, Councillor Foster assumed the Chair.

11. MOTIONS

11.1 Support Local Journalism and News Media

Support Local Journalism and News Media

Moved by Regional Chair Bradley

Seconded by Councillor Gibson

WHEREAS a healthy and strong local media is essential for the proper functioning of our democracy;

WHEREAS the role of the fourth estate ensures that residents are well informed, and elected officials are held accountable for their actions and decisions;

WHEREAS local sources of journalism have struggled financially in recent years due to a decline of traditional revenue sources;

WHEREAS newspapers across Canada continue to have their content republished on online platforms (including social media) with little to no compensation, further disadvantaging local news media by exploiting their content;

WHEREAS local newspapers across Canada have been forced to significantly downsize, reduce coverage, and in many cases, cease production all together;

WHEREAS Niagara's local radio stations have been forced to reduce their coverage of local news, replacing it with less relevant syndicated content;

WHEREAS the importance of local news media has never been more important than during the COVID-19 crisis, as residents turn to trusted news sources for vital information and content;

WHEREAS the decline of trusted, balanced local news media across Canada, staffed by ethical journalists with integrity, has created a vacuum that has been filled by disinformation and slanted coverage, often fueled by social media;

WHEREAS nearly two out of every three Canadians support sending financial aid to struggling news providers, according to a Nanos Research poll of April 2020; and

WHEREAS the federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in aid for Canadian media over five years in its 2019 budget, including a 25-per-cent tax credit for newsroom salaries; a 15-per-cent tax credit for digital media subscribers; and charitable tax status for non-profit news outlets.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **FORMALLY RECOGNIZE** that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in the region and encourage residents to support local sources of credible news;
2. That Niagara Regional Council **ENDORSE** legislation and regulations to support and rejuvenate news outlets across Canada;
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to write a letter to the federal government urging them to move quickly to pass legislation to ensure an ecosystem for a healthy news media to serve all Canadians; and
4. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to forward this motion to the local area municipalities, local Members of Parliament and Members of Provincial Parliament, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

The following friendly **amendment** was accepted by the Acting Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion:

2. That Niagara Regional Council **ENDORSE** legislation and regulations to support ~~and~~ rejuvenate **and create a level playing field for** news outlets across Canada.

Acting Chair Foster called the vote on the motion, as amended. Clause 2 of the motion was considered separately as follows:

2. That Niagara Regional Council **ENDORSE** legislation and regulations to support, rejuvenate and create a level playing field for news outlets across Canada.

Carried

Councillor Foster called the vote on the balance of the motion and declared it,

Carried

At this point in the meeting, Chair Bradley assumed the Chair.

11.2 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Councillor Huson advised the Clerk's Office that she would be bringing this motion forward for consideration at a future meeting of Council.

11.3 Broken or Damaged Recycling Bin Funding Reconsideration

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Ip

That Regional Council **RECONSIDER** the removal of the broken or damaged recycling bin program that had been eliminated through the 2021 budget process.

Two-thirds majority having been achieved, the Regional Chair declared the vote,

Carried

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Ip

WHEREAS given that progress has been made during this term of Council with regards to waste management, particularly in the area of recycling within our communities;

WHEREAS based on reports received at the Public Works Committee, increased recycling has been happening in Niagara, which delivers on one of the key principles in the new waste management policy;

WHEREAS a decision was made during our 2021 budget process to eliminate the waiving of fees for recycling containers (including blue bins, gray bins, green bins, organic kitchen catchers) that have been broken or damaged, reducing the budget impact by approximately \$111,000;

WHEREAS this change has had an unintended consequence of creating challenges at municipalities with regards to accounting and enforcement, given the various conditions that have now come into play for the replacement of recycling bins, which is now costing municipalities additional time and staff resources to deliver; and

WHEREAS this change may have had the further unintended consequence of creating a barrier for people in our communities when it comes to recycling bin replacement, which would be unfortunate given the community adoption of the new processes.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Region of Niagara **REINSTATE** the broken or damaged recycling bin program that had been eliminated through the 2021 budget process;
2. That this program, which is expected to cost approximately \$111,000, **BE RE-ESTABLISHED** back into base budget;

3. That for 2021 the cost **BE FUNDED** from the Operational stabilization fund; and
4. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to prepare the required budget amendment and present this to Council, including the required public notice.

Carried

11.4 Enhance and Support Niagara Region's Public Facing Communications

Moved by Councillor Redekop
Seconded by Councillor Easton

WHEREAS timely, accurate and effective two-way communications with elected officials and the public are of vital importance at all times;

WHEREAS the importance of these communications had been heightened since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS the provision of high-quality, exceptional communications between the Niagara Region and elected officials and members of public is dependent on internal coordination, information sharing and adherence to established strategies guiding all regional departments;

WHEREAS successful public communications are also dependent on strong relationships with external partners such as the Niagara Health, Brock University, Niagara College, the school boards, the provincial and federal government, the private sector and, most importantly, the 12 local area municipalities;

WHEREAS the Region's Strategic Communications and Public Affairs division provides a full suite of services to all Regional Departments (with the exception of Public Health) with a total staff compliment of 9 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs);

WHEREAS the Public Health Communications Team, whose services are limited to their department, has a current total staff compliment of 13 FTEs (with some of these positions being on contract for the duration of the pandemic);

WHEREAS a number of the communication positions in Public Health are funded all or in-part by provincial dollars;

WHEREAS Regional Council accepts the proposition that it is an important priority to ensure that communications with the public and other elected officials occur in the most efficient, effective and timely way possible;

WHEREAS Regional Council respects the need at times for all departments to be able to communicate in a confidential manner potentially sensitive information in the interest of the public's health, safety and general wellbeing;

WHEREAS it is critical during a time of pandemic that the messaging and communications emanating from all departments be aligned and respond to the need for the public and elected officials to receive timely, consistent, concise and comprehensible information;

WHEREAS the reporting structure of communications at Niagara Region can be rationalized without detrimentally affecting the ability of the Acting Medical Officer of Health to exercise his legislative authority under the Health Promotions and Protections Act; and

WHEREAS a reorganization of the Region's FTEs with a core public relations and communications responsibility into a consolidated department would enhance the objective of a strong communications team by allowing for a better sharing of resources, a reduction in silos within the organization thereby expediting the decision making process, a more streamlined interface for key stakeholders and partners, increased cooperation in regards to strategic planning and a strong potential for increased operational efficiency.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council/Board of Health **DIRECTS** the Acting Chief Administrative Officer and Acting Medical Officer of Health to ensure the immediate alignment of messaging and communications emanating from the Niagara Region Public Health Department and the Niagara Region on all matters related to the current COVID-19 pandemic and provide a progress report at the May 2021, Committee meetings; and
2. That Regional Council **DIRECTS** the Acting Chief Administrative Officer to:
 - a) Provide a report to the Corporate Services Committee for its May 12, 2021, meeting on the potential reorganization of the core communication resources found in all departments of Niagara Region, including Public Health, with a view to creating a unified strategic communications entity; and

- b) Determine what memorandums of understanding and/or service level agreements may be necessary to satisfy the needs of provincial funders in regards to any communications positions in public Health paid for, wholly or partially, by the Ministry of Health.

Carried

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

14. CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Edgar
Seconded by Councillor Easton

That this Council **DO NOW MOVE** into Closed Session for the purposes of receiving information of a confidential nature respecting:

A Matter of Litigation or Potential Litigation and Advice Subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege and a Matter Concerning the Position to be Applied to certain Negotiations to be Carried on by the Municipality, under s.239 (2) (e), (f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Material Recycling Facility Opportunity Review, Niagara Recycling Operations Agreement and Cellmark Claim; and

A Matter respecting Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 – Confidential Motion respecting Acting Chief Administrative Officer Compensation Review

Carried

Council resolved into closed session at 9:34 p.m.

15. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

Council reconvened in open session at 10:08 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber: Bradley (Regional Chair), Foster

Council Members Present via Video Conference: Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Chiocchio, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa

Absent/Regrets: Bellows, Rigby

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk

Staff Present via Video Conference: D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, T. Harrison, Commissioner/ Treasurer, Corporate Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

Others Present via Video Conference: D. Jeffries, Rae Christen Jeffries LLP, External Legal Counsel

15.1 Confidential Items PW 19-2021 and CL-C 27-2021

A Matter of Litigation or Potential Litigation and Advice Subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege and a Matter Concerning the Position to be Applied to certain Negotiations to be Carried on by the Municipality, under s.239 (2) (e), (f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Material Recycling Facility Opportunity Review, Niagara Recycling Operations Agreement and Cellmark Claim

Moved by Councillor Diodati
Seconded by Councillor Sendzik

That Confidential Report PW 19-2021, dated April 13, 2021, and Confidential Memorandum CL-C 27-2021, dated April 22, 2021, respecting A Matter of Litigation or Potential Litigation and Advice Subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege and a Matter Concerning the Position to be Applied to certain Negotiations to be Carried on by the Municipality, under s.239 (2) (e), (f) and (k) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Material Recycling Facility Opportunity Review, Niagara Recycling Operations Agreement and Cellmark Claim, **BE RECEIVED**; and

That staff **PROCEED** as directed in closed session.

Carried

16. BY-LAWS

Moved by Councillor Steele
Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That the following Bills **BE NOW READ** and **DO PASS**:

Bill 2021-23

A by-law to accept, assume and dedicate part of lot 201, CP Plan 4, in the Town of Grimsby as part of Regional Road No. 81 (Main Street East).

Bill 2021-24

A by-law to accept, assume and dedicate part of Lot 5, Con 4 in the City of Port Colborne as part of Regional Road No. 98 (Wilhelm Road).

Bill 2021-25

A by-law to set tax ratios and tax rate reductions for prescribed property subclasses for Regional purposes and area Municipal purposes for the year 2021.

Bill 2021-26

A by-law to set and levy the rate of taxation for Regional general and special purposes for the year 2021.

Bill 2021-27

A by-law to authorize a tile drainage loan for the Town of Lincoln.

Bill 2021-28

A by-law to adopt, ratify and confirm the actions of Regional Council at its meeting held on April 22, 2021.

Carried

17. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PROCEEDINGS OF SPECIAL COUNCIL
OPEN SESSION**

CL 9-2021

Thursday, April 29, 2021

Council Chamber / Video Conference

**Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber: Bradley (Regional Chair), Insinna

Council Members Present via Video Conference: Bellows, Butters, Bylsma, Chiocchio, Dart, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa

Absent/Regrets: Campion, Villella

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources

Others Present via Video Conference: R. Weir, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, D. Jeffries, Rae Christen Jeffries LLP, External Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Regional Chair Bradley called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by Councillor Whalen
Seconded by Councillor Gibson

That Council Agenda CL 9-2021, **BE ADOPTED.**

Carried

3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

4. CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Huson
Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That Council **DO NOW MOVE** into closed session for the purposes of receiving information of a confidential nature respecting:

A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege & A Matter of Litigation or Potential Litigation under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Update respecting litigation concerning Former Senior Administration Officials Employment Contracts.

Carried

Council resolved into closed session at 4:09 p.m.

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

Council reconvened in open session at 4:50 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber: Bradley (Regional Chair), Insinna

Council Members Present via Video Conference: Bellows, Butters, Bylsma, Chiocchio, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa

Absent/Regrets: Campion, Villella

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources

Others Present via Video Conference: J. Ford, Legacy Executive Search Partners, K. Kumar, Partner, Legacy Executive Search Partners, E. McDermott, Niagara Region Integrity Commissioner

5.1 Confidential Verbal Update

Moved by Councillor Zalepa
Seconded by Councillor Heit

That the Confidential Verbal Update respecting A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor-Client Privilege & A Matter of Litigation or Potential Litigation under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 – Update respecting litigation concerning Former Senior Administration Officials Employment Contracts, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

6. CORRESPONDENCE

6.1 For Consideration

6.1.1 CL-C 30-2021

Deferred Motion - Integrity Commissioner Investigation of Leak of Confidential Information

Edward McDermott, Niagara Region's Integrity Commissioner, answered questions from Council respecting the deferred motion.

Moved by Councillor Steele
Seconded by Councillor Disero

That Correspondence Item CL-C 30-2021, being a memorandum from A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, dated April 29, 2021, respecting Deferred Motion - Integrity Commissioner Investigation of Leak of Confidential Information, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

Moved by Councillor Disero
Seconded by Councillor Bellows

1. That a Committee **BE CREATED** to review the Code of Conduct; and
2. That a copy of the Code of Conduct and an acknowledgment to adhere to its contents **BE PROVIDED** to Members of Council to sign on a semi-annual basis.

The following friendly **amendment** was accepted by the Regional Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion to add the following clause:

That a Task Force BE ESTABLISHED to make improvements regarding the risk of confidential information being released.

The Regional Chair accepted the following change to the motion from the mover and seconder so that clause 1 reads as follows:

1. That the Code of Conduct review undertaken by John Mascarini **BE PROVIDED** to the Corporate Services Committee for review.

The Regional Chair called the vote on the motion as amended, as follows:

1. That the Code of Conduct review undertaken by John Mascarini **BE PROVIDED** to the Corporate Services Committee for review;
2. That a Task Force **BE ESTABLISHED** to make improvements regarding the risk of confidential information being released; and
3. That a copy of the Code of Conduct and an acknowledgment to adhere to its contents **BE PROVIDED** to Members of Council to sign on a semi-annual basis.

Carried

Councillor Information Request(s)

Invite John Mascarini to attend the meeting at which Council will discuss the Code of Conduct. Councillor Easton.

6.1.2 CL-C 31-2021

Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment - Core Competencies,
Position Profile and Job Advertisement

Moved by Councillor Greenwood
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Correspondence Item CL-C 31-2021, being a memorandum from A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, dated April 29, 2021, respecting Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment - Core Competencies, Position Profile and Job Advertisement, **BE RECEIVED**; and

That Regional Council **APPROVE** the Chief Administrative Officer Core Competencies (CAORC-C 10-2021 Revised), Position Profile (CAORC-C 11-2021 Revised), and Job Advertisement (CAORC-C 12-2021), for use in the Chief Administrative Officer recruitment.

Carried

7. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

7.1 Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment Committee

Minutes CAORC 5-2021, Tuesday, April 20, 2021

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That Minutes CAORC 5-2021, being the Open Session minutes of the Chief Administrative Officer Recruitment Committee meeting held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, **BE ADOPTED**.

Carried

8. **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT(S)**

8.1 CAO 2-2021

Update on the Exploration of Shared Services by the Chief Administrative Officers Working Group

Moved by Councillor Edgar
Seconded by Councillor Witteveen

That Report CAO 2-2021, dated April 29, 2021, respecting Update on the Exploration of Shared Services by the Chief Administrative Officers Working Group, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** the mandate of the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Working Group to explore and collaborate on service areas of mutual interest with the objective of achieving administrative and/or operational efficiencies and cost savings; and that the Local Area Municipal Councils be requested to do the same;
2. That Regional Council **APPROVE** the Regional share of funding for project management and facilitation support to the CAO Working Group to develop, document, evaluate, and prioritize shared service opportunities (this amount represents 50% of the total cost to a maximum contribution of \$50,000 per Appendix 1 of Report CAO 2-2021); and,
3. That the Acting Chief Administrative Officer **PROVIDE** a progress report to Corporate Services Committee in Q3 2021 on the development of guiding principles, a proposed governance structure, partnership protocol, and a short list of shared service opportunities recommended by the CAO Working Group for detailed business case development.

Carried

9. CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Gibson
Seconded by Councillor Easton

That Council **DO NOW MOVE** into closed session for the purposes of receiving information of a confidential nature respecting:

A Matter respecting Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 – Confidential Motion respecting Acting Chief Administrative Officer Compensation Review.

Carried

Council resolved into closed session at 5:49 p.m.

10. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION

Council reconvened in open session at 6:53 p.m. with the following individuals in attendance:

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber: Bradley (Regional Chair), Insinna

Council Members Present via Video Conference: Bellows, Butters, Bylsma, Chiocchio, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Ip, Jordan, Junkin, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa

Absent/Regrets: Campion, Villella

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: M. Lewis, Client & Support Advisor, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk

Staff Present via Video Conference: D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, D. Gibbs, Director, Legal & Court Services, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources

10.1 Confidential Motion from Councillor Huson

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Disero

That the motion, being A Matter respecting Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 – Confidential Motion respecting Acting Chief Administrative Officer Compensation Review, **BE RECEIVED**; and

That staff **PROCEED** as directed in closed session.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (19): Butters, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Junkin, Nicholson, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Whalen.

No (9): Bellows, Bylsma, Chiocchio, Darte, Gale, Jordan, Redekop, Witteveen, Zalepa.

Carried

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Materials Sent Anonymously

Moved by Councillor Sendzik
Seconded by Councillor Ip

That no materials sent unsolicited with non-verifiable and anonymous sources **WILL BE DISCUSSED** by Regional Council until authentication of source is established within the guidelines of the Region's Whistleblower Policy.

Carried

12. BY-LAWS

12.1 Bill 2021-29

That Bill 2021-29 being a by-law to adopt, ratify and confirm the actions of Regional Council at its special meeting held on April 29, 2021, **BE NOW READ** and **DO PASS**.

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Subject: Budget Amendment - Reinstatement of Waste Management Free Container Exchange Program Budget

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, May 20, 2021

Recommendations

1. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Waste Management Operating Budget in the amount of \$111,346 **BE APPROVED** from the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve to fund the reinstatement of the damaged recycling or green bin exchange program and that there be no impact on Niagara Region's 2021 Waste Management Requisition to Local Area Municipalities (LAMs), 2021 tax levy and 2021 property tax rates.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to amend the 2021 Waste Management Operating Budget to reinstate budget for the damaged recycling or green bin exchange program utilizing the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve as a one-time funding source for the reinstatement.
- At the Regional Council meeting on April 22, 2021, Council approved a motion to reconsider the approved 2021 Waste Management Operating Budget in order to reinstate the budget for the damaged recycling or green bin exchange program and directed staff to prepare a budget amendment for consideration at the May 20, 2021 Council meeting.
- Use of reserves (and reserve funds) is limited to those approved by Council as part of the annual budget process. Any in-year use of reserves must comply with the Reserve and Reserve Funds Policy C-F-013 and Budget Control By-Law and are considered a budget amendment which requires 10 days' notice prior to council approval as per Public Notice Policy C-RC-004

Financial Considerations

Approval of the amendment included in this report will not impact Niagara Region's

2021 Waste Management Requisition to LAMs, 2021 tax levy or 2021 property tax rates. Residents will not see a change to the waste collection portion of their property tax bill (See Appendix I – Waste Management 2021 Operating Budget Amendment).

The 2021 Waste Management Operating Budget was approved by Budget Review Committee of the Whole on November 26, 2020 and ratified by Regional Council on December 17, 2020.

The 2021 uncommitted balance in the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve is approximately \$2,942,000. The Waste Management Stabilization Reserve is currently being utilized to mitigate waste management operating budget pressures as outlined in CSD 66-2020. The primary budget pressure for 2021 is the new collection contract, which began in October 2020. As use of the Waste Management Stabilization Reserve to fund ongoing initiatives is not a sustainable funding source, staff will present the program as a reinstatement into the base 2022 Waste Management Operating Budget. The cost of reinstating the damaged recycling and green bin exchange program is \$111,346, which is approximately 0.27% of the 2021 Waste Management Requisition. The projected Waste Management Stabilization Reserve balance from 2021 – 2023 with the approval of this budget amendment is noted in Table 1 per below.

Table 1 – Forecasted and Target Balance of Waste Management Stabilization Reserve
(in thousands)

Projected 2021 YE Balance	Projected 2022 YE Balance	Projected 2023 YE Balance	Target Reserve Balance
\$2,831	\$1,953	\$2,577	\$5,937 - \$8,905

All Budget Amendments require notice to be posted on the Regional website 10 days prior to being approved by Council per Public Notice Policy C-RC-004. The item being recommended was provided with proper notice of proposed amendments to the 2021 Waste Management Operating Budget.

The recommendations identified in this report support overall budget flexibility (noted as an area of focus in the S&P report) as well as maintain Council's approved 2021 Net Waste Management Requisition to LAMs.

Analysis

Since 2009, Niagara Region has exchanged broken recycling and green bin containers at no fee to residents. This program has several benefits to residents:

- Encourage participation in curbside diversion programs;
- Decrease the volume of waste to Regional landfills;
- Decrease greenhouse gases generated by the disposal of organic waste in landfills;
- Promote neater, more efficient collection at the curbside through the use of functional containers; and,
- Extend a sense of benefit to residents from the revenues recognized by the Region from the sale of the collected recyclables.

Niagara Region also provides recycling and green bin containers at no fee to homeowners and renters within 12 months of moving into their new home.

As part of the Region's Budget Planning Strategy to help mitigate budget pressures in 2021 and mitigate requisition increases on taxpayers, a number of items were proposed to ensure a reasonable budget increase was presented for 2021. One of these items was Niagara Region's recycling and green bin broken container free exchange program. The program was slated to cease on April 1, 2021.

In 2019, \$338,108 was spent to purchase recycling boxes and green bins. It is estimated that \$111,346, or 33%, was spent to exchange broken containers for residents

Alternatives Reviewed

Council directed staff to prepare the required budget amendment for this program using the Waste Management Stabilization reserve to fund the program for 2021. An increase to the net Waste Management Requisition is not practical as tax rate by-laws have been approved and are ready to be billed by the LAMs.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The free container exchange program supports Council's Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Government. Provision of free container exchanges strengthens the corporate customer service culture that puts Niagara residents first. The program also strengthens partnerships with LAMs.

Other Pertinent Reports

- CSD 66-2020 – 2021 Budget – Waste Management Services Operating Budget and Requisition

Prepared by:

Catherine Habermehl
Director, Waste Management
Waste Management Services

Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Public Works Department

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Dan Ane, Manager Program Financial Support

Appendices

Appendix I - Waste Management 2021 Operating Budget Amendment

Waste Management 2021 Operating Budget Amendment

Object of Expenditure	2021 Budget	Proposed Amendment	Proposed 2021 Amended Budget
Compensation	\$ 3,574,470	\$ -	\$ 3,574,470
Administrative	746,504	-	746,504
Operational & Supply	49,749,724	-	49,749,724
Occupancy & Infrastructure	1,620,477	-	1,620,477
Equipment, Vehicles, Technology	1,150,164	-	1,150,164
Partnership, Rebate, Exemption	196,178	-	196,178
Transfers To Funds	4,135,500	-	4,135,500
Intercompany Charges	115,321	-	115,321
Gross Expenditure	61,288,339	-	61,288,339
Taxation	(40,566,764)	-	(40,566,764)
By-Law Charges & Sales	(12,269,077)	111,346	(12,157,731)
Other Revenue	(6,466,388)	-	(6,466,388)
Transfers From Funds	(3,571,710)	(111,346)	(3,683,056)
Gross Revenue	(62,873,939)	-	(62,873,939)
Net Direct Expenditure before Indirect Allocation	(1,585,600)	-	(1,585,600)
Indirect Allocation	1,507,622	-	1,507,622
Capital Financing Allocation	77,977	-	77,977
Net Indirect Allocation	1,585,600	-	1,585,600
Net Expenditure after Indirect Allocation	\$ (0)	\$ -	\$ (0)

MEMORANDUM

CL-C 47-2021

Subject: Regional Councillor Appointment to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Date: May 20, 2021

To: Regional Council

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

At its meeting held on February 25, 2021, Regional Council approved the following recommendation of its Corporate Services Committee:

That Report CLK 1-2021, dated February 17, 2021, respecting Establishment of Diversity Related Advisory Committees, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Terms of Reference for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, attached as Appendix 1 to Report CLK 1-2021, as amended, **BE APPROVED**;
2. That one Regional Councillor **BE APPOINTED** to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee;
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to advertise for interested residents to serve on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee based on the criteria described in Report CLK 1-2021; and
4. That in consultation with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, staff **BE DIRECTED** to report back to Council on progress and any additional resources required to establish and launch an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee and a 2SLGBTQQA+ Advisory Committee by September 30, 2021.

Council will be considering the appointment of community members to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee as part of the Corporate Services Committee minutes, therefore, it is appropriate for Council to now consider the appointment of a Regional Councillor to the Committee in accordance with recommendation 2 above.

At the meeting being held on May 20, 2021, Councillors will be asked to indicate their interest to sit on the Committee. Should there be more than one Councillor interested, voting will be conducted and the Councillor with the majority of votes will be appointed.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

**COTW 1-2021
Thursday, May 6, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Regional Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Council Members Present in the Council Chamber:	Bradley (Regional Chair), Foster
Council Members Present via Video Conference:	Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Chiocchio, Darte, Diodati, Disero, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Gale, Gibson, Greenwood, Heit, Huson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Nicholson, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Steele, Ugulini, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen, Zalepa
Absent/Regrets:	Bellows, Junkin
Staff Present in the Council Chamber:	M. Elia, Technology Support Analyst, D. Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning & Development Services, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk
Staff Present via Video Conference:	E. Acs, Manager, Community Planning, D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, I. Banach, Acting Direction, Community & Long Range Planning, G. Bowie, Planner, T. Harrison, Treasurer/Commissioner, Corporate Services, D. Heyworth, Official Plan Policy Consultant, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, P. Lambert, Director, Infrastructure, Planning & Development Engineering, D. Morreale, Director, Development Approvals, S. Norman, Senior Planner, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, A. Tikky, Planner, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Others Present via Video Conference:	N. McDonald, President, Meridian Planning, Sal Spitale, Principle - Senior Ecologist, North-South Environmental

1. CALL TO ORDER

Regional Chair Bradley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

3.1 Niagara Official Plan Review

Doug Giles, Acting Director, Planning & Development Services, Isaiah Banach, Acting Director, Community & Long Range Planning, Erik Acs, Manager, Community Planning, Sean Norman, Senior Planner, Community Planning, and David Heyworth, Official Plan Coordinator, provided information respecting Niagara Official Plan Review. Topics of the presentation included:

- Background
- Comprehensive review and timeline
- Growth
 - Trends
 - Housing Trends and Affordability
 - Strategic Growth Areas
 - Implementation Tools
 - Outcomes
- Natural Environment System (NES)
 - Project Overview
 - Consultation Breakdown
 - Options Development and Breakdown
 - Next Steps
 - Recommended NES Option 3B
- Climate Change
 - Modelling
 - Policies
 - Greening Initiative
- Economic Competitiveness & Diversity
 - Aggregates Policy Direction
 - Land Needs Assessment
 - Draft Results Land Need
 - Settlement Area Expansions

Councillor Information Requests(s):

Provide information respecting the comparison of population growth projections for 2031 and 2051 broken down by local area municipality. Councillor Fertich.

Provide information respecting local independence and flexibility, and Regional jurisdiction with respect to Provincial Policy. Councillor Easton.

4. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

There were no items for consideration.

6. **CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

There were no consent items for information.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of other business.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Jim Bradley
Regional Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Regional Council Workshop: Niagara Official Plan Review

Thursday, May 6, 2021
Committee-of-the-Whole Meeting

Isaiah Banach

Acting Director
Community & Long Range Planning

Doug Giles

Acting Commissioner
Planning & Development Services

Sean Norman

Senior Planner
Community Planning

David Heyworth

Official Plan Coordinator
Planning & Development Services

The Official Plan has not been comprehensively updated in **nearly 50 years**. A new Niagara Official Plan is needed to improve:



OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SYSTEM

Improved mapping of the Region's natural heritage features and water resources



OUR RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Prioritize climate change throughout the plan to achieve sustainable and resilient communities.



OUR HOUSING MIX

Support a diverse range of dwelling types to addresses affordability and market demand.



OUR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Identified areas that are protected for long-term investment in employment uses.

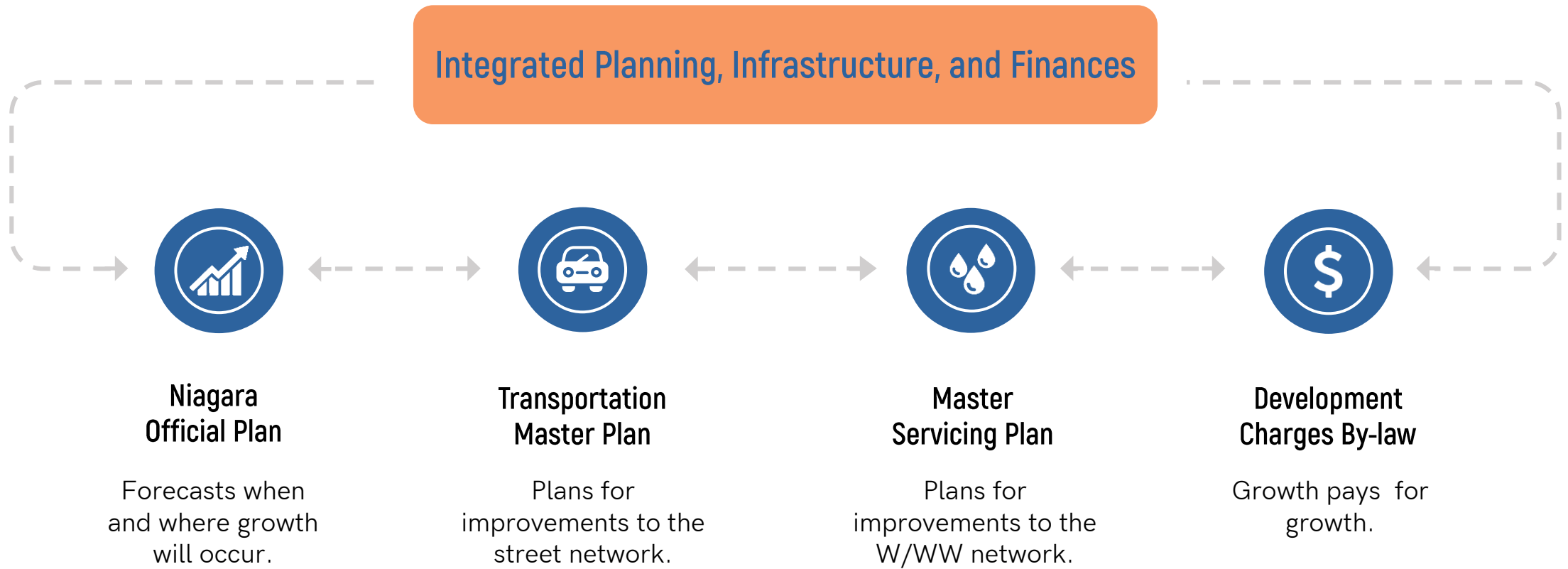


OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Clearer policies for local implementation and coordination with Regional planning.



comprehensive review

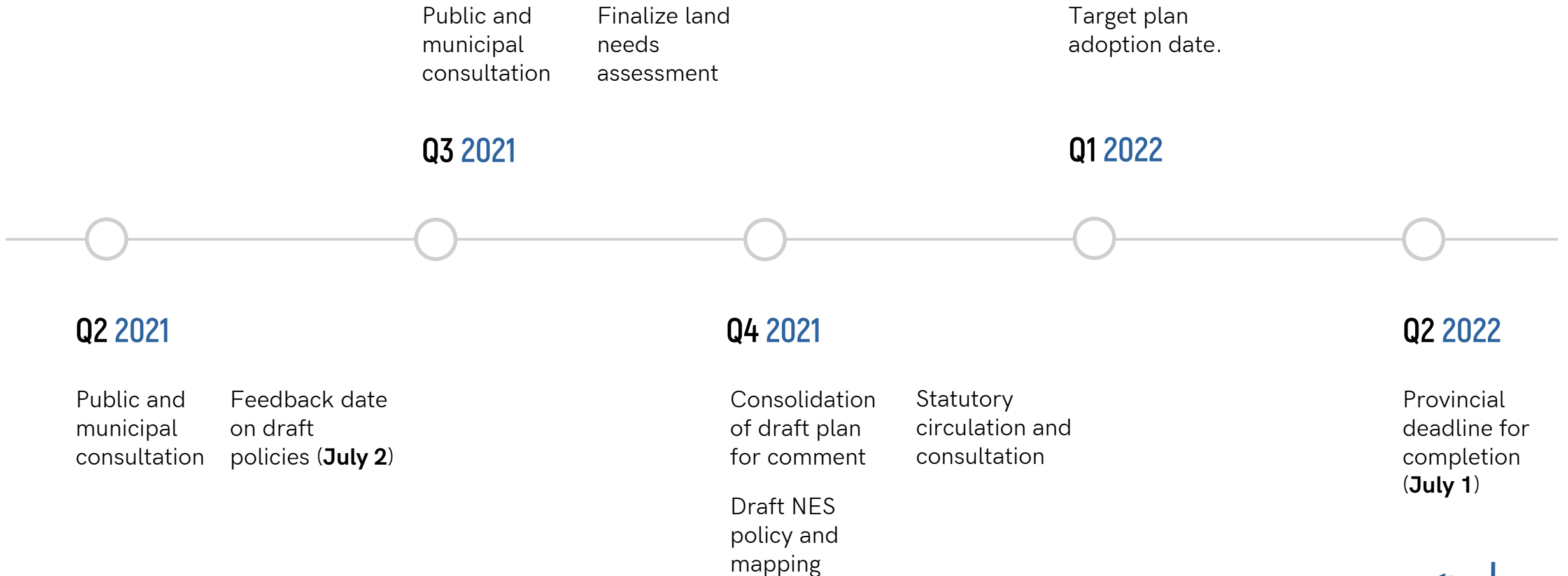


The Province is the final approval authority for the new Niagara Official Plan. The Provincial deadline for the Official Plan is **July 1, 2022**.

To move the Official Plan forward, a decision is needed on the Natural Environment System Option.



official plan timeline



natural environment systems options

01

OPTIONS MAPPING IS A VISUAL AID

Mapping of the options assists in decision-making.

02

DETAILED MAPPING WILL BE CREATED

Detailed mapping will be prepared after the option is selected in consultation with local municipalities and the NPCA.

03

WE WILL CONSULT ON THE NES

There will be significant opportunities for public and stakeholders comments.





The new Official Plan **will balance the interests of current and future residents.**

Challenges such as housing affordability, the natural environment, climate change, economic development may not have consensus from all parties.

There are many ways to address these challenges. As long as Council's decision conforms with Provincial Policy, we can have a **made in Niagara solution.**



The Region will **proactively plan for growth.**

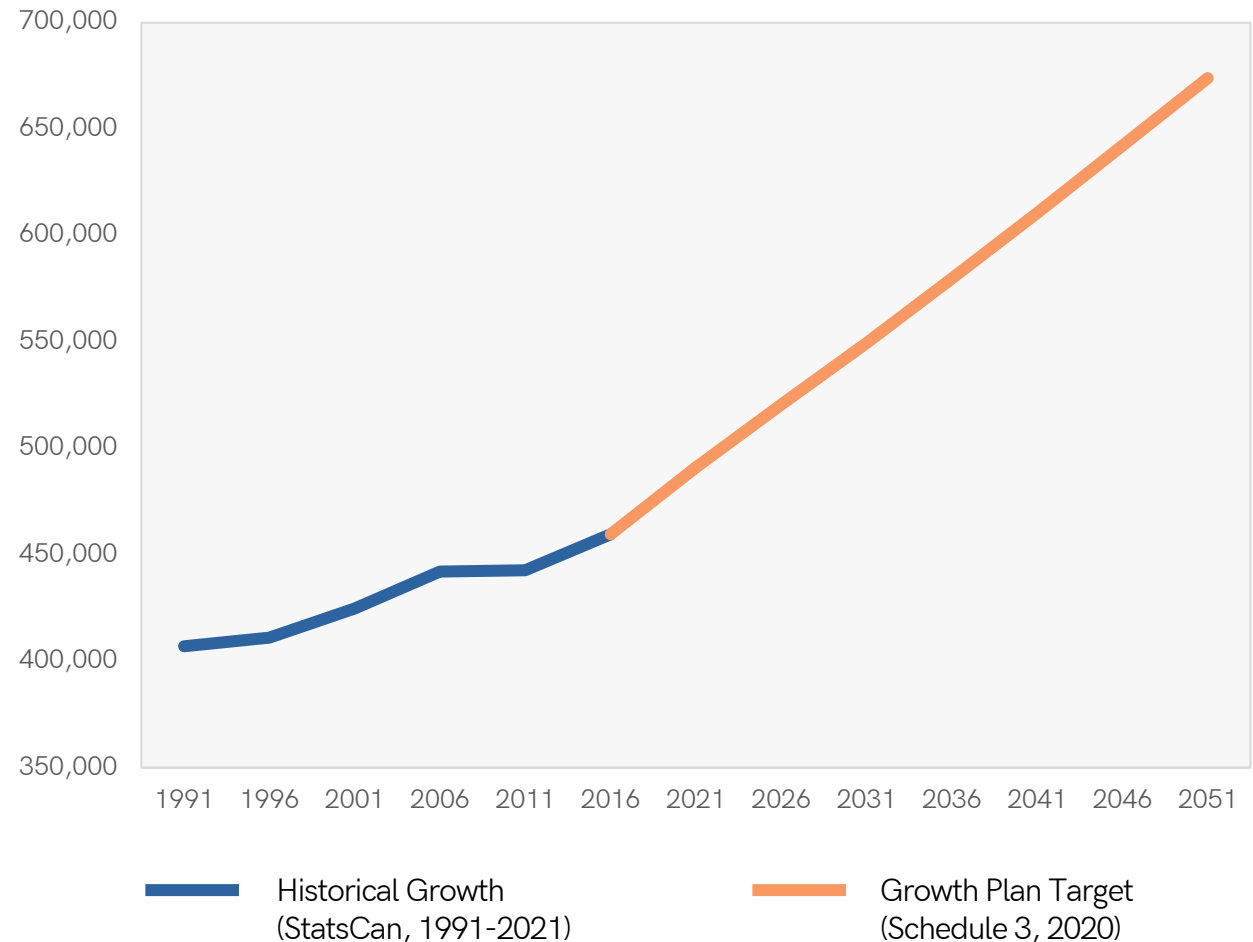
Growth is coming. By strategically directing growth we can create affordable, sustainable, and vibrant places that offer a range of housing options and amenities that will allow our residents to age-in-place.

growth trends

The Growth Plan expects that at least **674,000** people will live in the Niagara Region in the next 30 years.

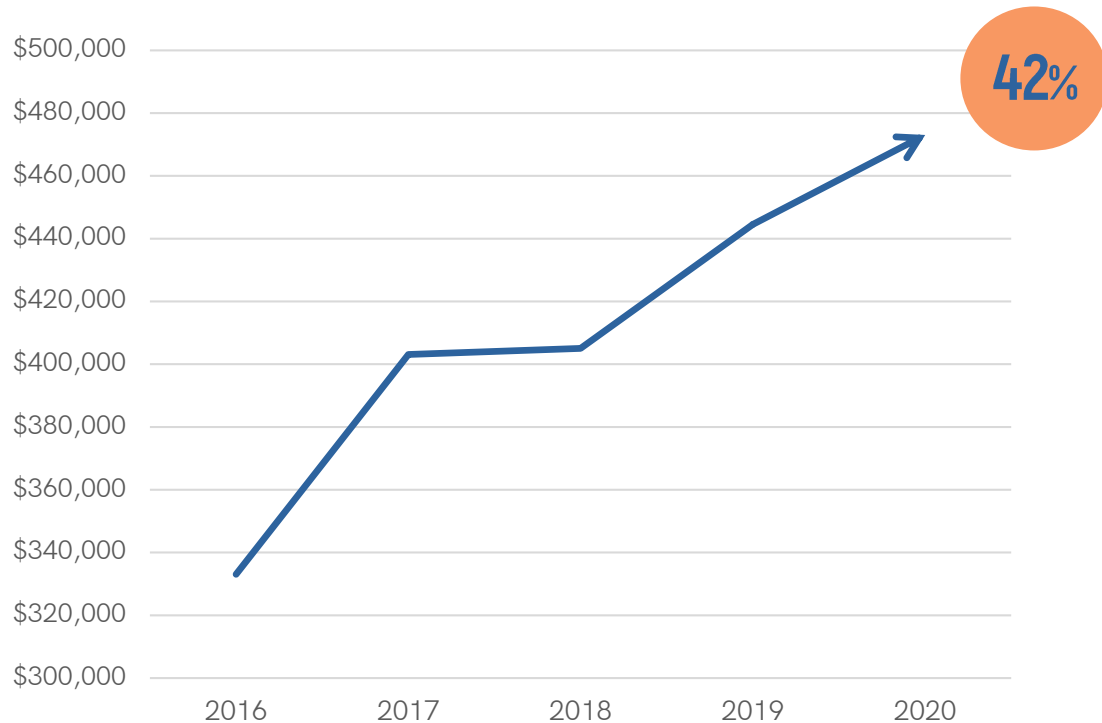
This represents an over **37%** increase between 2021 and 2051, or approximately **182,000** additional people.

Historic and Projected Population Growth in Niagara
from 1991 to 2051



housing trends

Average Market Prices in Niagara
from 2016 to 2020, CANCEA



Increased housing prices places further pressure on rates of **core housing need**. Core housing need refers to households that either:

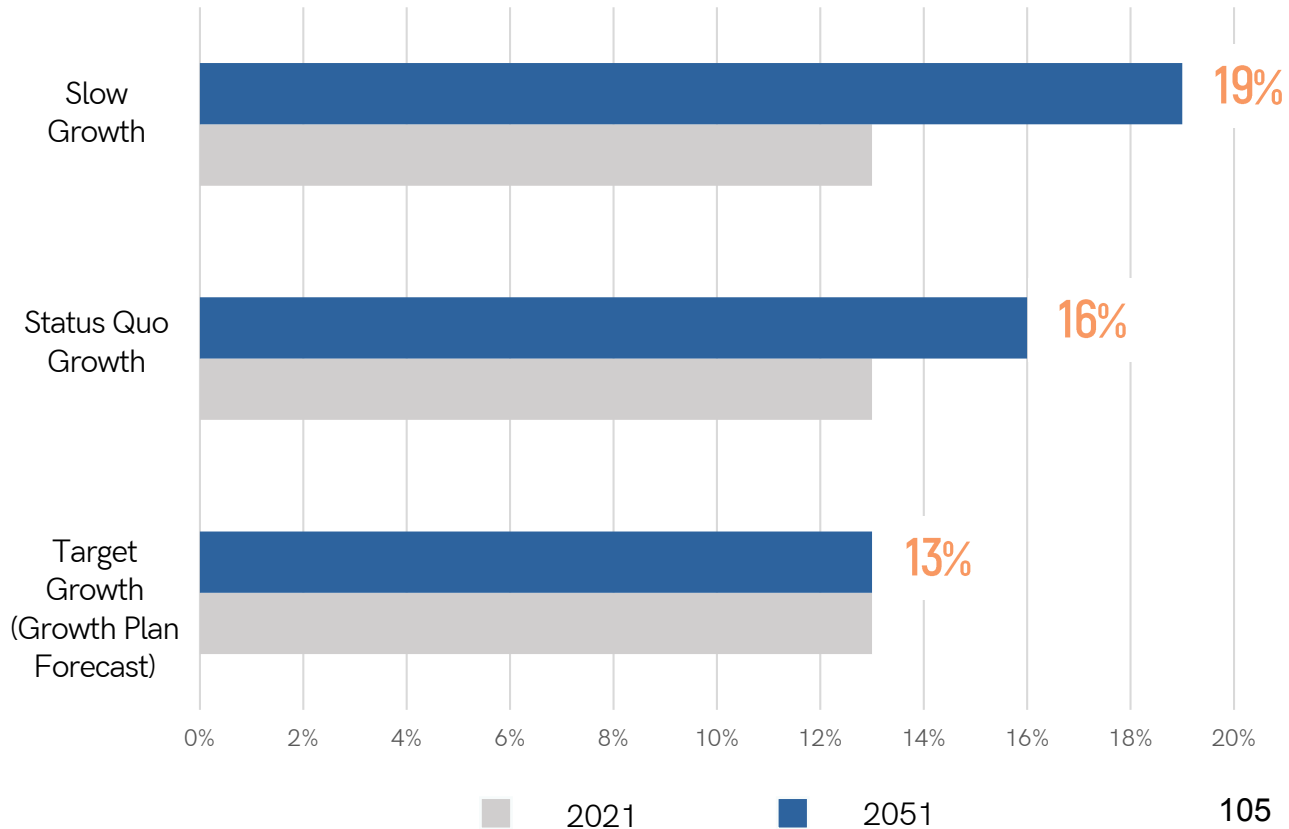
- 1 are in need of major repair
- 2 do not have enough bedrooms to house residents
- 3 costs more than 30% of annual household income

In Niagara, core housing need is primarily driven by affordability. **As of 2016, the overall rate of core housing need in Niagara is 13%.**



housing affordability

Rates of Core Housing Need Under
Different Growth Scenarios, CANCEA



We need to build more housing or core housing need will get worse.

Achieving the Growth Plan's minimum forecasts will help to maintain the Region's rates of core housing need.



housing affordability



HOUSING DIVERSITY

Higher-density housing forms will provide more affordable options and age-in-place opportunities.



STRATEGIC GROWTH

Directing growth strategically will encourage intensification and more affordable housing options.



HOUSING COORDINATION

Targets and objectives can be implemented through the Niagara Official Plan and local intensification and housing strategies.

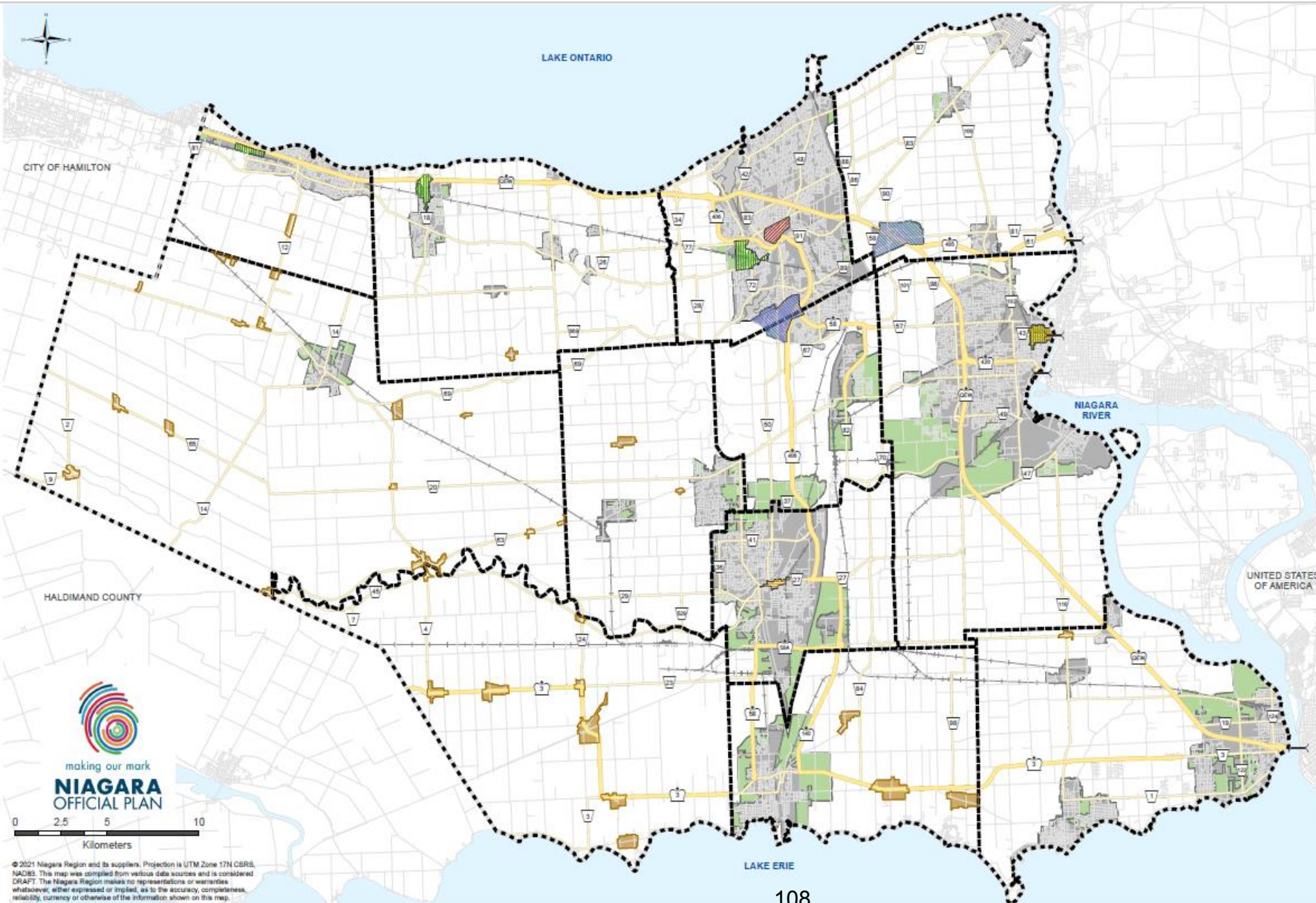




creating complete communities.

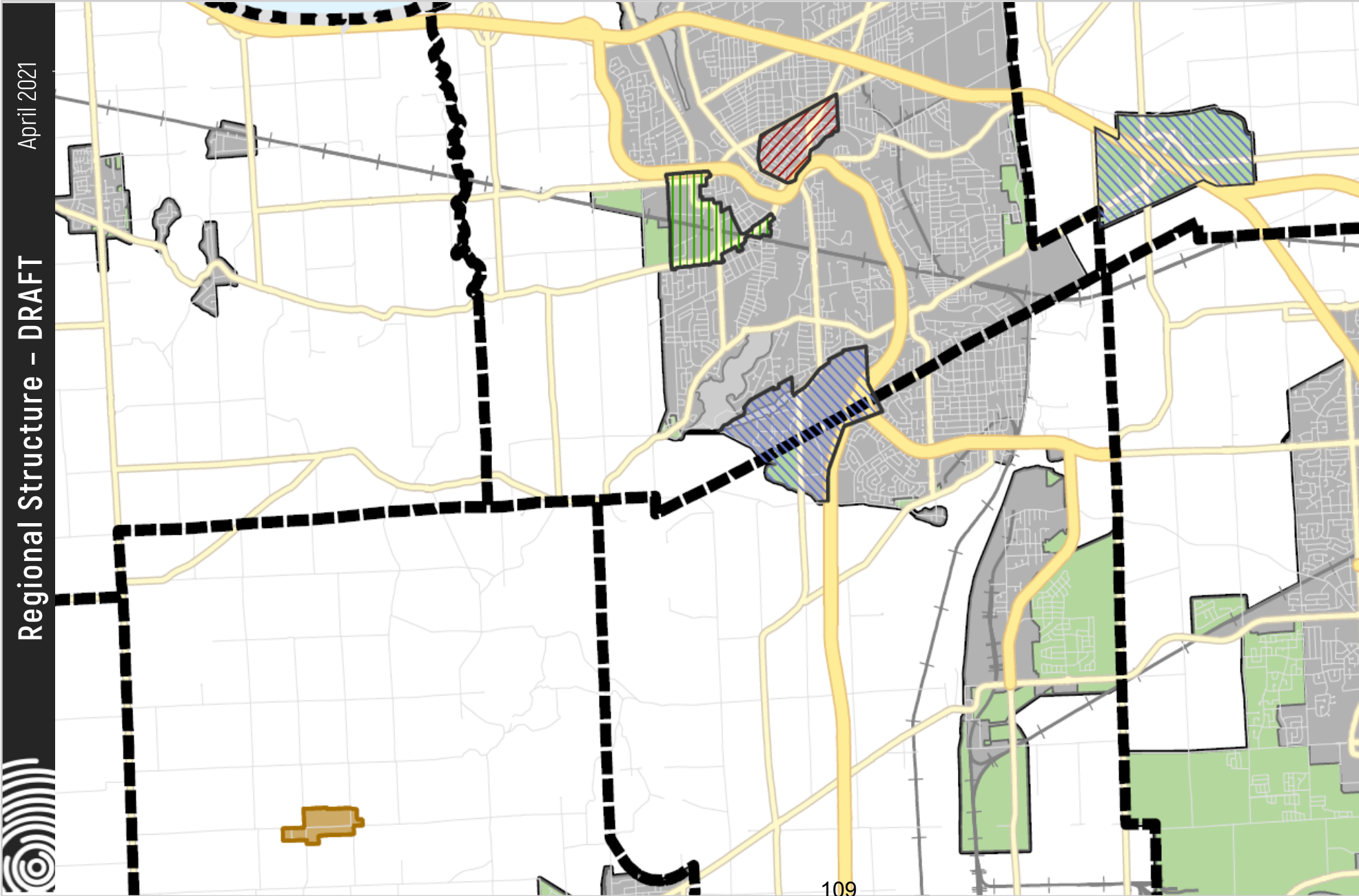
Proactive planning can allow for the creation of complete communities, which provide affordable, sustainable, and vibrant places to live, work, shop and access services in close proximity to one another.





LEGEND

- Built-Up Area
 - Designated Greenfield Area
 - Rural Settlements
 - Rural Area
- Strategic Growth Areas
- Regional Growth Centre
 - District Plan Area
 - Major Transit Station Area
 - Urban Growth Centre



109

LEGEND

- Built-Up Area
- Designated Greenfield Area
- Rural Settlements
- Rural Area

Strategic Growth Areas

- Regional Growth Centre
- District Plan Area
- Major Transit Station Area
- Urban Growth Centre





The majority of the Region's forecasted growth will be directed to the Urban Area, **with 56% directed to existing Built-Up Areas.**

This exceeds the current target of 40%. It also exceed the minimum of 50% required by the Growth Plan.

More intensification means less land is needed in the Designated Greenfield Area and for settlement area boundary expansions.



strategic growth areas

There are four kinds of Strategic Growth Areas (SGA) identified. Combined, these areas are anticipated to accommodate **approximately 30% of the Region's growth**.

MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS

minimum density target
125 people and jobs/ha



REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRES

minimum density target
125 people and jobs/ha



DISTRICT PLAN AREAS

minimum density target
100 people and jobs/ha



URBAN GROWTH CENTRE

minimum density target
150 people and jobs/ha



implementation tools



District and Secondary Plans

Neighbourhood level plans that envision the types of land uses to be developed within a specified area, and the improvements needed to realize that vision.



Urban Design

Policies and/or guidelines that outline the scale, materials, and standards used for a community's built form, streetscape, and public realm.



Intensification Strategies

Policies that identify priority areas for development within a municipality in line with the Regional Structure and the corresponding intensification rate.



Monitoring and Indicators

Metrics that will measure the success of the Official Plan's intensification rates, density targets, and other objectives.



growth outcomes



Affordable housing opportunities.



Climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Efficient use of infrastructure.



Investments in public amenities.



Protection of natural and rural systems.



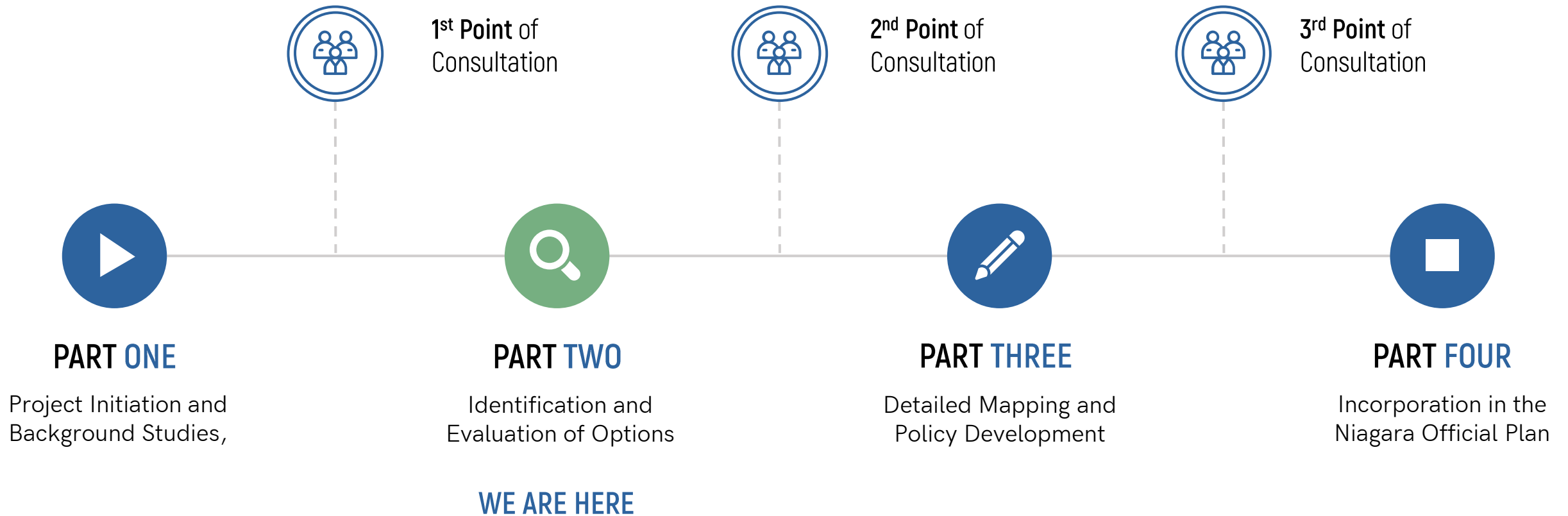
Support for economic development.



The Region will **maintain & enhance ecological health and biodiversity.**

Niagara is the most biodiverse region in Ontario. It is imperative that we protect our natural environment system for the overall health of our ecosystem, and to improve and maintain a high quality of life for our communities.

project overview



NES consultation breakdown



individual points of
engagement

8 public
information
centres

7 stakeholder
meetings
held

6 reports to
regional
council

plus several meetings and presentations to:

Local Councils and Local Staff

Indigenous Groups

Region's Planning Advisory
Committee (PAC)

Agricultural Policy and Action
Committee (APAC)

Niagara Parks Commission

Provincial Ministries

Niagara Escarpment Commission

NPCA Board, Staff and PAC



options development



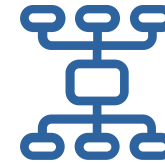
PROVINCIAL REQUIREMENTS

All options conform to Provincial requirements and could be implemented.



IMPROVE EXISTING SYSTEM

All options represent an increase as compared to the existing system in Niagara.



RANGE OF CONSIDERATIONS

Options reflect various factors, including interaction with the agricultural system.



FEEDBACK CONSIDERED

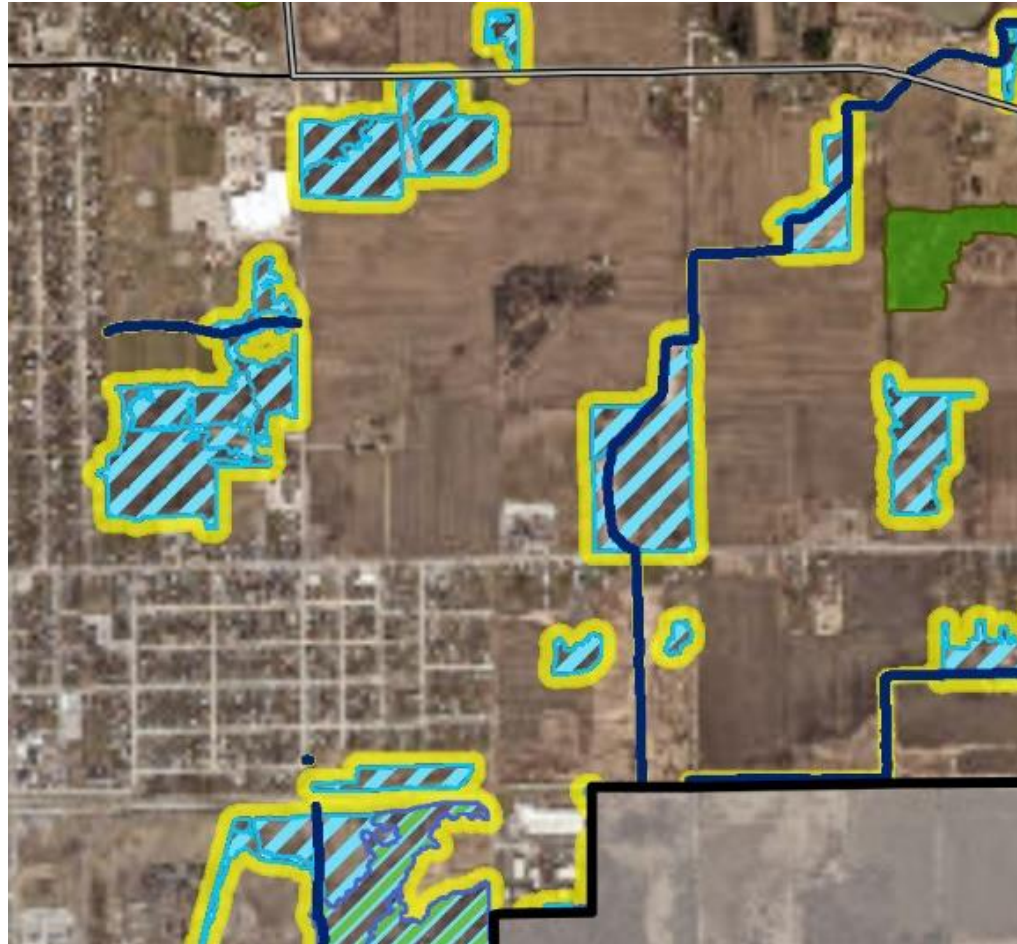
Options have been refined based on public and stakeholder feedback.



options breakdown

LEGEND

- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Other Wetlands
- Buffers
- Permanent and Intermittent Streams
- Other Woodlands
- Small Linkages
- Municipal Boundary



Option 1

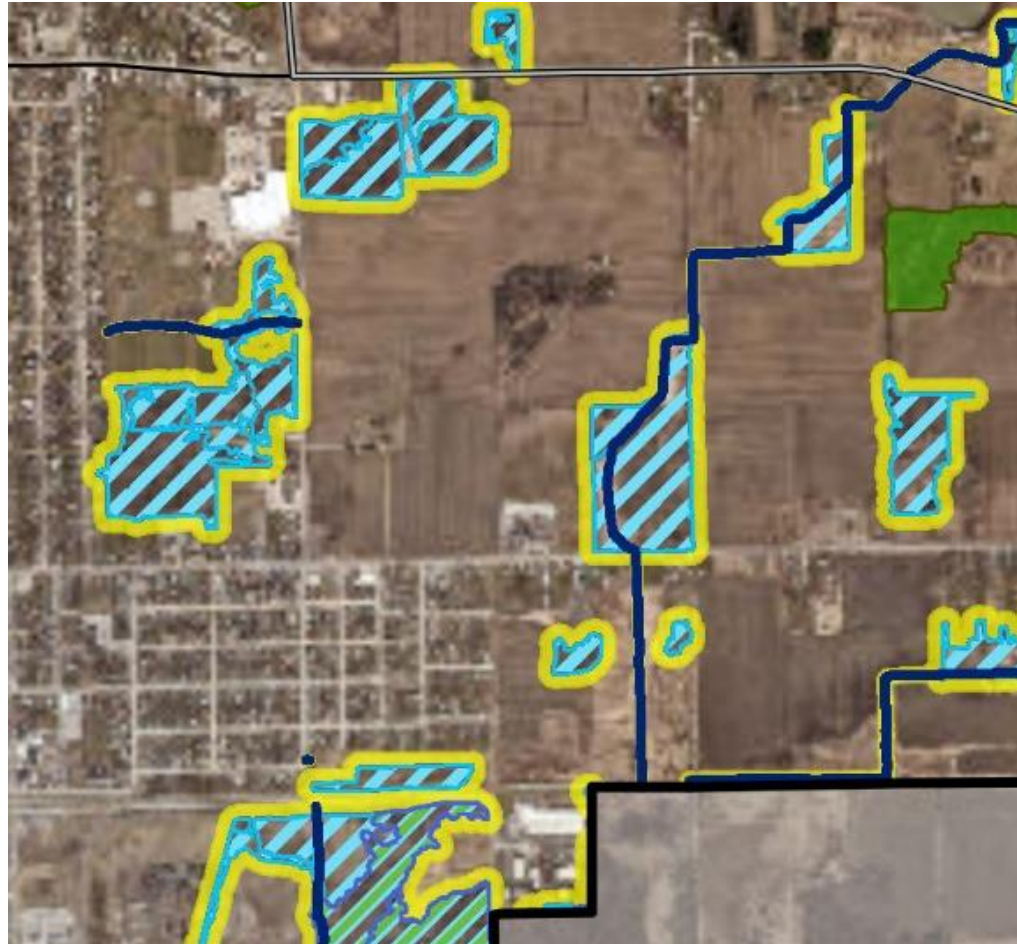
- ✓ Implements the required Provincial standards, including mapping of key features.
- ✓ Relies on the provincial NHS to fulfil the requirements for a 'system-based' approach.
- ✓ The entire system would be an overlay in the Niagara Official Plan schedules.



options breakdown

LEGEND

- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Other Wetlands
- Buffers
- Permanent and Intermittent Streams
- Other Woodlands
- Small Linkages
- Municipal Boundary



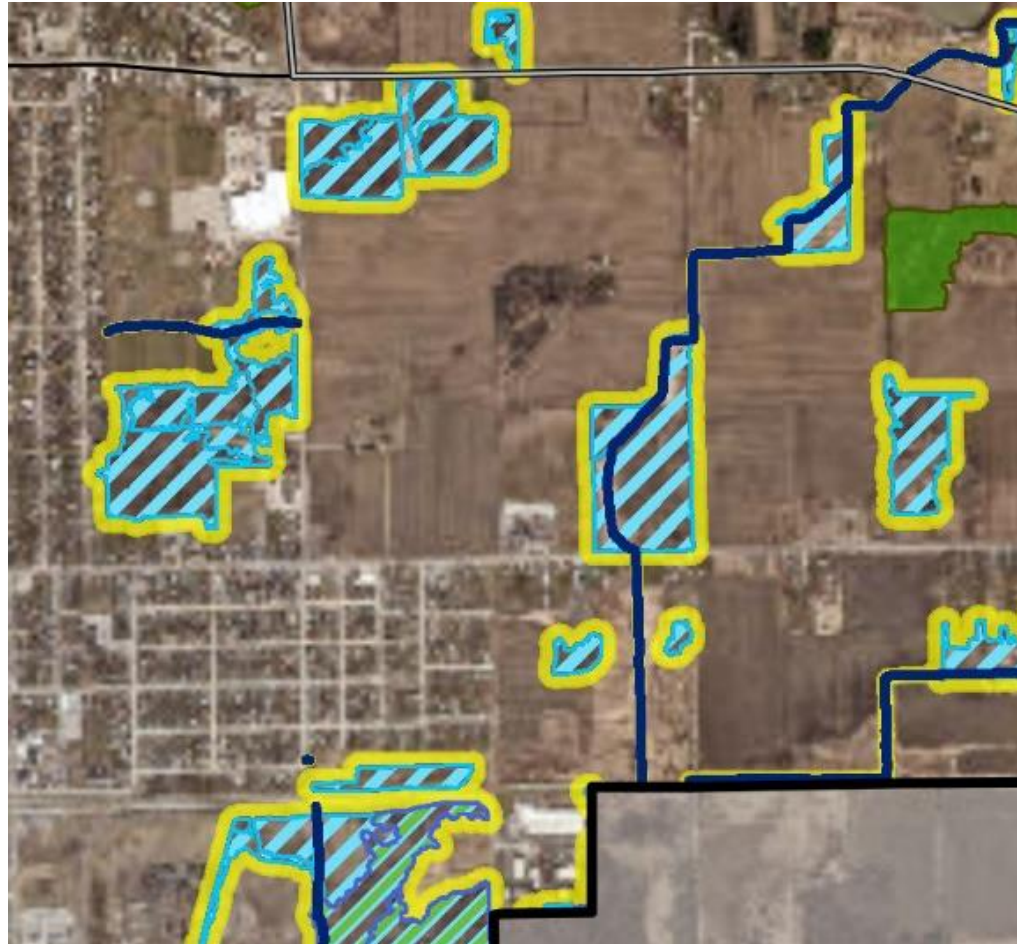
Option 2

- ✓ Same as **Option 1** but key features would be designated as a mutually exclusive land use in the Niagara Official Plan schedules.

options breakdown

LEGEND

- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Other Wetlands
- Buffers
- Permanent and Intermittent Streams
- Other Woodlands
- Small Linkages
- Municipal Boundary



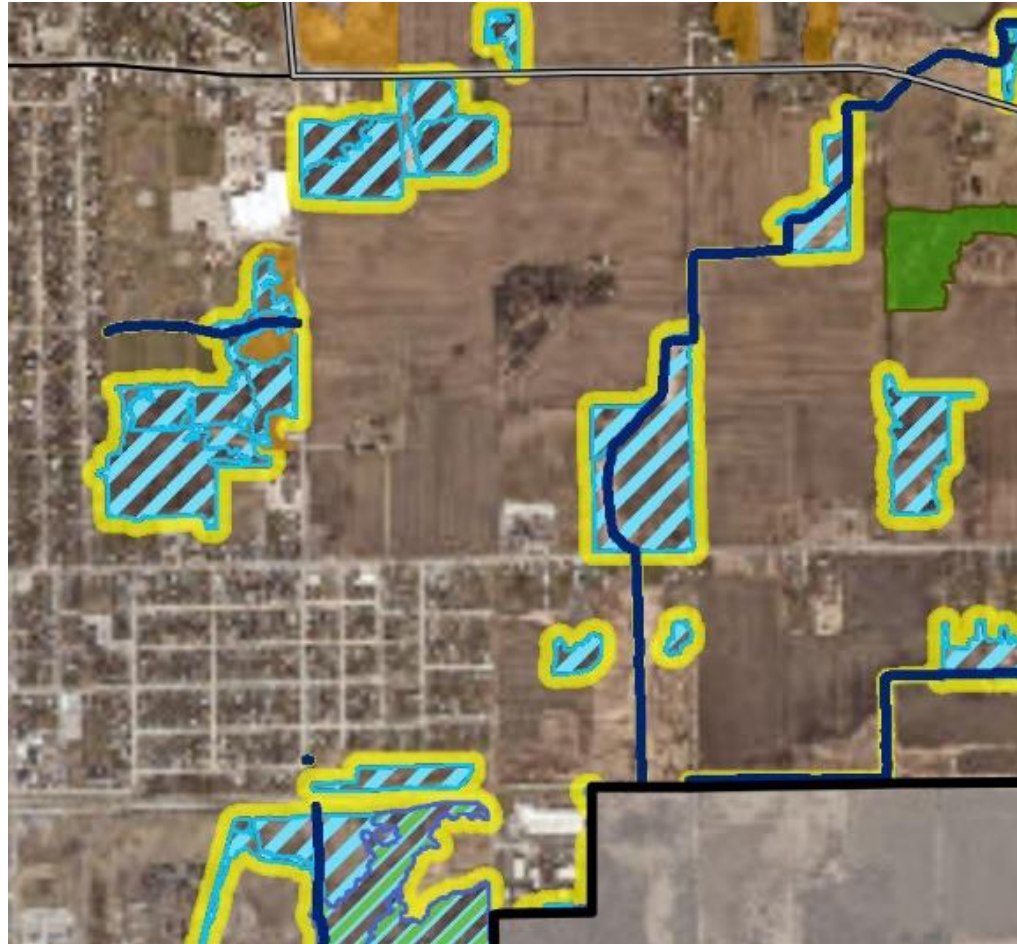
Option 3A

- ✓ Same as **Options 1 and 2** in Urban Areas.
- ✓ Additional features and areas added in rural areas only.

options breakdown

LEGEND

- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Other Wetlands
- Buffers
- Permanent and Intermittent Streams
- Other Woodlands
- Small Linkages
- Municipal Boundary



Option 3B

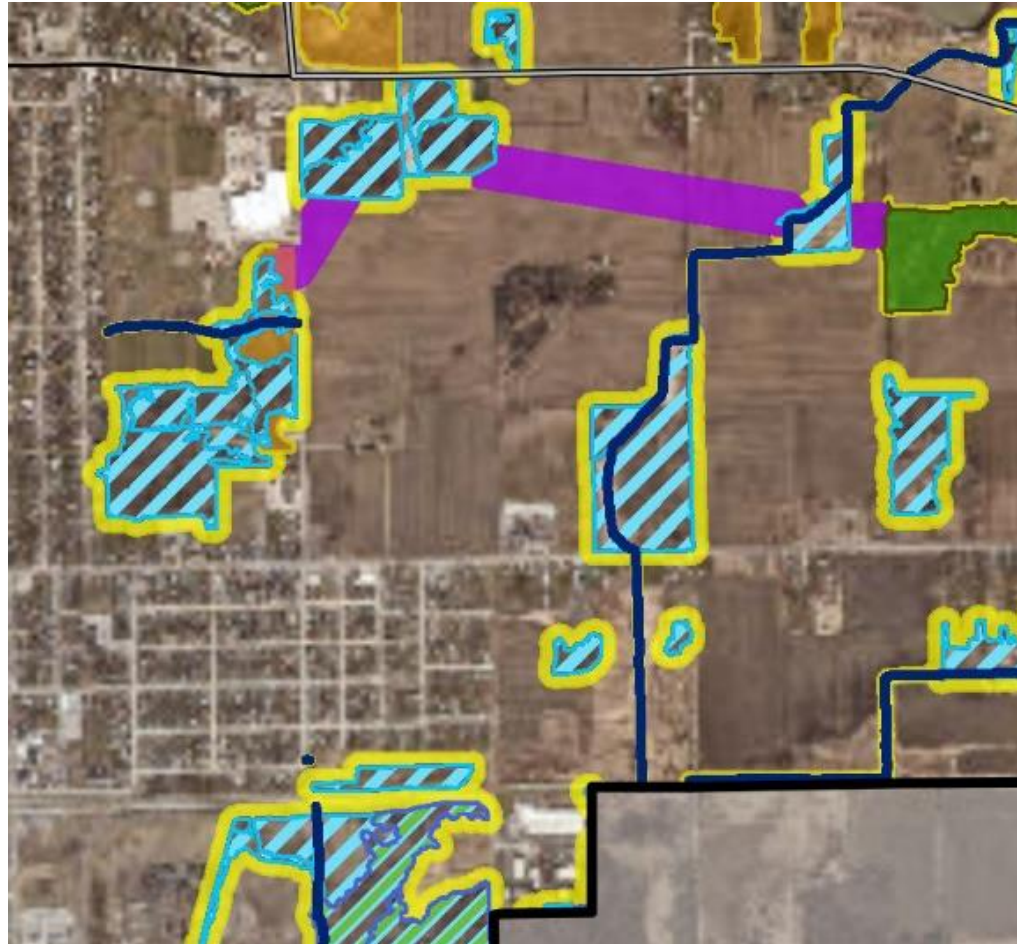
- ✓ Builds on **Options 3A**.
- ✓ Introduces Other Woodlands into Urban Areas.
- ✓ Additional optional features in rural areas.



options breakdown

LEGEND

- Significant Woodlands
- Provincially Significant Wetlands
- Other Wetlands
- Buffers
- Permanent and Intermittent Streams
- Other Woodlands
- Small Linkages
- Municipal Boundary



Option 3C

- ✓ Builds on **Option 3B**.
- ✓ Introduces small linkages in Urban Areas.
- ✓ Introduces buffers on non-regulated features in Urban Areas.
- ✓ Introduces supporting features and areas (including enhancement areas) in Urban Areas.



REGIONAL OPTIONS COMPARISON – KEY NATURAL HERITAGE AND HYDROLOGIC FEATURES

	Options 1, 2, and 3A		Option 3B		Option 3C	
Feature	Hectares	% of Urban Area	Hectares	% of Urban Area	Hectares	% of Urban Area
Significant Woodlands	1592.6	4.6%	1592.6	4.6%	1592.6	4.6%
Significant Wetland	1486.2	4.3%	1486.2	4.3%	1486.2	4.3%
Life Science ANSI	28.4	0.1%	28.4	0.1%	28.4	0.1%
Earth Science ANSI	45.7	0.1%	45.7	0.1%	45.7	0.1%
Other Wetlands	1309.1	3.8%	1309.1	3.8%	1309.1	3.8%
Permanent and Intermittent Streams (Lines)	30.25	N/A	30.25	N/A	30.25	N/A
Permanent and Intermittent Streams (Polygons)	773.0	2.2%	773.0	2.2%	773.0	2.2%
Other Woodlands	N/A	N/A	548.2	1.6%	548.2	1.6%
Linkages	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	34.2	0.1%
Buffers	2192.2	6.3%	2101.3	6.1%	2587.0	7.5%
Total	7250.7	21.0%	7677.7	22.2%	8194.7	23.7%

Mapping was prepared for the purpose of comparing options. **This is not the final mapping.**

next steps

1

Decision on the Natural Environment System Option.

2

Work with local municipalities to map selected option.

3

Hold public and stakeholder consultation

4

Finalize detailed policies and mapping.





coordination with growth management.

The sooner the Natural Environment System is established, the sooner natural features and areas can be better managed and protected. That will help determine where growth can be accommodated outside of those areas.



recommended NES Option 3B

1

Exceeds the
required provincial
standards.

2

Allows local
municipalities to
plan based on
local context.

3

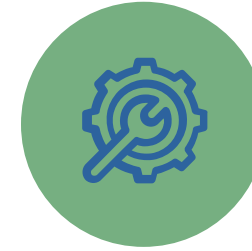
Balances feedback
received through
engagement.





There will be changes to environmental planning in the Region based on Provincial policy, including:

- ✓ The need for a systems based approach to natural environment planning.
- ✓ The need for a comprehensive water resource system.
- ✓ The identification of the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System.



Regardless of the options selected the following improvements should also be anticipated:

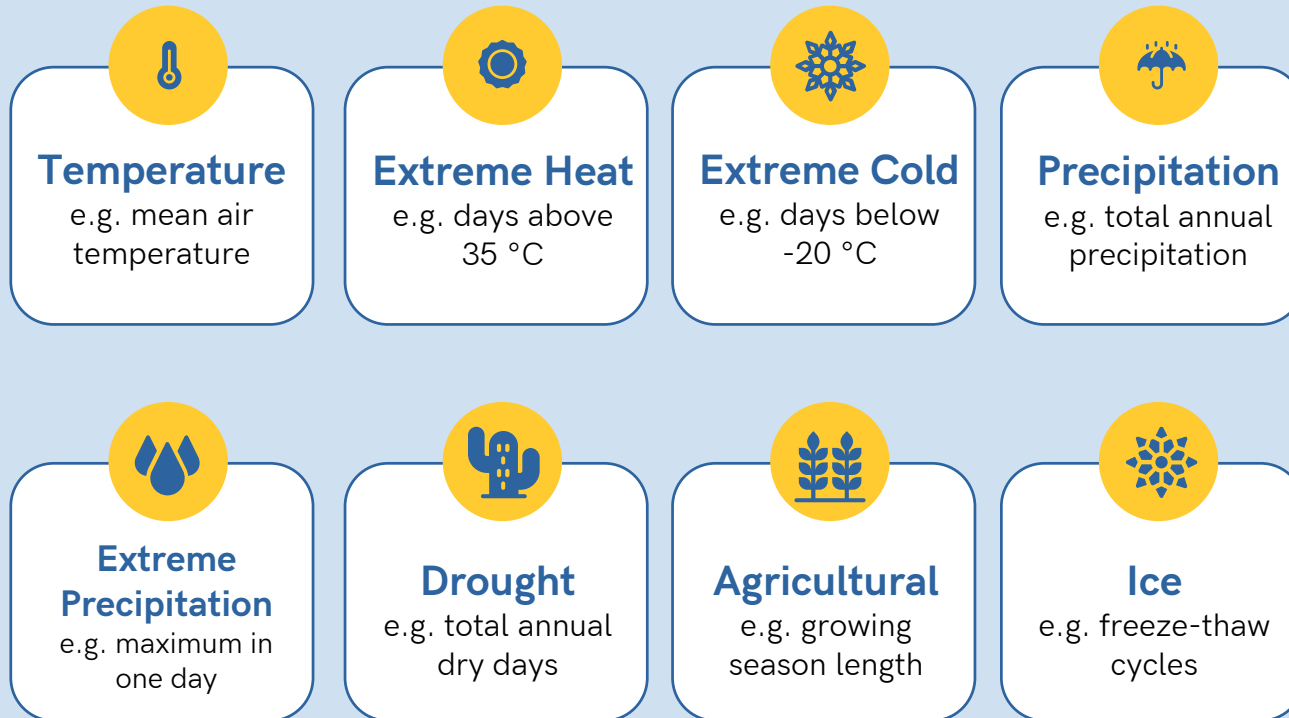
- ✓ Significantly improved mapping of the natural environment system.
- ✓ Modernized definitions, criteria, and methodology for the identification of environmental features
- ✓ Better alignment with the regulations and land use policies of the NPCA.
- ✓ Improved and more understandable policy.



The Region will **create resiliency for our changing climate.**

Climate change will result in increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather events. We need to consider how we can manage and mitigate their impacts in order to secure long-term health and well-being for our communities, and to protect investments in the region's infrastructure and built form.

climate change modelling



Q2 to Q3

1

Milestone: Produce climate analyses.

2

Milestone: Produce guidance document.

Q3 to Q4

3

Milestone: Knowledge transfer session.

Q4

4

Final: Prepare final report and climate data.



climate change policies

The policies of the Official Plan and associated strategies will identify ways in which we adapt to and mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.

- ✔ Integrating low impact development and green infrastructure into new development.
- ✔ Providing opportunities for the use of public transit and active transportation.
- ✔ Enhancing natural features that help to store greenhouse gas emissions.
- ✔ Building flood defences and planning for higher temperatures.



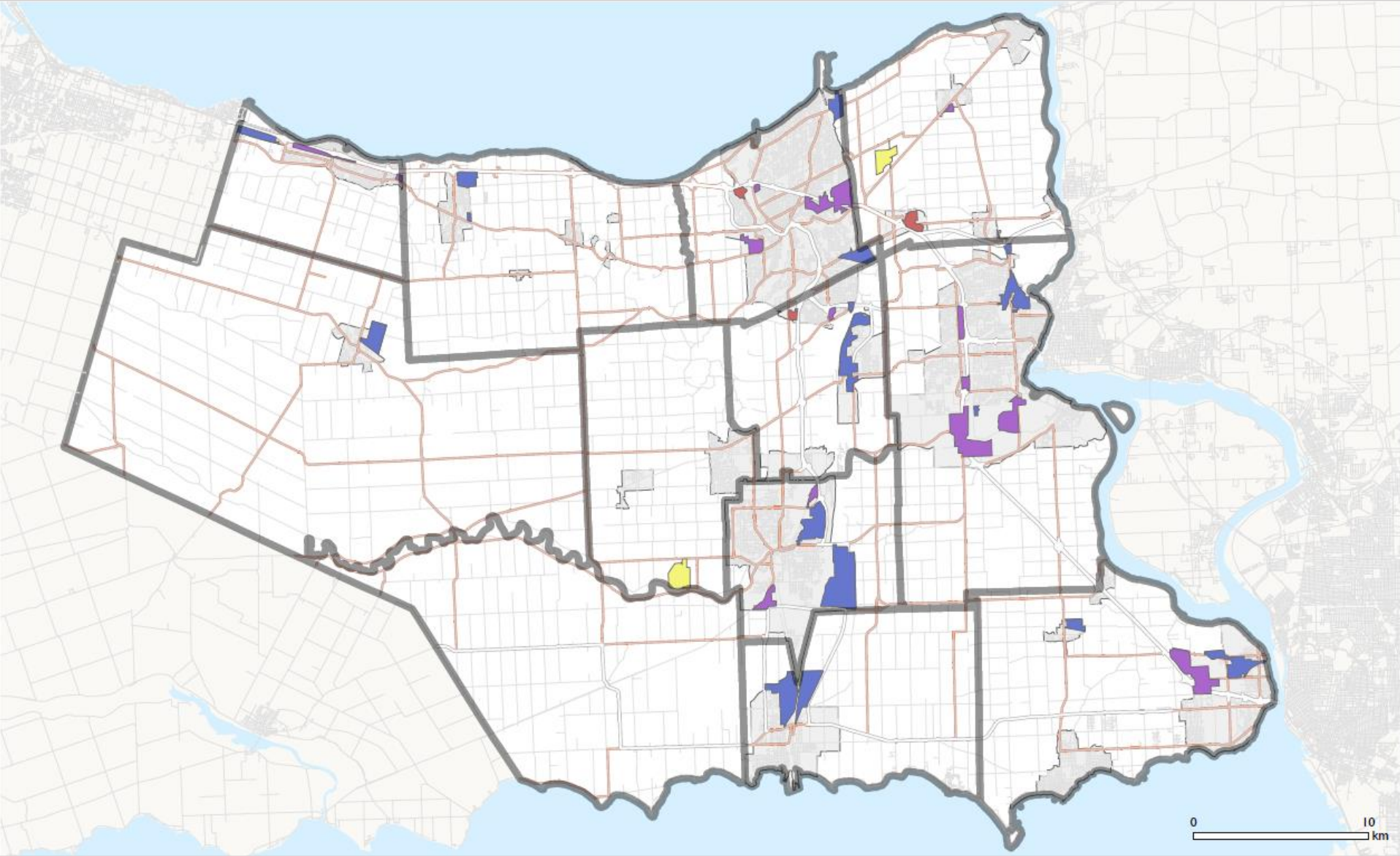
greening initiative

- Interest expressed by members of the public and Council.
- Initiative will extend beyond the timeline for the Niagara Official Plan.
- Researching program options to increase tree coverage across Niagara.
- Working with NPCA to identify publically owned restoration sites to prioritize.
- Working group formed to assist with research and development of options.



The Region will **support economic competitiveness & diversity.**

Economic development is a key driver of regional prosperity. We must consider the needs of key economic sectors in the Region, including agriculture and manufacturing, and how land use tools can be used to attract and retain these industries.



LEGEND

- Core Employment Areas
- Dynamic Employment Areas
- Knowledge & Innovation Employment Areas
- Airport Lands

aggregates policy direction

MARKET ACCESS

Aggregates shall be made available as close to markets as possible



DEMONSTRATED NEED

No requirement to demonstrate 'need' when considering an mineral aggregate operation.



ADVERSE IMPACTS

Extraction must minimize social, economic, and environmental impacts



LAND USE PROTECTION

Need to protect existing operations from incompatible land uses



DEPOSIT PROTECTION

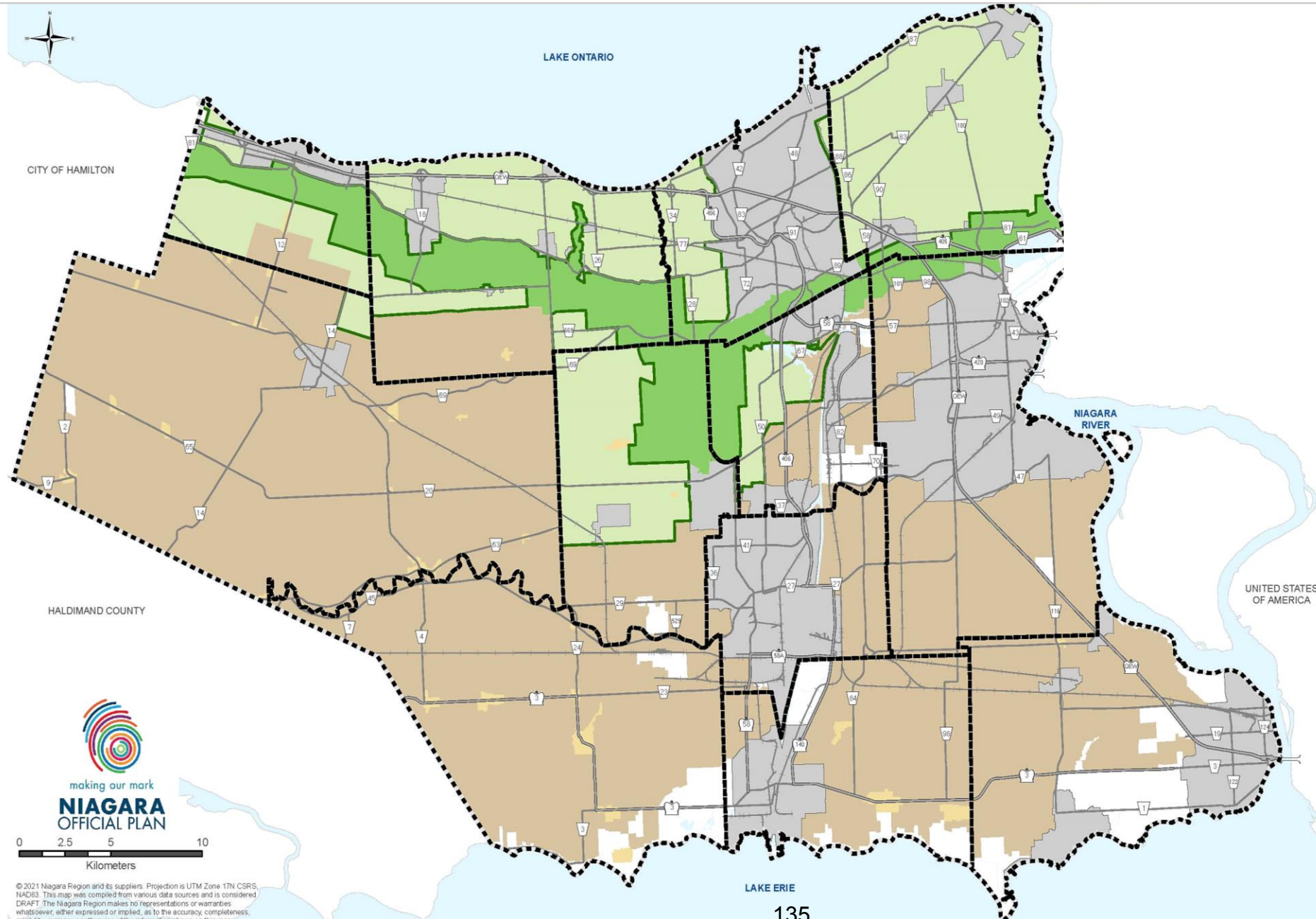
Need to protect known deposits of mineral aggregates for long-term use



REHABILITATION PLANNING

Importance of rehabilitation planning, including progressive and comprehensive rehabilitation





LEGEND

- Greenbelt Plan
- NEP Area Agricultural Land Base
- Specialty Crop Area
- Prime Agricultural Area
- Rural Area
- Urban Area
- Rural Settlement



making our mark
NIAGARA
OFFICIAL PLAN

0 2.5 5 10
Kilometers

© 2021 Niagara Region and its suppliers. Projection is UTM Zone 17N CSRS, NAD83. This map was compiled from various data sources and is considered DRAFT. The Niagara Region makes no representations or warranties whatsoever, either expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness, availability, or suitability of the information on this map for any purpose.

LAKE ERIE



land needs assessment



We must follow a Land Needs Methodology released by the Province, including focus on market demand.



The Land Needs Assessment is informed by data from specific background studies.



It determines how much land is needed to house and employ our future population.

The outputs of the Land Needs Assessment are based on the recommendations of various strategies.

- ✓ Population Forecasts
- ✓ Housing Forecasts
- ✓ Employment Forecasts
- ✓ Intensification Rates
- ✓ Density Targets
- ✓ Employment Area Boundaries
- ✓ Employment Area Supply
- ✓ Non-Development Natural Heritage Areas
- ✓ Vacant Employment Area (ha)
- ✓ Vacant Community Area (ha)



draft results land need

An addition of **460 hectares** of Community Area and a surplus of **20 hectares** of Employment Land.

	Existing Area (ha)	Existing % of Total*	Potential Addition (ha)	Change in Total Area (%)
Settlement Area	35,962	19%	+460	1%
Growth Plan Prime Agricultural Area	95,481	52%	+3,300	4%
Greenbelt Protected Countryside	43,542	24%	+1,393 (set)	3%

Also an addition of 38,000+ ha of Provincial Natural Heritage System

*other designations represent approximately 5% of total



settlement area expansions

- Draft processes and criteria are included.
- The criteria considers the NES in determining where expansions can occur.
- Expansions are not permitted in the Greenbelt Plan area.
- Draft results suggest potential needs in Niagara Falls, West Lincoln, and Fort Erie.
- Recommendations on the Land Needs and Settlement Area Boundary Review will be made in **Summer and Fall 2021**.





The Official Plan is outdated.

Updates are needed to secure future prosperity and address modern challenges.



Increase housing supply.

The Region has a significant affordability problem. More housing is needed, particularly higher-density housing.



A balanced approach.

The Official Plan balances feedback received with best practices and Provincial policy.



A decision on the NES is needed.

Staff require direction on the NES to proceed with detailed policy & mapping development.



Everything is still draft.

Draft policies on various parts of the Official Plan are available for review and comment.



Consultation is a key component.

To date, staff have undertaken significant consultation. More consultation is planned for Summer and Fall 2021.



Minute Item No. 5.1
AC-C 3-2021
2020 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements

That Report AC-C 3-2021, dated May 10, 2021, respecting 2020 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the audited consolidated financial statements of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Niagara Region"), including the sinking fund financial statements and the trust fund financial statements, for the year ended December 31, 2020, as presented in Appendix 1 of Report AC-C 3-2021, **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the audit findings report pertaining to the audited consolidated financial statements of the Niagara Region for the year ended December 31, 2020, as presented in Appendix 2 to Report AC-C 3-2021, **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditors to finalize the statements as presented.

Minute Item No. 5.2
AC-C 4-2021
Appointment of Auditors

That Report AC-C 4-2021, dated May 10, 2021, respecting Appointment of Auditors, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Deloitte **BE APPOINTED** as Niagara Region's external auditor for an additional two-year term starting the calendar year ending December 31, 2021 until the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

Minute Item No. 5.3
AC-C 6-2021
Audit Committee Terms of Reference Update

That Report AC-C 6-2021, dated May 10, 2021, respecting Audit Committee Terms of Reference Update, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the updated Audit Committee Terms of Reference, Appendix 1 to Report AC-C 6-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

**Minute Item No. 6
Consent Items for Information**

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

AC-C 5-2021

Management Action Plan Update

JBM-C 6-2021

Approval of Court Services 2020 Audited Schedule of Revenues, Expenses and Funds Available for Distribution

AC-C 7-2021

Niagara Regional Housing 2020 Draft Audited Financial Statements

Minute Item No. 6.3

PW 5-2021

Approval of Statement of Contributions and Expenditures for Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant

That Report PW 5-2021, dated April 13, 2021, respecting Approval of Statement of Contributions and Expenditures for Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Minute Item No. 7.1

Motion Respecting Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project

1. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide a report to the Public Works Committee on the potential causes of the project delay, including information respecting the project being over-budget, Council approval of cost overruns, and an assessment of the project management; and
2. That this report **BE COMPLETED** without delay in order to determine best practices as the Corporation proceeds with the Niagara South Wastewater Treatment plant project.

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
AUDIT COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION**

**AC 2-2021
Monday, May 10, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Niagara Regional Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in the
Council Chamber: Rigby (Committee Chair)

Committee Members Present via Video
Conference: Bradley (Regional Chair), Foster, Gale, Redekop, Whalen
(Committee Vice-Chair)

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: H. Chamberlain, Director/Deputy Treasurer, Financial Management & Planning, S. Guglielmi, Technology Support Analyst, T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, F. Marcella, Internal Auditor, B. Menage, Director, Procurement & Strategic Acquisitions, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, M. Steele, Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis

Staff Present via Video Conference: E. Amirault, Associate Director, Finance, Operations & Systems, S. Mota, Corporate Reporting Supervisor, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Rigby called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

4. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 AC-C 3-2021

2020 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements

Melanie Steele, Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis, and Trevor Ferguson, Partner, Deloitte, provided information respecting 2020 Consolidated Financial Statement Highlights. Topics of the presentation included:

- Year-end Overview
- Consolidated Financial Statement Highlights
 - 2020 Audit Plan Highlights
 - Presentation Reconciliation
 - Reconciliation of Surplus
 - Statement of Operations
 - Statement of Financial Position
- Audit Findings Report
- Next Steps

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gale

That Report AC-C 3-2021, dated May 10, 2021, respecting 2020 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the audited consolidated financial statements of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the “Niagara Region”), including the sinking fund financial statements and the trust fund financial statements, for the year ended December 31, 2020, as presented in Appendix 1 of Report AC-C 3-2021, **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the audit findings report pertaining to the audited consolidated financial statements of the Niagara Region for the year ended December 31, 2020, as presented in Appendix 2 to Report AC-C 3-2021, **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditors to finalize the statements as presented.

Carried

5.2 AC-C 4-2021

Appointment of Auditors

Moved by Councillor Whalen
Seconded by Councillor Foster

That Report AC-C 4-2021, dated May 10, 2021, respecting Appointment of Auditors, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Deloitte **BE APPOINTED** as Niagara Region's external auditor for an additional two-year term starting the calendar year ending December 31, 2021 until the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

Carried

5.3 AC-C 6-2021

Audit Committee Terms of Reference Update

Moved by Councillor Redekop
Seconded by Councillor Gale

That Report AC-C 6-2021, dated May 10, 2021, respecting Audit Committee Terms of Reference Update, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the updated Audit Committee Terms of Reference, Appendix 1 to Report AC-C 6-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

6. **CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

Report PW 5-2021 was considered separately.

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

AC-C 5-2021

Management Action Plan Update

JBM-C 6-2021

Approval of Court Services 2020 Audited Schedule of Revenues, Expenses and Funds Available for Distribution

AC-C 7-2021

Niagara Regional Housing 2020 Draft Audited Financial Statements

Carried

6.3 PW 5-2021

Approval of Statement of Contributions and Expenditures for Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Report PW 5-2021, dated April 13, 2021, respecting Approval of Statement of Contributions and Expenditures for Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Defeated

7. **OTHER BUSINESS**

7.1 Motion Respecting Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project

Moved by Councillor Gale
Seconded by Councillor Whalen

1. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide a report to the Public Works Committee on the potential causes of the project delay, including information respecting the project being over-budget, and an assessment of the project management; and
2. That this report **BE COMPLETED** without delay in order to determine best practices as the Corporation proceeds with the Niagara South Wastewater Treatment plant project.

The following friendly **amendment** was accepted by the Committee Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion:

1. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide a report to the Public Works Committee on the potential causes of the project delay, including information respecting the project being over-budget, **Council approval of cost overruns**, and an assessment of the project management; and

The Committee Chair called the vote on the motion, as amended, and declared it,

Carried

7.2 Waste Management Services Consulting Contracts

Councillor Gale requested staff provide a list of all consultants hired by Waste Management Services during the period of January 2019 to April 2021, and a list of the associated contract amounts and tender approvals.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

Tim Rigby
Committee Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

2020 Consolidated Financial Statement Highlights

Audit Committee
AC-C 3-2021

May 10, 2021

Melanie Steele, Associate Director Reporting & Analysis

NIAGARA REGION

2020

2020 Consolidated Financial
Statement Highlights

Audit Committee
May 10, 2021

Agenda

Year-end Overview



Consolidated Financial Statement Highlights



Audit Findings Report



Next Steps

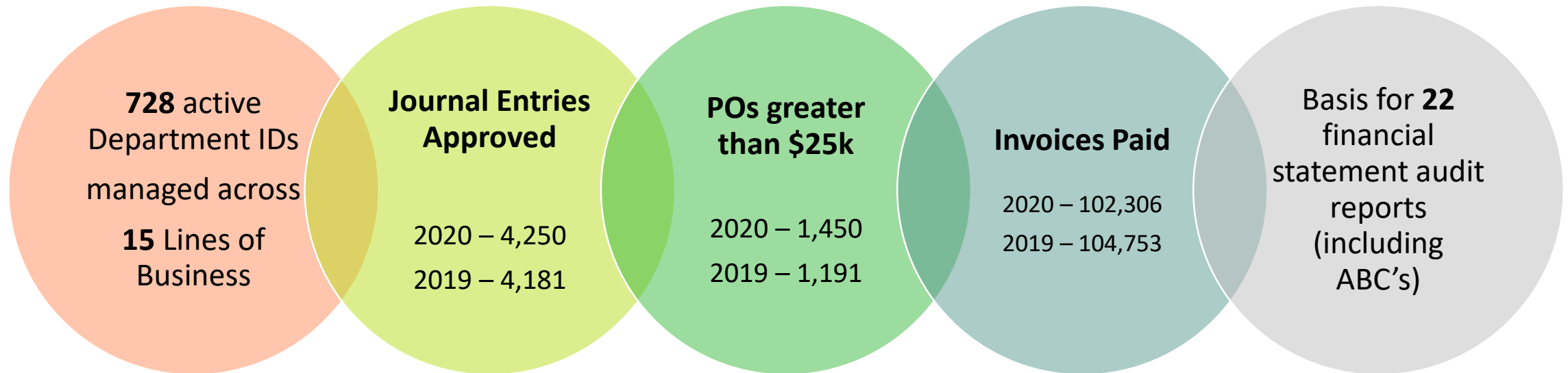
Year-End Overview

Recap of reports presented during the year

Activity	2020	2019
Audit Planning Report	AC - Sept. 21, 2020	AC - Sept. 9, 2019
Q1 Financial Update	BRC - June 18, 2020 Council - June 25, 2020	BRC - June 20, 2019 Council - July 18, 2019
Q2 Financial Update	CSC - Sept. 9, 2020 Council - Sept. 17, 2020	CSC - Sept. 11, 2019 Council - Sept. 19, 2019
Q3 Financial Update	CSC - Dec. 9, 2020 Council - Dec. 17, 2020	CSC - Dec. 4, 2019 Council - Dec. 12, 2019
Year-End Results and Transfer Report	CSC - Mar. 10, 2021 Council - Apr. 22, 2021	CSC - Mar. 11, 2020 Council - Mar. 19, 2020
Committee Review of Audited Financial Statements	AC - May 10, 2021	CSC - May 13, 2020
Council Approval of Audited Financial Statements	May 20, 2021	May 21, 2020

Year-End Overview

2020 Statistics



2020 Audit Plan Highlights

- **Control Reliance Approach**
 - Deloitte tested our controls in order to place reliance on them
- **Risk Based Approach**
 - Significant risks were assessed and resulted in specific audit procedures
- **Materiality**
 - Determined on a basis of total revenues
 - Misstatements greater than 5% of materiality reported to Audit Committee
 - Financial statements are free from material misstatements

Presentation Reconciliation

Key highlights between what you see in the Budget vs. Audited PSAS* Financial Statements

Budget Financials (presented quarterly)	Audited Financials (presented annually)
Functional basis - Levy, Rate, Capital	Canadian PSAS
Used for setting tax rates	Used for credit rating, annual report, MBN
Encumbrance accounting	Accrual accounting
Reserve accounting	Excludes reserve transfers
Excludes unfunded liabilities (i.e. employee future benefits, landfill)	Includes all liabilities
Capital is based on funding sources	Capital is expensed through depreciation
Not consolidated	Consolidated
Budget created to manage at program level	Audited statements summarized at overall financial position

*PSAS – Public Sector Accounting Standards

Reconciliation of Surplus

Reconciliation of differences between year-end results & audited financial statements

(in thousands)	2020	2019
Water & Wastewater (deficit) surplus	\$ 2,729	\$ (1,684)
Waste Management (deficit) surplus	1,493	(1,156)
Levy surplus	37,306	3,453
Net operating surplus (per Year End Transfer Report CSD 17-2021)	41,528	613
Net capital activity	(53,846)	(45,030)
Net funding activity	121,486	106,307
Change in unfunded liabilities	(12,940)	(4,494)
Annual surplus per PSAS consolidated financial statements	\$ 96,228	\$ 57,396

**A detailed surplus reconciliation is found in Appendix 3 of report*

Statement of Operations

Revenues

Budget to Actual (in thousands)	Change
Budgeted revenues per financial statements	\$ 1,071,959
<u>Significant changes</u>	
User charges driven mainly by reduced transit fares due to COVID-19 service impacts and reduced ridership, as well as reduced parental fees collected at childcare centres	(12,082)
Government transfers - Ontario driven mainly by funding received to support incremental COVID-related costs, offset by reduced revenue in Community Assistance due to lower client benefit costs	38,821
Development Charges driven by timing of revenue recognition on combined sewer overflow projects	(7,435)
Infraction revenue driven by reduced fines collected in Court Services as a result of COVID-related court closures and delay in the implementation of the Vision Zero program	(5,544)
Investment income driven by lower interest realized on investments	(3,019)
Other/miscellaneous	2,568
Actual revenues	\$ 1,085,268

Statement of Operations

Expenses

Budget to Actual (in thousands)	Change
Budgeted expenses per financial statements	\$ 1,038,947
<u>Significant changes</u>	
Transportation Services driven mainly by reduced-labour related costs, utilities, materials, and transit costs as a result of COVID-related service impacts	(18,519)
Environmental Services driven mainly by timing of combined sewer overflow grants and delays in maintenance work as a result of COVID	(20,218)
Social and Family Services driven mainly by incremental COVID-related costs in the long-term care homes, offset by reduced Community Assistance expenditures for clients	5,081
Health Services driven mainly by incremental costs related to COVID, including staffing, supplies and personal protective equipment	6,294
Planning and Development driven mainly by reduced uptake in planning and incentive grants	(12,184)
Miscellaneous/other differences than budget	(10,361)
Actual expenses	\$ 989,040

Statement of Financial Position

Employee future benefits (Note 5) and landfill liability (Note 7)

(in thousands)	2020		2019	
	EFB*	Landfill	EFB*	Landfill
Liability	\$ 116,148	\$ 67,872	\$ 109,642	\$ 61,277
Reserves	34,326	10,820	34,589	8,205
Funded Status	30%	16%	32%	13%

*EFB - Employee Future Benefits

These liabilities are partially unfunded and are only adjusted annually – no adjustments are made for quarterly reporting purposes

Statement of Financial Position

Long-term liabilities (Note 9)

(in thousands)	2020	2019	Change
Long-term liabilities			
Long-term liabilities	\$ 758,658	\$ 712,170	\$ 46,488
Less: sinking fund assets	(18,457)	(16,266)	(2,191)
Long-term debt	740,201	695,904	44,297
Less: Debt recoverable from LAMs	(324,254)	(316,419)	(7,835)
Net Region long-term liabilities	\$ 415,947	\$ 379,485	\$ 36,462

(in thousands)	Debt Issued in 2020	Debt Repaid in 2020	Net Change
Region	\$ 69,964	\$ (31,573)	\$ 38,391
LAMs	38,669	(30,572)	8,097
Long-term liabilities	\$ 108,633	\$ (62,145)	\$ 46,488

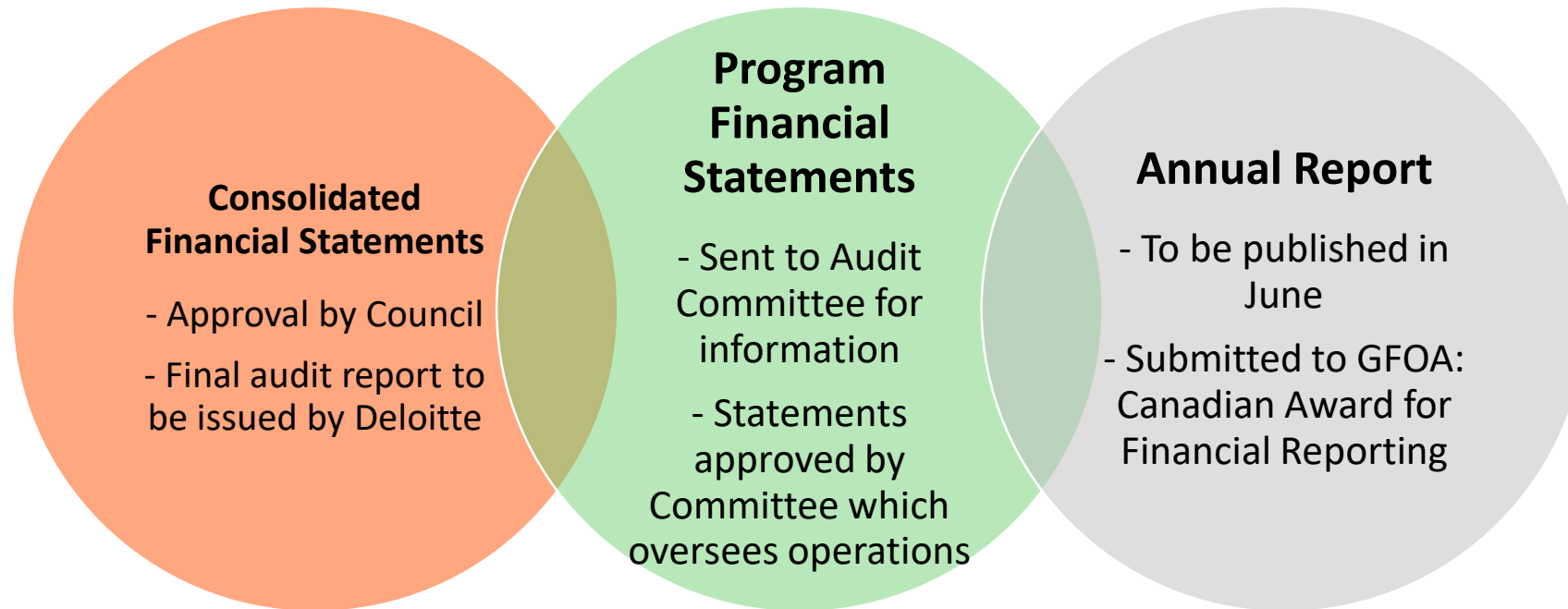
Audit Findings Report

Presented by: Trevor Ferguson, Partner, Deloitte

- Audit findings report included (Appendix 2)
- Unqualified audit opinion
- No Management Letter to Audit Committee for 2020 year-end

Next Steps

Financial Statement Approval and Annual Report



Questions?

Melanie Steele

Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis

905-980-6000 ext. 3591

melanie.steele@niagararegion.ca

Subject: 2020 Audited Consolidated Financial Statements

Report to: Audit Committee

Report date: Monday, May 10, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the audited consolidated financial statements of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the “Niagara Region”), including the sinking fund financial statements and the trust fund financial statements, for the year ended December 31, 2020 presented in Appendix 1 **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the audit findings report pertaining to the audited consolidated financial statements of the Niagara Region for the year ended December 31, 2020 presented in Appendix 2 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditors to finalize the statements as presented.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to comply with the Audit Committee Terms of Reference that the Audit Committee satisfy itself, on behalf of Regional Council, that Niagara Region’s annual consolidated financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and to recommend to Council whether the annual financial statements should be approved.
- The requirement for an annual audit is established in the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25 paragraphs 294.1 through 296.1
- Niagara Region received an unqualified audit opinion and no management letter points for the year ended December 31, 2020.
- Year-end funding surplus results were reported in CSD 17-2021, 2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report, and are consistent with the results reported in the consolidated financial statements adjusted for accounting presentation required of Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS). A reconciliation of the two presentation methodologies is provided in Appendix 3.

Financial Considerations

The consolidated financial statements have been prepared in compliance with legislation and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles established

by the Public Sector Accounting Board of Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.

A draft copy of the Niagara Region's financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2020 is attached in Appendix 1. In addition, Deloitte's audit findings report for the year ended December 31, 2020 is also attached in Appendix 2.

The Niagara Region budget to actual results (funding surplus) are prepared and reported on a quarterly basis (used as a tool to manage funding requirements), whereas the consolidated financial statements are prepared using Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS). Appendix 3 reconciles the surplus per the audited Consolidated Statement of Operations to the funding surplus based on the budget approach previously presented in CSD 17-2021.

Analysis

The consolidated financial statements of the Niagara Region, including the sinking fund financial statements and the trust fund financial statements, for the year ended December 31, 2020 have been audited.

Niagara Region's external auditor (Deloitte) has indicated that in their opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Region and the results of its operations. The fair presentation as of December 31, 2020 includes:

- Consolidated statement of financial position
- Consolidated statement of operations and accumulated surplus
- Consolidated statement of changes in net debt
- Consolidated statement of cash flows
- Sinking fund financial statements
- Trust fund financial statements

The consolidated financial statements are prepared using PSAS, making them comparable to other municipalities in Canada.

The consolidated financial statements reflect the assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses, as well as the accumulated surplus of the reporting entity. The reporting entity is comprised of all organizations, committees and local boards accountable for the

administration of their financial affairs and resources to Niagara Region and which are owned and controlled by the Region. These entities and organizations include:

- Niagara Regional Housing
- Court Services
- Niagara Regional Police Services

In addition to the consolidated financial statements the following statements are also included in Appendix 1.

Sinking Fund Financial Statements

In June 2010, Niagara Region issued sinking fund debentures by way of bylaw 76-2010. The first payment into the sinking fund occurred in June 2011. The Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25 paragraph 409.6 requires the municipal auditor to certify the balance in the sinking fund each year.

Trust Fund Financial Statements

As per Ontario Regulation 79/10, section 241.(10) of the Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007, every licensee of a long-term care home must have each resident account audited annually.

During the course of the audit, Deloitte makes note of any observed internal control weaknesses and makes suggestions for improvements through management letter comments. There are no management letter points for the 2020 consolidated financial statement audit.

In accordance with Canadian Auditing Standards, the consolidated financial statements will be dated on the date in which the recognized authority with respect to the financial statements has approved the financial statements. In the case of Niagara Region, this authority lies with Council, and as such, the signed Auditor's report will be received on the date when the financial statements are approved by Council. Until that approval is received, the consolidated financial statements are marked as draft.

Upon completion of the 2020 Annual Report, which contains the consolidated financial statements, the financial statements will be available to the public on the Niagara Region website:

[Annual Reports](#)

(<https://www.niagararegion.ca/government/budget/finance/default.aspx>)

Alternatives Reviewed

The consolidated financial statements are prepared using PSAS and an annual audit is a requirement of the Municipal Act, therefore no alternatives were reviewed.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Providing formal financial reporting to Council and the public supports the Council Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Government.

Other Pertinent Reports

CSD 17-2021 2020 Year End Results and Transfer Report

Prepared by:

Melanie Steele, MBA CPA CA
Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis
Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Helen Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Draft 2020 Consolidated Financial Statements
Appendix 2	2020 Deloitte Audit Findings Report
Appendix 3	Annual Surplus Reconciliation

CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

For the year ended December 31, 2020

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

INDEX

December 31, 2020

Consolidated Financial Statements

Managements Responsibility for the Consolidated Financial Statements	2
Independent Auditors' Report on Consolidated Financial Statements	3
Consolidated Statement of Financial Position	5
Consolidated Statement of Operations	6
Consolidated Statement of Change in Net Debt	7
Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows	8
Notes to the Consolidated Financial Statements	9

Sinking Fund Financial Statements

Independent Auditors' Report on Sinking Fund Financial Statements	35
Sinking Fund Statement of Financial Position	37
Sinking Fund Statement of Operations and Change in Net Financial Assets	38
Sinking Fund Statement of Cash Flows	39
Notes to the Sinking Fund Financial Statements	40

Trust Fund Financial Statements

Independent Auditors' Report on Trust Fund Financial Statements	41
Trust Fund Statement of Financial Position	43
Trust Fund Statement of Financial Activities and Change in Fund Balance	44
Trust Fund Statement of Cash Flows	45
Notes to the Trust Fund Financial Statements	46

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The accompanying consolidated financial statements of The Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") are the responsibility of the Region's management and have been prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards. A summary of the significant accounting policies is described in Note 1 to the consolidated financial statements. The preparation of consolidated financial statements necessarily involves the use of estimates based on management's judgment, particularly when transactions affecting the current accounting period cannot be finalized with certainty until future periods.

The Region's management maintains a system of internal controls designed to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are properly authorized and recorded in compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements, and reliable financial information is available on a timely basis for preparation of the consolidated financial statements. These systems are monitored and evaluated by management.

The audit committee meets with management and the external auditors to review the consolidated financial statements and discuss any significant financial reporting or internal control matters prior to their approval of the consolidated financial statements.

The consolidated financial statements have been audited by Deloitte LLP, independent external auditors appointed by the Region. The accompanying Independent Auditors' Report outlines their responsibilities, the scope of their examination and their opinion on the Region's consolidated financial statements.

Todd Harrison,

Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer

May 20, 2021

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Council, Inhabitants and Ratepayers of
the Regional Municipality of Niagara

Opinion

We have audited the consolidated financial statements of Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region"), which comprise the consolidated statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, and the consolidated statements of operations and changes in net financial assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Region as at December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations, changes in net financial assets, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Region in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Region's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Region or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Region's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Region's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Region's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Region to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the Region to express an opinion on the financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
_____, 2021

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 224,114	\$ 135,681
Investments (note 2)	658,015	635,596
Accounts receivable (note 3)	78,204	80,140
Other assets	948	417
Tangible capital assets held for sale (note 4)	850	1,760
Debt recoverable from others (note 9)	324,254	316,419
	1,286,385	1,170,013
FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	157,970	129,782
Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities (note 5)	116,148	109,462
Deferred revenue (note 6)	235,356	219,750
Landfill closure and post-closure liability (note 7)	67,872	61,277
Contaminated sites liability (note 8)	576	-
Long-term liabilities (note 9)	740,201	695,904
Capital lease obligation (note 10)	4,262	4,352
	1,322,385	1,220,527
Net debt	(36,000)	(50,514)
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Tangible capital assets (note 11)	1,903,743	1,823,929
Inventory	8,485	7,498
Prepaid expenses	19,522	18,609
	1,931,750	1,850,036
Accumulated surplus (note 12)	\$ 1,895,750	\$ 1,799,522

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020 Budget (note 20)	2020 Actual	2019 Actual
REVENUES (Note 19)			
Taxation and user charges:			
Levies on area municipalities	\$ 409,634	\$ 409,551	\$ 383,481
User charges	238,150	226,068	223,723
	647,784	635,619	607,204
Government transfers (note 18):			
Government of Canada	31,591	31,841	26,637
Province of Ontario	315,372	354,193	320,866
Other municipalities	397	640	861
	347,360	386,674	348,364
Other:			
Development charges earned	40,863	33,428	19,814
Investment income	18,362	15,343	18,176
Provincial offences	10,612	5,068	7,025
Miscellaneous	6,978	9,136	8,710
	76,815	62,975	53,725
Total revenues	1,071,959	1,085,268	1,009,293
EXPENSES (Note 19)			
General government	55,245	52,542	42,053
Protection to persons and property	203,445	196,100	192,662
Transportation services	104,538	87,555	72,933
Environmental services	174,209	154,424	150,408
Health services	108,124	114,626	107,966
Social and family services	303,664	308,768	302,631
Social housing	67,220	64,707	63,964
Planning and development	22,502	10,318	19,280
Total expenses	1,038,947	989,040	951,897
Annual surplus	33,012	96,228	57,396
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	1,799,522	1,799,522	1,742,126
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 1,832,534	\$ 1,895,750	\$ 1,799,522

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020 Budget (note 20)	2020 Actual	2019 Actual
Annual surplus	\$ 33,012	\$ 96,228	\$ 57,396
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(172,451)	(172,451)	(158,046)
Contributed tangible capital assets	(951)	(951)	(142)
Transfers (to) from tangible capital assets held for sale	(910)	(910)	1,004
Amortization of tangible capital assets	92,331	92,331	87,189
Loss on sale of tangible capital assets	1,973	1,973	197
Net proceeds on sale of tangible capital assets	194	194	568
Write down on tangible capital assets held for sale	-	-	418
Change in inventory	-	(987)	(138)
Change in prepaid expenses	-	(913)	2,227
Change in net debt	(46,802)	14,514	(9,327)
Net debt, beginning of year	(41,187)	(50,514)	(41,187)
Net debt, end of year	\$ (87,989)	\$ (36,000)	\$ (50,514)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Annual surplus	\$ 96,228	\$ 57,396
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization of tangible capital assets	92,331	87,189
Loss on sale of tangible capital assets	1,973	197
Contributed tangible capital assets	(951)	(142)
Write down on tangible capital assets held for sale	-	418
Change in employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities	6,686	5,041
Change in landfill closure and post-closure liability	6,595	(120)
Change in contaminated sites liability	576	-
Change in non-cash assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	1,936	573
Other assets	(531)	(88)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	28,188	15,587
Deferred revenue	15,606	41,430
Inventory	(987)	(138)
Prepaid expenses	(913)	2,227
Net change in cash from operating activities	246,737	209,570
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES		
Net proceeds on sale of tangible capital assets	194	568
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(172,451)	(158,046)
Net change in cash from capital activities	(172,257)	(157,478)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Proceeds on sale of investments	2,589	137,880
Purchase of investments	(25,008)	(188,056)
Net change in cash from investing activities	(22,419)	(50,176)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Capital lease acquired	-	6,379
Capital lease payments	(90)	(2,027)
Proceeds on debt issued and assumed	69,966	58,263
Long-term debt repaid	(31,573)	(33,936)
Increase in sinking fund assets	(1,931)	(1,816)
Net change in cash from financing activities	36,372	26,863
Net change in cash	88,433	28,779
Cash, beginning of year	135,681	106,902
Cash, end of year	\$ 224,134	\$ 135,681
Cash paid for interest	\$ 13,781	\$ 13,380
Cash received from interest	16,920	20,066
Investing and financing activities on behalf of others:		
Debt issued on behalf of others	38,668	39,412
Repayment made on behalf of others	\$ 30,833	\$ 28,677

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

1. Significant accounting policies:

The Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") is an upper-tier municipality in the Province of Ontario (the "Province"), Canada. The provisions of provincial statutes such as the Municipal Act, Municipal Affairs Act and related legislation guide its operations.

The consolidated financial statements of The Regional Municipality of Niagara are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards ("PSAS") as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board ("PSAB") of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada ("CPA Canada"). Significant accounting policies adopted by the Region are as follows:

a) Basis of consolidation:

i) Consolidated entities:

The consolidated financial statements reflect the assets, liabilities, revenues, expenses and accumulated surplus of the reporting entity. The reporting entity is comprised of all organizations, committees and local boards accountable for the administration of their financial affairs and resources to the Region and which are owned or controlled by the Region. These entities and organizations include:

Niagara Regional Police Services

Niagara Regional Housing

Court Services Operations

Interdepartmental and inter-organizational transactions and balances between these organizations are eliminated.

ii) Trust funds:

Trust funds and their related operations administered by the Region are not included in these consolidated financial statements.

b) Basis of accounting:

The Region follows the accrual method of accounting for revenues and expenses. Revenues are recognized in the year in which they are earned and measurable. Expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable as a result of receipt of goods or services and/or the creation of a legal obligation to pay.

c) Investments:

Investments consist of bonds and money market notes and are stated at the lower of cost and market value. Gains and losses on investments are recorded when incurred.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

(d) Non-financial assets:

Non-financial assets are not available to discharge existing liabilities and are held for use in the provision of services. They have useful lives extending beyond the current year and are not intended for sale in the ordinary course of operations.

(i) Tangible capital assets:

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which includes amounts that are directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. The cost, less residual value of the tangible capital assets, excluding land and landfill sites, are amortized on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Asset	Useful Life - Years
Landfill and land improvements	3 – 50
Building and building improvements	3 – 60
Vehicles, machinery and equipment	- Vehicles 3 – 20
	- Machinery and equipment 3 – 60
Water and wastewater infrastructure	25 – 100
Roads infrastructure	- Base 40
	- Bridge and culvert 60
	- Surface 10
	- Other infrastructure 5 - 40

Landfill sites are amortized using the units of production method based upon capacity used during the year.

One half of the annual amortization is charged in the year of acquisition and in the year of disposal. Assets under construction (work in progress) are not amortized until the asset is in service.

(ii) Contributions of tangible capital assets:

Tangible capital assets received as contributions are recorded at their fair value at the date of receipt and also are recorded as revenue.

(iii) Intangible assets:

Intangible assets and natural resources that have not been purchased are not recognized as assets in the consolidated financial statements.

(iv) Interest capitalization:

The Region's tangible capital asset policy does not allow for the capitalization of interest costs associated with the acquisition or construction of a tangible capital asset.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

(e) Non-financial assets (continued):

(v) Leases:

Leases which transfer substantially all of the benefits and risks incidental to ownership of property are accounted for as capital leases. All other leases are accounted for as operating leases and the related payments are charged to expenses as incurred.

(vi) Inventories:

Inventories held for consumption are recorded at the lower of cost and replacement cost.

(f) Reserves and reserve funds:

Certain amounts, as approved by Regional Council are set aside in reserves for future operating and capital purposes. Transfers to and/or from reserves are an adjustment to the respective reserve when approved. Reserves are presented on the consolidated statement of financial position in accumulated surplus.

(g) Government transfers:

Government transfers are recognized as revenue in the consolidated financial statements when the transfer is authorized, any eligibility criteria are met and a reasonable estimate of the amount can be made, except when and to the extent that stipulations by the transferor give rise to an obligation that meet the definition of a liability. Government transfers that meet the definition of a liability are recognized as revenue as the liability is extinguished.

(h) Deferred revenue:

Deferred revenues represent development charges collected under the Development Charges Act (1997), grants, user charges and fees which have been collected but for which the related services have yet to be performed. These amounts are recognized as revenues in the fiscal year the services are performed.

(i) Taxation revenue:

Property tax revenue is recognized on an accrual basis when the tax is authorized by the passing of the tax levy by-law. Taxes are levied on properties listed on the assessment roll at the time the by-law is passed based on approved budget and tax rates. Supplementary taxation is recognized as additional billings are issued for properties that are added to the assessment roll during the year.

At year end, the Region evaluates the likelihood of having to repay taxes as a result of tax appeals or other changes and recognizes the liability if the amount can be reasonably estimated.

(j) Investment income:

Investment income earned on surplus current fund, capital fund, reserves and reserve funds (other than obligatory reserve funds which are comprised of development charges and gas tax), are reported as revenue in the period earned. Investment income earned on obligatory reserve funds is added to the applicable fund balance and forms part of the deferred development charge and gas tax balances.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

(k) Municipal cost-sharing:

The Region acts as an intermediary to administer capital projects for the acquisition of assets belonging to local area municipalities. Funding received and expenses incurred relating to the local area municipalities share of these projects amounted to \$6,472 (2019 \$4,886) and is not reflected in these consolidated financial statements.

(l) Tangible capital assets held for sale:

Tangible capital assets which meet the criteria for financial assets are reclassified as “tangible capital assets held for sale” on the consolidated statement of financial position. Tangible capital assets held for sale are recorded at the lower of cost and net realizable value.

Tangible capital assets held for sale are reasonably anticipated to be sold to a purchaser, external to the Region, within one year of the statement of financial position date.

(m) Use of estimates:

The preparation of consolidated financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the consolidated financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Significant estimates include assumptions used in estimating provisions for tax write-offs, accrued liabilities, landfill closure and post-closure liability, contaminated site liability, certain payroll liabilities and in performing actuarial valuations of employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities. Amounts recorded for amortization of tangible capital assets are based on estimates of useful service life. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

2. Investments:

Investments reported on the consolidated statement of financial position at the lower of cost or market have market values as follows:

	2020		2019	
	Cost	Market Value	Cost	Market Value
Investments	\$ 658,015	\$ 693,687	\$ 635,596	\$ 650,422

The Region has purchased \$3,928 (2019 - \$4,841) of its own debentures issued on behalf of itself and local area municipalities which have not been cancelled. This investment in own debentures is included in investments on the consolidated statement of financial position. The Region's share of the gross outstanding amount of these debentures is \$32,973 (2019 - \$36,627). Coupon rates for these debentures ranged from 3.10% to 3.45%.

3. Accounts receivable:

Accounts receivable are reported net of a valuation allowance of \$652 (2019 - \$763).

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

4. Tangible capital assets held for sale:

During the year, the Region wrote down tangible capital assets held for sale to these assets net realizable value in the amount of \$nil (2019 – \$418). The value of write downs related to tangible capital assets held for sale is reported in the consolidated statement of operations.

5. Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities:

The Region provides certain employee benefits which will require funding in future periods. These benefits include benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ("WSIB") Act, sick leave, life insurance, extended health and dental benefits for early retirees.

	2020	2019
Workplace Safety & Insurance Board	\$ 51,389	\$ 48,039
Accumulated Sick Leave	10,904	11,818
Retiree benefits	36,416	35,335
Vacation pay	12,545	10,098
Other post-employment liabilities	4,894	4,172
Total employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities	\$ 116,148	\$ 109,462

Employee future benefits and post-employment benefits reported on the consolidated statement of financial position by entity consist of the following:

	2020	2019
Niagara Regional Police Services	\$ 63,335	\$ 61,438
Niagara Regional Housing	1,538	1,648
Niagara Region	51,275	46,376
Total	\$ 116,148	\$ 109,462

The Region has established reserve funds to mitigate the future impact of these obligations. These reserves were created under municipal by-law and do not meet the definition of a plan asset under PSAS PS3250 Retirement Benefits. Therefore, for the purposes of these financial statements, the plans are considered unfunded. These reserve funds are presented in the consolidated statement of financial position within accumulated surplus. Reserves relating to these liabilities are summarized by entity below:

	2020	2019
Niagara Regional Police Services	\$ 8,982	\$ 9,101
Niagara Regional Housing	793	793
Niagara Region	24,551	24,695
Total (Note 12)	\$ 34,326	\$ 34,589

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

5. Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities (continued):

Information about the Region's benefit plans is as follows:

	2020			
	Niagara Regional Police	Niagara Regional Housing	Niagara Region	Total
Accrued benefit obligation:				
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 66,424	\$ 480	\$ 55,361	\$ 122,265
Current benefit cost	3,948	(9)	7,702	11,641
Interest	2,322	5	1,680	4,007
Benefits paid	(5,596)	(15)	(5,157)	(10,768)
Balance, end of year	67,098	461	59,586	127,145
Unamortized actuarial (loss) gain	(3,763)	1,077	(8,311)	(10,997)
Liability	\$ 63,335	\$ 1,538	\$ 51,275	\$ 116,148

	2019			
	Niagara Regional Police	Niagara Regional Housing	Niagara Region	Total
Accrued benefit obligation:				
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 65,513	\$ 460	\$ 52,454	\$ 118,427
Current benefit cost	5,075	42	6,367	11,484
Interest	2,302	6	1,610	3,918
Benefits paid	(6,466)	(28)	(5,070)	(11,564)
Balance, end of year	66,424	480	55,361	122,265
Unamortized actuarial (loss) gain	(4,986)	1,168	(8,985)	(12,803)
Liability	\$ 61,438	\$ 1,648	\$ 46,376	\$ 109,462

Included in expenses is \$1,806 (2019 - \$1,202) for amortization of the actuarial gain. The unamortized actuarial gain (loss) is amortized over the expected average remaining service life as listed below:

Accumulated Sick Leave Benefit Plan entitlements	6 - 12 years
Retiree benefits	16 - 21 years
WSIB	11 years

The most recent actuarial valuation was completed as at December 31, 2018 with estimates to December 31, 2021.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

5. Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities (continued):

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ("WSIB")

With respect to responsibilities under provisions of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act the Region has elected to be treated as a Schedule 2 employer and remits payments to the WSIB as required to fund disability payments. An actuarial estimate of future liabilities of the Region under the provisions of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act has been completed and forms the basis for the estimated liability reported in these financial statements.

The unamortized actuarial gain on future payments required to WSIB is amortized over the expected period of the liability which is 11 years.

The main actuarial assumptions employed for the valuation are as follows:

Discount rate

The obligation of the present value of future liabilities as at December 31, 2020 and the expense for the year ended December 31, 2020, were determined using a discount rate of 3.75% (2019 – 3.75%).

Administration costs

Administration costs were assumed to be 32% (2019 – 32%) of the compensation expense.

Compensation expense

Compensation costs include loss of earnings benefits, health care costs and non-economic loss awards, were assumed to increase at a rate of 2% per annum (2019 – 2.0%).

Accumulated sick leave

Under the accumulated sick leave benefit plan, unused sick leave can accumulate and certain employees may become entitled to a cash payment when they leave the Region's employment.

The main actuarial assumptions employed for the valuation are as follows:

Discount rate

The obligation as at December 31, 2020, of the present value of future liabilities and the expense for the year ended December 31, 2020, were determined using a discount rate of 3.75% (2019 – 3.75%).

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

5. Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities (continued):

Retiree benefits

The Region pays certain life insurance benefits on behalf of retired employees as well as extended health and dental benefits for early retirees to age 65 and Health Care Spending Accounts for certain retirees until the age of 70 or 75 depending on year of retirement. The Region recognizes these post-retirement costs in the period in which the employees rendered the services.

The unamortized actuarial loss on retiree benefits is amortized over the expected average remaining service life of 10 years.

The main actuarial assumptions employed for the valuations are as follows:

Discount rate

The obligation as at December 31, 2020, of the present value of future liabilities and the expense for the year ended December 31, 2020, were determined using a discount rate of 3.75% (2019 - 3.75%).

Medical costs

Medical costs were assumed to increase at the rate of 3.42% (2019 – 3.42%) per year, reducing to 2.75% in 2022 and thereafter.

Dental costs

Dental costs were assumed to increase at the rate of 2.75% (2019 – 2.75%) per year.

Inflation

Inflation was assumed to be 1.75% (2019 – 1.75%) per year.

Other pension plans

The Region makes contributions to the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Fund ("OMERS"), which is a multi-employer plan. The plan is a defined benefit plan which specifies the amount of the retirement benefit to be received by the employees based on the length of service and rates of pay. The Region accounts for its participation in OMERS as a defined contribution plan. The OMERS Plan ended 2020 with a funding deficit of \$3.2 billion (2019 - \$3.4 billion). The funded ratio remained unchanged at 97% in 2020, and has either stayed the same or increased for the eighth consecutive year.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

5. Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities (continued):

Other pension plans (continued)

The amount contributed to OMERS for 2020 was \$32,270 (2019 - \$31,292) for current service and is included as an expense on the consolidated statement of operations. Employees' contribution to OMERS in 2020 were \$32,226 (2019 - \$31,259).

Contributions for employees with a normal retirement age of 65 were being made at rate of 9.0% (2019 – 9.0%) for earnings up to the yearly maximum pensionable earnings of \$58.70 (2019 - \$57.40) and at a rate of 14.6% (2019 – 14.6%) for earnings greater than the yearly maximum pensionable earnings. For uniformed police officers with a normal retirement age of 60, those rates were 9.2% (2019 - 9.2%) and 15.8% (2019 - 15.8%) respectively.

6. Deferred revenue:

In accordance with PSAS, obligatory reserve funds are reported as deferred revenue. The Region treats development charges and gas tax as obligatory reserve funds. The Region has obligatory reserve funds in the amount of \$205,339 (2019 - \$198,142). These reserve funds are considered obligatory as Provincial and Federal legislation restricts how these funds may be used, and under certain circumstances, how these funds may be refunded.

Amounts related to development charges collected are recognized as revenue when the Region has approved and incurred the expenses for the capital works for which the development charges were raised. These funds have been set aside, as required by the Development Charges Act (1997), to defray the cost of growth related capital projects associated with new development.

In 2008, Investing in Ontario approved a total funding of \$20,157 for capital infrastructure. Revenue is recognized as expenses are incurred. The remaining balance of \$10,617 has been set aside for the construction of the South Niagara East-West Corridor.

The deferred revenues, reported on the consolidated statement of financial position, are comprised of the following:

	2020	2019
Development charges	\$ 176,297	\$ 163,141
Gas tax	29,042	35,001
Obligatory reserve funds	205,339	198,142
Investing in Ontario Grant	10,617	10,617
Other deferred revenue	19,400	10,991
Balance, end of year	\$ 235,356	\$ 219,750

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

6. Deferred revenue (continued):

The continuity of obligatory reserve funds are summarized below:

Development charges:

	2020	2019
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 163,141	\$ 134,530
Externally restricted inflows	42,126	45,478
Revenue earned	(33,428)	(19,814)
Investment income	4,458	2,947
Balance, end of year	\$ 176,297	\$ 163,141

Gas tax:

	2020	2019
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 35,001	\$ 20,232
Externally restricted inflows	14,443	28,344
Revenue earned	(21,243)	(14,121)
Investment income	841	546
Balance, end of year	\$ 29,042	\$ 35,001

7. Landfill closure and post-closure liability:

The Region owns and monitors 14 landfill sites, two of which are open and operating. The liability for closure of operational sites and post-closure care has been recognized based upon the usage of the site's capacity during the year. Landfill closure and post-closure care are activities that are expected to occur in perpetuity and requirements have been defined in accordance with industry standards and include final covering and landscaping of the landfill, pumping of ground water and leachates from the site, and ongoing environmental monitoring, site inspection and maintenance.

The costs were based upon the 2020 budget and inflation adjusted at a rate of 1.75% per annum (2019 – 1.75%) until the end of contamination. These costs were then discounted to December 31, 2020 using a discount rate of 3.40% (2019 – 3.75%). Post-closure care is estimated to be required for the contaminating lifespan of landfill sites up to 40 years (2019 – 40 years). The liability for closure and post-closure care as at December 31, 2020 is \$67,872 (2019 - \$61,277). Estimated total expenditures for closure and post-closure care are \$77,776 (2019 - \$71,419). The liability remaining to be recognized is \$9,904 (2019 - \$10,142). It is estimated that the life of open landfill sites range from 30 to 45 years with an estimated total remaining capacity of 3,220 thousand cubic meters (2019 - 3,285 thousand cubic meters).

The Region has a landfill reserve which is dedicated for costs relating to settling closure and post-closure care liabilities. As of December 31, 2020 the reserve balance is \$10,820 (2019 - \$8,205).

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

8. Contaminated site liability:

A liability for the remediation of contaminated sites is recognized as the best estimate of the amount required to remediate the contaminated sites when the following criteria are met: contamination exceeding an environmental standard exists, the Region is either directly responsible or accepts responsibility for the remediation, it is expected that the future economic benefit will be given up, and a reasonable estimate of the amount is determinable. If the likelihood of the Region's obligation to incur these costs is either not determinable, or if an amount cannot be reasonably estimated, the costs are disclosed as contingent liabilities in the notes to the financial statements.

As at December 31, 2020 the Region has recognized a liability for contaminated sites of \$576 (2019 - \$nil) in the consolidated financial statements. The liability was estimated by management based on the estimated costs required to remediate the contamination. These estimated costs include consultant fees, lab analyses costs, excavation costs, and disposal costs. The remediation is planned to occur in 2024 and is subject to Council approval.

9. Net long-term liabilities:

- (a) As well as incurring long-term liabilities for regional purposes, the Region also incurs long-term liabilities on behalf of the area municipalities. The responsibility for raising the amounts required to service this debt lies with the respective area municipalities.

The balance of net long-term liabilities reported on the consolidated statement of financial position is made up of the following:

	2020	2019
Long-term liabilities incurred by the Region	\$ 758,658	\$ 712,170
Less: Sinking fund assets	(18,457)	(16,266)
Long-term debt	\$ 740,201	\$ 695,904
Debt recoverable from others net of sinking fund assets (long-term liabilities incurred by the Region for which other entities have assumed responsibility)	(324,254)	(316,419)
Net long-term debt, end of year	\$ 415,947	\$ 379,485

- (b) The long-term liabilities in (a) issued in the name of the Region have been approved by by-law. The annual principal and interest payments required to service these liabilities are within the annual debt repayment limit prescribed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
- (c) The Region issued sinking fund debentures of \$78,079 payable on June 30, 2040 and bearing interest at the rate of 5.2% per annum. The sinking fund debentures are included in long-term liabilities in (a) and include \$9,333 borrowed on behalf of the City of St. Catharines and shown as debt recoverable from others. The City of St. Catharines share of the sinking fund assets have been removed from the debt recoverable from others in (a). Annual principal payments into the sinking fund of \$1,512 are due June 30 of each year. These payments are reflected as principal repayments in (e).

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

9. Net long-term liabilities (continued):

- (d) The Region is contingently liable for long-term liabilities with respect to debt issued for area municipalities, school boards, tile drainage and shoreline property assistance. The total amount outstanding as at December 31, 2020 is \$324,254 (2019 - \$316,419) and is reported on the consolidated statement of financial position as debt recoverable from others.
- (e) Principal payments to be funded by the Region, including sinking fund payments, due in each of the next five years are as follows:

	2020
2021	\$ 30,863
2022	30,621
2023	30,251
2024	27,539
2025	25,389
Thereafter	271,284
	\$ 415,947

Total interest on net long-term liabilities which are reported on the consolidated statement of operations amounted to \$13,571 in 2020 (2019 - \$13,336). The long-term liabilities bear interest at rates ranging from 0.55% to 4.65%. The interest on long-term liabilities assumed by the municipalities or by individuals in the case of tile drainage and shoreline property assistance loans are not reflected in these consolidated financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

10. Capital lease obligation:

In 2017, the Region entered into a lease agreement for the construction of land and building in Niagara Falls to be used for Public Health. Upon completion of the construction in 2019, the Region has accounted for the obligation as a capital lease. The amount of the obligation is calculated as the present value of payments required under the terms of the agreement. The discount rate used by the Region in determining the present value of the lease payments is 3.75%.

The payments under the lease agreement began in 2019 and the agreement requires monthly lease payments over a period of 30 years until 2049 in addition to balloon payment required in 2029.

Future annual lease payments under the agreement are as follows:

	2020
2021	\$ 216
2022	216
2023	216
2024	216
2025	216
Thereafter	6,010
Total minimum lease payments	\$ 7,090
Less: amount representing implicit interest at 3.75%	(2,828)
Capital lease obligation	\$ 4,262

In 2020, interest of \$126 (2019 - \$95) relating to the capital lease obligation has been reported in the consolidated statement of operations.

The cost of the leased tangible capital assets at December 31, 2020 is \$6,379 (Land - \$800, Building - \$5,579) and accumulated amortization of leased tangible capital assets at December 31, 2020 is \$209 (2019 - \$69). Amortization of the building is calculated using the straight line method for a period of 40 years.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

11. Tangible capital assets:

	2020							
	Land	Landfill and Land Improvements	Building and Building Improvements	Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment	Water and Wastewater Infrastructure	Roads Infrastructure	Work in progress	Total
Cost								
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 223,666	\$ 104,590	\$ 807,799	\$ 639,171	\$ 372,599	\$ 824,241	\$ 179,385	\$ 3,151,451
Additions/transfers	6,106	6,178	31,722	64,363	26,266	60,323	(21,556)	173,402
Reclassification of assets previously held for sale	1,323	-	103	-	-	-	-	1,426
Disposals	(498)	(1,854)	(4,026)	(19,939)	(29)	(9,399)	-	(35,745)
Balance, end of year	230,597	108,914	835,598	683,595	398,836	875,165	157,829	3,290,534
Accumulated Amortization								
Balance, beginning of year	-	55,627	383,442	428,923	87,654	371,876	-	1,327,522
Disposals	-	(1,782)	(3,755)	(19,680)	(22)	(7,823)	-	(33,062)
Amortization expense	-	3,826	24,796	31,568	5,607	26,534	-	92,331
Balance, end of year	-	57,671	404,483	440,811	93,239	390,587	-	1,386,791
Net Book Value, end of year	\$ 230,597	\$ 51,243	\$ 431,115	\$ 242,784	\$ 305,597	\$ 484,578	\$ 157,829	\$ 1,903,743

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

11. Tangible capital assets (continued):

	2019							
	Land	Landfill and Land Improvements	Building and Building Improvements	Vehicles, Machinery and Equipment	Water and Wastewater Infrastructure	Roads Infrastructure	Work in progress	Total
Cost								
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 223,572	\$ 101,046	\$ 773,995	\$ 627,622	\$ 355,448	\$ 781,767	\$ 148,601	\$ 3,012,051
Additions/transfers	1,526	5,300	38,050	18,441	17,151	46,936	30,784	158,188
Disposals	(1,432)	(1,756)	(4,246)	(6,892)	-	(4,462)	-	(18,788)
Balance, end of year	223,666	104,590	807,799	639,171	372,599	824,241	179,385	3,151,451
Accumulated Amortization								
Balance, beginning of year	-	53,869	363,510	403,820	82,372	353,363	-	1,256,934
Disposals	-	(1,747)	(4,073)	(5,438)	-	(5,343)	-	(16,601)
Amortization expense	-	3,505	24,005	30,541	5,282	23,856	-	87,189
Balance, end of year	-	55,627	383,442	428,923	87,654	371,876	-	1,327,522
Net Book Value, end of year	\$ 223,666	\$ 48,963	\$ 424,357	\$ 210,248	\$ 284,945	\$ 452,365	\$ 179,385	\$ 1,823,929

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

11. Tangible capital assets (continued):

(a) Work in progress

Work in progress of \$157,829 (2019 - \$179,385) has not been amortized. Amortization of these assets will commence when the asset is put into service. Included in work in progress at December 31, 2020 is \$13,687 (2019 - \$13,687) related to the Region's contribution toward the construction of the 2022 Canada Summer Games infrastructure. The Region also has an additional commitment of \$6,350 to this project and plans to fund 68% of the total contribution with federal gas tax revenue.

(b) Contributed tangible capital assets

Contributed capital assets are recognized at fair market value at the date of contribution. Where an estimate of fair value could not be made, the tangible capital asset was recognized at a nominal value. Land is the only category where nominal values were assigned. The value of contributed assets transferred to the Region during the year is \$951 (2019 - \$142).

(c) Works of art and historical treasures

No works of art or historical treasures are held by the Region.

(d) Write-downs of tangible capital assets

The Region had \$nil write-downs (2019 – \$nil) of tangible capital assets during the year.

The value of write-downs related to tangible capital assets is reported in the consolidated statement of operations.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

12. Accumulated Surplus:

Accumulated surplus consists of balances as follows:

	2020	2019
Surplus:		
Invested in tangible capital assets	\$ 1,483,534	\$ 1,440,091
Capital fund – unexpended capital financing	322,541	271,407
Operating fund	(10,987)	(10,886)
Unfunded		
Landfill closure and post-closure liability	(67,872)	(61,277)
Contaminated sites	(576)	-
Employee future benefits and post-employment liabilities	(114,339)	(108,148)
Total surplus	1,612,301	1,531,187
Reserves set aside by Council:		
Ambulance communication	-	37
Circle route initiatives	1,383	1,383
Hospital contribution	6,600	-
Employee benefits	34,326	34,589
Encumbrances	16,275	16,377
General capital levy	19,941	15,680
Niagara Regional Housing	12,226	14,482
Court Services facilities renewal	3,210	2,876
Public liability self-insurance	2,270	2,270
Smart growth	201	201
Taxpayer relief reserve	53,509	23,757
Waste management	17,534	21,813
Wastewater	28,409	43,424
Water	75,384	81,798
Landfill liability	10,820	8,205
Other reserves	1,361	1,443
Total reserves	283,449	268,335
Total accumulated surplus	\$ 1,895,750	\$ 1,799,522

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

13. Trust funds:

Trust funds administered by the Region amounting to \$985 (2019 - \$962) have not been included in the consolidated statement of financial position nor have their operations been included in the consolidated statement of operations. The financial position and activities of the trust funds are reported separately in the trust fund financial statements.

14. Commitments:

- (a) The Region has outstanding contractual obligations of approximately \$164,838 (2019 - \$184,243) for capital projects. These costs include holdbacks. The holdbacks related to work completed as of December 31, 2020 have been accrued. Regional council has authorized the financing of these obligations.
- (b) The Region is committed to paying principal and interest payments on provincial debentures issued to finance the properties transferred to Niagara Regional Housing from Ontario Housing Corporation. The debentures are outstanding in the amount of \$5,488 (2019 - \$7,124). Annual payments of \$1,695 (2019 - \$2,063) have been charged to current operations.
- (c) The Region enters into various service contracts and other agreements in the normal course of business, which have been approved by the appropriate level of management or by Council but which have not been reported as commitments.
- (d) Minimum annual operating lease payments:

The Region has commitments under various building, land and equipment lease agreements with minimum annual operating lease payments as follows:

	2020
2021	\$ 1,910
2022	1,464
2023	925
2024	774
2025	248
Thereafter	254
	\$ 5,575

15. Contingent liabilities:

At December 31, 2020, the Region has been named defendant or co-defendant in a number of outstanding legal actions. No provision has been made for any claims that are expected to be covered by insurance or where the consequences are undeterminable.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

16. Public Liability Insurance:

The Region has undertaken a portion of the risk for public liability as a means of achieving efficient and cost effective risk management. The Region is self-insured for public liability claims up to \$1,000 for any individual claim and \$1,000 for any number of claims arising out of a single occurrence. Outside coverage is in place for claims in excess of these amounts up to \$25,000 per occurrence for all Public Health Units, EMS and all health operations including; care homes, seniors services, community services, homeless shelters, and police services, and \$50,000 per occurrence for all other claims.

The Region has a reserve fund for allocated self-insurance claims which as at December 31, 2020 amount to \$2,270 (2019 - \$2,270) and is reported on the consolidated statement of financial position under accumulated surplus. An amount of \$nil (2019- \$nil) has been transferred from this reserve fund in the current year.

Payments charged against operations in the current year amounted to \$4,326 (2019 - \$6,091).

17. Self-funded employee benefit plans:

The Region provides a group health and dental plan for certain employees and has assumed the full liability for payment of benefits under this plan.

Payments charged against operations in the current year amounted to \$18,507 (2019 - \$17,886).

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

18. Government transfers:

The government transfers reported on the consolidated statement of operations are as follows:

	Budget	2020	2019
Revenue:			
Government of Canada:			
Transportation services	\$ 18,067	\$ 18,067	\$ 10,668
Environmental services	4,470	4,470	6,164
Social and family services	1,204	1,584	1,125
Social housing	7,720	7,720	8,599
Planning and development	130	-	81
	31,591	31,841	26,637
Province of Ontario:			
General government	1,902	20,829	1,952
Protection to persons and property	9,737	9,642	9,652
Transportation services	15	70	2,031
Environmental services	693	693	1,626
Health services	66,867	72,819	64,974
Social and family services	227,189	242,099	230,206
Social housing	8,969	8,041	10,425
	315,372	354,193	320,866
Other municipalities:			
General government	69	172	542
Protection to persons and property	325	319	319
Transportation services	3	3	-
Environmental services	-	146	-
	397	640	861
Total revenues	\$ 347,360	\$ 386,674	\$ 348,364

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

19. Segmented information:

Segmented information has been identified based upon functional areas by the Region.

The functional areas have been separately disclosed in the segmented information as follows:

(i) General government:

General government consists of the general management of the Region, including adopting by-laws and policy, levying taxes, issuing debentures and providing administrative, technical, facility management, and financial services.

(ii) Protection to persons and property:

Protection to persons and property is comprised of Police Services and Court Services. The mandate of Police Services is to ensure the safety of the lives and property of citizens, preserve peace and good order, prevent crimes from occurring, detect offenders and enforce the law. Court Services is responsible for administering and prosecuting Provincial Offences including those committed under the Highway Traffic Act, the Compulsory Automobile Insurance Act, the Trespass to Property Act, the Liquor License Act and other provincial legislation, municipal by-laws and minor federal offences. Court Services governs all aspects of the legal prosecution process, from serving an offence notice to an accused person to conducting trials including sentencing and appeals.

(iii) Transportation services:

Transportation services is responsible for the planning, design, operation and maintenance of the roadway system, the maintenance of parks and open space, and street lights.

(iv) Environmental services:

Environmental services is responsible for the engineering and operation of the water and wastewater systems and waste management. Waste management encompasses solid waste collection and disposal and Niagara Recycling.

(v) Health services:

The Public Health Department offers a range of programs related to health services that includes protection and promotion, disease and injury prevention and also oversees the Emergency Services Division ("ESD") that encompasses both Land Ambulance ("Paramedic") Services and Land Ambulance Communications ("Dispatch") Services.

(vi) Social and family services:

The Community Services department is responsible for providing public services that sustains and supports individuals, families and communities. Programs and services are delivered through Senior Services, Children's Services, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities and Homelessness Services and Community Engagement.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

19. Segmented information (continued):

(vii) Social housing:

Social housing is responsible for providing and advocating for secure, affordable housing in the Region.

(viii) Planning and development:

The Planning and Development department provides information to Council and the community through working with partners and community groups to support planning initiatives in the region, providing information to residents about Region programs and services. The planning and development department also supports the Region special initiatives.

Certain allocation methodologies are employed in the preparation of segmented information. Taxation and payments-in-lieu of taxes are not allocated and reported in general government and environmental services. User charges and other revenue have been allocated to the segments based upon the segment that generated the revenue. Government transfers have been allocated to the segment based upon the purpose for which the transfer was made. Development charges earned and developer contributions received are allocated to the segment for which the charge was collected.

The accounting policies used in these segments are consistent with those followed in the preparation of the consolidated financial statements as disclosed in Note 1.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

19. Segmented information (continued):

	2020								
	General government	Protection to persons and property	Transportation services	Environmental services	Health services	Social and family services	Social housing	Planning and development	Total
Revenues:									
Levies on area municipalities	\$ 370,730	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 38,821	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 409,551
User charges	436	3,880	5,222	173,494	602	25,528	15,839	1,067	226,068
Government transfers	21,001	9,961	18,140	5,309	72,819	243,683	15,761	-	386,674
Development charges earned	1,109	470	10,790	15,427	158	-	5,048	426	33,428
Investment income	15,118	-	-	-	-	-	225	-	15,343
Provincial offenses	-	5,068	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,068
Miscellaneous	855	482	968	5,639	114	545	272	261	9,136
Total revenues	409,249	19,861	35,120	238,690	73,693	269,756	37,145	1,754	1,085,268
Expenses:									
Salaries, wages and employee benefits	5,272	161,542	16,193	32,765	96,165	120,210	6,187	5,687	444,021
Operating expenses	24,900	17,609	23,822	86,535	14,712	80,096	19,611	1,453	268,738
External transfers	1,955	6,992	16,360	5,441	-	104,386	29,841	3,178	168,153
Debt services	13,427	-	21	-	126	-	-	-	13,574
Amortization	6,919	10,003	29,623	29,250	3,415	4,053	9,068	-	92,331
Miscellaneous	69	(46)	1,536	433	208	23	-	-	2,223
Total expenses:	52,542	196,100	87,555	154,424	114,626	308,768	64,707	10,318	989,040
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ 356,707	\$ (176,239)	\$ (52,435)	\$ 84,266	\$ (40,933)	\$ (39,012)	\$ (27,562)	\$ (8,564)	\$ 96,228

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

19. Segmented information (continued):

	2019								
	General government	Protection to persons and property	Transportation services	Environmental services	Health services	Social and family services	Social housing	Planning and development	Total
Revenues:									
Levies on area municipalities	\$ 348,152	-	-	\$ 35,329	-	-	-	-	\$ 383,481
User charges	746	8,119	6,680	163,353	735	27,908	15,293	889	223,723
Government transfers	2,494	9,971	12,699	7,790	64,974	231,331	19,024	81	348,364
Development charges earned	-	(4)	12,556	6,570	14	-	272	406	19,814
Investment income	17,842	-	-	-	-	-	334	-	18,176
Provincial offenses	-	7,025	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,025
Miscellaneous	1,815	835	61	4,691	74	842	388	4	8,710
Total revenues	371,049	25,946	31,996	217,733	65,797	260,081	35,311	1,380	1,009,293
Expenses:									
Salaries, wages and employee benefits	6,061	156,665	15,648	32,249	90,134	110,197	6,042	5,506	422,502
Operating expenses	13,784	17,728	25,133	86,358	14,793	78,421	19,876	1,849	257,942
External transfers	1,797	7,895	5,490	4,263	-	110,122	29,516	11,925	171,008
Debt services	13,230	-	26	-	-	-	-	-	13,256
Amortization	7,181	10,374	26,636	27,538	3,039	3,891	8,530	-	87,189
Total expenses:	42,053	192,662	72,933	150,408	107,966	302,631	63,964	19,280	951,897
Annual surplus (deficit)	\$ 328,996	\$ (166,716)	\$ (40,937)	\$ 67,325	\$ (42,169)	\$ (42,550)	\$ (28,653)	\$ (17,900)	\$ 57,396

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

20. Budget data:

The budget amounts presented in these consolidated financial statements are based upon the 2020 operating and capital budgets approved by Council on December 12, 2019. The chart below reconciles the approved budget to the budget amounts reported in these consolidated financial statements. Budgets established for tangible capital asset acquisitions are on a project-oriented basis, the costs of which may be carried out over one or more years. Where amounts were budgeted on a project-oriented basis, the budget amounts used are based on actual projects that took place during the year to reflect the same basis of accounting that was used to report the actual results. In addition, to ensure comparability of expenses, the allocation of program support costs completed for actual reporting was also applied to the budget amounts.

	Budget Amount
REVENUES	
Operating	
Approved budget	\$ 1,015,216
Budget Adjustments	23,900
Expenses classified as revenue	(172)
Capital:	
Development charges	31,128
Grants and subsidies	26,119
Other contributions	935
Loss on sale of tangible capital assets	(1,973)
Less:	
Transfers from reserves	(22,984)
Proceeds on sale of tangible capital assets	(210)
Total revenue	1,071,959
EXPENSES	
Operating	
Approved budget	\$ 1,015,216
Budget Adjustments	23,900
Expenses classified as revenue	(172)
Add:	
Capital project cost resulting in operating expenses	20,125
Amortization	92,331
Employee future benefits	6,192
Landfill liability	6,595
Contaminated sites	576
Less:	
Operating expenses resulting in tangible capital assets	(2,757)
Transfers to reserves, including capital	(75,761)
Debt principal payments	(47,298)
Total expenses	1,038,947
Annual surplus	\$ 33,012

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

21. Significant Event:

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized the outbreak of a strain of the novel coronavirus ("COVID-19") as a pandemic which has resulted in a series of public health and emergency measures that have been put in place to combat the spread of the virus. The duration and impact of COVID-19 is unknown at this time and it is not possible to reliably estimate the impact that the length and severity of these developments will have on the financial results and condition of the Region in future periods.

The Region's 2020 operating budget was approved prior to the pandemic. As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Region adjusted service levels and work plans and received additional government funding relating to these costs.

22. Contingent Liabilities:

Subsequent to December 31, 2020, on April 8, 2021, the Region executed a guarantee of the Region's portion of Southwestern Internet Fibre Technology ("SWIFT")'s revolving credit facility with TD Bank in an amount of \$2,439. The purpose of the credit facility is to fund SWIFT's obligation to pay the internet service providers who will undertake the project to expand digital infrastructure within the Region until the receipt of the funding for the project is received from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

23. Comparative figures:

Certain prior year figures have been reclassified to conform to the consolidated financial statement presentation adopted in the current year.

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Council, Inhabitants and Ratepayers of the
Regional Municipality of Niagara

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the Sinking Funds of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, and the statements of operations, change in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the sinking funds of the Region as at December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations, changes in net financial assets, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Region in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Region's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Region or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Region's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Region's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Region's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Region to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
_____, 2021



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

SINKING FUND STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 2,180	\$ 228
Interest receivable	75	96
Due from operating fund	16	48
Investments (note 2)	16,202	15,941
	18,473	16,313
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4	4
Sinking fund requirements		
City of St. Catharines	2,158	1,907
The Regional Municipality of Niagara	15,896	14,049
	18,058	15,960
Accumulated surplus and net financial assets	\$ 415	\$ 353

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

SINKING FUND STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGE IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
REVENUES		
Contributions	\$ 1,512	\$ 1,512
Investment Income	652	606
Total revenues	2,164	2,118
EXPENSES		
Professional fees and dues	4	3
Provision for sinking fund requirements	2,098	2,027
Total expenses	2,102	2,030
Annual Surplus	62	88
Accumulated surplus and net financial assets, beginning of year	353	265
Accumulated surplus and net financial assets, end of year	\$ 415	\$ 353

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

SINKING FUND STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Annual surplus	\$ 62	\$ 88
Change in non-cash assets and liabilities:		
Interest receivable	21	(31)
Due from operating fund	32	(43)
Net change in cash from operating activities	115	14
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of investments	(2,061)	(1,981)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	1,800	-
Net change in cash from investing activities	(261)	(1,981)
FINANCING ACTIVITY		
Increase in sinking fund requirements	2,098	2,026
Net change in cash from financing activity	2,098	2,026
Net change in cash	1,952	59
Cash, beginning of year	228	169
Cash, end of year	\$ 2,180	\$ 228

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO SINKING FUND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

1. Significant accounting policies:

The financial statements of sinking funds of The Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") are the representation of management prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

The sinking fund is a separate fund maintained for the purpose of providing for the repayment of all sinking fund debt when it becomes due. The Region issued sinking fund debentures of \$78,079 payable on June 30, 2040 and bearing interest at the rate of 5.2% per annum. Included in the sinking fund debenture is \$9,333 borrowed on behalf of the City of St. Catharines, representing a proportionate share of 11.95%. Annual interest payments on the sinking fund debt are \$4,060.

Significant accounting policies adopted by the Region for the sinking funds are as follows:

(a) Basis of accounting:

The Region's sinking fund follows the accrual method of accounting for revenues and expenses.

(b) Sinking fund requirements:

The requirements of the sinking fund represent the amounts required which, together with interest compounded annually, will be sufficient to retire the related debentures at maturity. The requirements were calculated using a rate of 3.5% per annum.

(d) Investment income:

Investment income is reported as revenue in the period earned.

2. Investments:

The investments consist of municipal bonds and are carried at cost. At December 31, 2020 the investments have a market value of \$19,691 (2019 - \$17,751)

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of Council, Inhabitants and Ratepayers of
the Regional Municipality of Niagara

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of the trust funds of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, and the statements of financial activities and change in fund balance and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the trust funds of the Region as at December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Region in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Region's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Region or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Region's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Region's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Region's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Region to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
_____, 2021



THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

TRUST FUNDS STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 251	\$ 244
Due from Regional Municipality of Niagara	734	718
Fund balance	\$ 985	\$ 962

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

TRUST FUNDS STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
REVENUE		
Deposits from residents	\$ 245	\$ 468
Donations	201	261
	446	729
EXPENSES		
Expenditures for the benefit of residents	423	725
	423	725
Excess of revenues over expenses	23	4
Fund balance, beginning of year	962	958
Fund balance, end of year	\$ 985	\$ 962

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

TRUST FUNDS STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

	2020	2019
OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ 23	\$ 4
Change in non-cash assets and liabilities		
Due from Regional Municipality of Niagara	(16)	(9)
Net change in cash from operating activities	7	(5)
Cash, beginning of year	244	249
Cash, end of year	\$ 251	\$ 244

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

NOTES TO TRUST FUNDS FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended December 31, 2020 (In thousands of dollars)

1. Significant accounting policies:

These financial statements reflect the financial position, financial operations, and cash flows of funds held in trust by The Regional Municipality of Niagara ("the Region") for residents of the eight long-term care homes:

- Gilmore Lodge
- Upper Canada Lodge
- Deer Park Villa
- Woodlands of Sunset
- Linhaven
- Rapelje Lodge
- Northland Point
- Meadows of Dorchester

These financial statements are the representation of management and are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and reflect the following policies:

(a) Basis of Accounting:

Revenues are recorded in the period in which the transactions or events occurred that gave rise to the revenue.

Expenses are recorded in the period the goods and services are acquired and a liability is incurred, or transfers are due.

(b) Uses of Estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amount of revenues and expenses during the period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.



Regional Municipality of Niagara Report to the Audit Committee on the 2020 audit

April 17, 2021

Members of the Audit Committee
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Report on audited annual financial statements

Dear Audit Committee Members:

We are pleased to submit this report on the status of our audit of the consolidated financial statements of the Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") for the 2020 fiscal year. This report summarizes the scope of our audit, our findings and reviews certain other matters that we believe to be of interest to you.

As agreed in our Master Services Agreement dated November 8, 2016, and our confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020, we have performed audit of the following, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"):

- Consolidated financial statements of the Region prepared in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards ("PSAS")
- Financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing ("NRH") prepared in accordance with PSAS
- Financial statements of the Regional Municipality of Niagara Trust Funds (the "Trust Funds") prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and
- Financial statements of the Regional Municipality of Niagara Sinking Funds (the "Sinking Funds") prepared in accordance with PSAS.

Herein after, collectively referred to as the "Financial Statements".

We expect to issue our Independent Auditor's Reports on the financial statements of the Region, the Trust Funds, and the Sinking Funds upon approval of the financial statements by the Treasurer.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with the audit plan dated August 26, 2020 that was presented to the Audit Committee.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Regional Council through the Audit Committee, management and others within the Region, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We look forward to discussing this report summarizing the outcome of our audit with you and answering any questions you may have.

Yours truly,

"Original signed by Deloitte LLP"

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Table of contents

Executive summary	1
Audit risks	2
Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates	5
Appendix 1 – Communication requirements and other reportable matters	6
Appendix 2 – Independence letter	9
Appendix 3 – Summary of misstatements	10
Appendix 4 – Draft management representation letter	11
Appendix 5 – New and Revised Accounting Standards	12

Executive summary



Audit scope and terms of engagement

We have been asked to perform audit of the financial statements of the Region, NRH, the Trust Funds and the Sinking Funds (collectively, the "Region") in accordance with the applicable accounting frameworks as at and for the year ended December 31, 2020. Our audit were conducted in accordance with Canadian Generally Accepted Auditing Standards ("Canadian GAAS").

The terms and conditions of our engagement are described in the Master Services Agreement dated November 8, 2016, and our confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020. We have developed appropriate safeguards and procedures to eliminate threats to our independence or to reduce them to an acceptable level.



Audit risks

- 1 Revenue and deferred revenue amounts (Region)
- 2 Year-end cut-off (Region)
- 3 Tangible capital assets (Region)
Year-end accruals and other estimates (including salaries, employee future benefits, landfill closure and post-closure liability, contaminated sites, and allowance for doubtful accounts) (Region)
- 4 Management override of controls (Region/NRH)
- 5 Tenant and other receivables/revenue (NRH)
- 6 Long-term debt (NRH)
- 7 Financial statement disclosures (NRH)



Uncorrected misstatements

We are responsible for providing reasonable assurance that your financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement.

Materiality levels were determined on the basis of total revenue.

We have informed the Committee of all uncorrected misstatements greater than a clearly trivial amount of 5% of materiality and any misstatements that are, in our judgment, qualitatively material. In accordance with Canadian GAAS, we asked that any misstatements be corrected.



Outstanding Matters & Next Steps

Completion of our subsequent events procedures

Receipt of outstanding legal responses

Receipt of signed Management's representation letter



Going Concern

Management has completed its assessment of the ability of the Region to continue as a going concern and in making its assessment did not identify any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt upon the Region's ability to continue as a going concern. We agree with management's assessment.



Results

No restrictions have been placed on the scope of our audit. We intend to issue an unmodified audit report on the financial statements of the Region and NRH for the year ended December 31, 2020 once the outstanding items referred to above are completed satisfactorily and the financial statements are approved.

Audit risks

The audit risks identified as part of our risk assessment, together with our planned responses and conclusions, are described below.

Region of Niagara

Revenue and deferred revenue amounts*

Audit risk

Canadian Auditing Standards include the presumption of a fraud risk involving improper revenue recognition.

Our audit response

- Substantive testing to determine if restricted contributions (i.e., development charges, conditional grants, COVID-19 funding, etc.) have been recognized as revenue in the appropriate period.

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

Year-end cut-off

Audit risk

Determine if cut-off of revenues and expenses is appropriate.

Our audit response

- Substantive testing on accounts payable, accrued liabilities, deferred revenue and accounts receivable, and
- Test disbursements subsequent to year-end.

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

Tangible capital assets

Risk identified

Appropriate accounting and disclosure.

Our audit response

- Test assumptions used in determining completeness, valuation, recording and cut-off of additions and disposals, and
- Testing of calculations of amortization.

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

Year-end accruals and other estimates (including salaries, employee future benefits, landfill closure and post-closure liability, contaminated sites, and allowance for doubtful accounts)

Audit risk

Estimates requiring management judgments and assumptions.

Our audit response

- Obtain documentation on management's control over accounting estimates and assess risk
- Review and assess the consistency of major assumptions used to develop significant accounting estimates
- Compare actual historical experience to models employed in such calculations
- Obtain calculations from experts for accruals such as employee future benefit liability and landfill liability, and assess assumptions and data used to prepare the report, and
- Review actual outcome of prior year estimates.

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

Management override of controls* (Region/NRH)

Audit risk

Management override of controls is a presumed area of risk in a financial statement audit due to management's ability to override controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

Our audit response

- Our audit tests the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of financial statements
- We will obtain an understanding of the business rationale for significant transactions that we become aware of that are outside of the normal course of business, or that otherwise appear to be unusual given our understanding of the Region and its environment
- We will review accounting estimates for bias and evaluate whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represent a risk of material misstatement
- In addition, experienced Deloitte personnel will be assigned to the testing and review of journal entries and areas of estimates, and
- Professional skepticism will be maintained throughout the audit.

Audit results

Management has represented to us that they have not identified any fraud or illegal items and our audit procedures support this assessment.

Niagara Regional Housing

Tenant and other receivables/revenue*

Audit risk

Canadian Auditing Standards include the presumption of a fraud risk involving improper revenue recognition. Valuation of tenant and other receivables.

Our audit response

- Review aging reports and estimate allowance for doubtful tenant receivables for reasonableness
- Confirm subsidies received from the Service Manager, and
- Perform detail testing of tenant and other receivables and related revenue.

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

Long-term debt

Audit risk

Appropriate accounting and disclosure.

Our audit response

- Confirm long-term debt balances
- Recalculate interest

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

Financial statement disclosures

Audit risk

Appropriate disclosure of proposed future operational changes.

Our audit response

- Ensure changes to future operations are appropriately disclosed as subsequent events in the financial statements.

Audit results

No significant issues were noted as a result of this testing.

*These areas have been identified as areas of significant risk.

Significant events including subsequent events

The design of our audit plan began with a reassessment of risk areas from last year's audit. We have identified a few significant developments or factors that changed since our prior year risk assessment. This is an overview of how these additional developments impacted our audit plan and the results of the audit work we performed.

COVID-19

Impact on our 2020 audit

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the audit work was performed remotely, and the risk assessment and analytical procedures were considered with the potential impact of the pandemic in mind. Despite the audit taking place in a remote work environment, we were able to obtain sufficient evidence for our audit and controls testing. There were no significant changes to the nature of our audit procedures as a result.

Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates

The accounting policies described below are those that are most important and representative of the Region's financial condition and financial performance.

In the course of our audit of the financial statements, we considered the qualitative aspects of the financial reporting process, including items that have a significant impact on the relevance, reliability, comparability and understandability of the information included in the financial statements.

The significant accounting policies of the Region are disclosed in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In our judgment, the significant accounting practices and policies, selected and applied by management are, in all material respects, acceptable under the applicable accounting frameworks and are appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Region.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's current judgments. These judgments are normally based on knowledge and experience about past and current events, assumptions about future events and interpretations of the financial reporting standards.

During the year ended December 31, 2020, management advised us that there were no significant changes in accounting estimates or in judgments relating to the application of the accounting policies.

In our judgment, the significant accounting estimates made by management are, in all material respects, free of possible management bias and of material misstatement. The disclosure in the financial statements around estimation uncertainty is in accordance with PSAS and is appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Region.

Appendix 1 – Communication requirements and other reportable matters

Required communication	Reference	Refer to this report or document described below
Audit Service Plan		
1. Our responsibilities under Canadian GAAS, including forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements	CAS ¹ 260.14	Refer to our master service agreement dated November 8, 2016, and our confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020.
2. An overview of the overall audit strategy, addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Timing of the audit b. Significant risks, including fraud risks 	CAS 260.15	Refer to our 2020 Audit service plan presented August 26, 2020.
3. Significant transactions outside of the normal course of business, including related party transactions	CAS 260 App. 2, CAS 550.27	Nothing to report.
Enquiries of those charged with governance		
4. How those charged with governance exercise oversight over management's process for identifying and responding to the risk of fraud and the internal control that management has established to mitigate these risks	CAS 240.21	We are not aware of any fraudulent events.
5. Any known suspected or alleged fraud affecting the Region	CAS 240.22	None noted.
6. Whether the Region is in compliance with laws and regulations	CAS 250.15	No concerns noted.
Year End Communication		
7. Fraud or possible fraud identified through the audit process	CAS 240.40-.42	We are not aware of any fraudulent events.
8. Significant accounting policies, practices, unusual transactions, and our related conclusions	CAS 260.16 a.	Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates section. No unusual transactions noted.

¹ CAS: Canadian Auditing Standards – CAS are issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of CPA Canada

Required communication	Reference	Refer to this report or document described below
9. Alternative treatments for accounting policies and practices that have been discussed with management during the current audit period	CAS 260.16 a.	Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates section.
10. Matters related to going concern	CAS 570.25	We concluded that there was no substantial doubt about the Region's ability to continue as a going concern.
11. Consultation with other accountants		None
12. Management judgments and accounting estimates	CAS 260.16 a.	Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates section.
13. Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit	CAS 260.16 b.	No significant difficulties to report.
14. Material written communications between management and us, including management representation letters	CAS 260.16 c.	Management representation letter.
15. Circumstances that affect the form and the content of the auditor's report	CAS 260.16.d.	None
16. Other matters that are significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process	CAS 260.16e.	No other matters to report.
17. Modifications to our opinion(s)	CAS 260.A21	None
18. Other significant matters discussed with management	CAS 260.A.22	None
19. Matters involving non-compliance with laws and regulations that come to our attention, unless prohibited by law or regulation, including Illegal or possibly illegal acts that come to our attention	CAS 250.23	We are not aware of any illegal acts or matters involving non-compliance with laws and regulations.
20. Litigation		No litigation matters to report.
21. Significant deficiencies in internal control, if any, identified by us in the conduct of the audit of the financial statements	CAS 265	No deficiencies to report.
22. Uncorrected misstatements and disclosure items	CAS 450.12-13	In accordance with Canadian GAAS, we request that all misstatements be corrected. See Appendix 3 for corrected misstatement. No uncorrected misstatements and uncorrected disclosure to report.
Other reportable matters		
23. Changes to the audit plan	CAS 260.A26	None
24. Concerns regarding management competence and integrity		We did not note any concerns regarding management competence and integrity.
25. Disagreements with management		None

Required communication	Reference	Refer to this report or document described below
26. Post-balance sheet events		None
27. Other significant matters arising from the audit		None

Appendix 2 – Independence letter

April 17, 2021

Private and confidential

The Members of the Audit Committee
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

Dear Audit Committee Members,

We have been engaged to audit the consolidated financial statements of Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") for the year ended December 31, 2020.

You have requested that we communicate in writing with you regarding our compliance with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence as well as all relationships and other matters between the Region, our Firm and network firms that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence. You have also requested us to communicate the related safeguards that have been applied to eliminate identified threats to independence or reduce them to an acceptable level.

In determining which relationships to report, we have considered relevant rules and related interpretations prescribed by the appropriate provincial regulator/ordre and applicable legislation, covering such matters as:

- a. Holding a financial interest, either directly or indirectly, in a client
- b. Holding a position, either directly or indirectly, that gives the right or responsibility to exert significant influence over the financial or accounting policies of a client
- c. Personal or business relationships of immediate family, close relatives, partners or retired partners, either directly or indirectly, with a client
- d. Economic dependence on a client, and
- e. Provision of services in addition to the audit engagement.

We confirm to you that the engagement team and others in the firm as appropriate, the firm and, when applicable, network firms have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence.

We have prepared the following comments to facilitate our discussion with you regarding independence matters arising since April 8, 2020, date of our last letter.

We are not aware of any relationships between the Deloitte entities (defined as the Member Firms of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited and their respective affiliates) and the Region, its affiliates, or persons in financial reporting oversight roles at the Region and its affiliates, that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on independence, that have occurred from April 8, 2020 to April 17, 2021.

We hereby confirm that we are independent with respect to the Region in accordance with the Rules of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario as of April 17, 2021.

This letter is intended solely for the use of the Committee, management, and others within the Region.

Yours truly,



Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Appendix 3 – Summary of misstatements

Corrected misstatement

	Debit \$ (000's)	Credit \$ (000's)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,030	
Cash		2,030
To adjust Cash and Accounts payable and accrued liabilities for amounts related to interest payments made, but not previously recorded, during the year.		

Appendix 4 – Draft management representation letter

Draft

[Region letterhead]

_____, 2021

Private and confidential

Trevor Ferguson
Deloitte LLP
400 Applewood Crescent, Suite 500
Vaughan ON L4K 0C3

Re: Consolidated Financial statements of Regional Municipality of Niagara for the year ended December 31, 2020

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit by Deloitte LLP ("Deloitte" or "you") of the consolidated financial statements of Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region" or "we" or "us") for the year ended December 31, 2020, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information (the "Financial Statements") for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the Financial Statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of the Region in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards ("PSAS").

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. Items are considered to be material if they, individually or in the aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

We confirm that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

Financial statements

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities as set out in the terms of the Master Services Agreement between the Region and Deloitte dated November 8, 2016, and amended January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020 for the preparation of the Financial Statements in accordance with PSAS. In particular, the Financial Statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, and present the financial position of the Region as at December 31, 2020 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with PSAS.
2. Significant assumptions used in making estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

In preparing the Financial Statements in accordance with PSAS, management makes judgments and assumptions about the future and uses estimates. The completeness and appropriateness of the disclosures related to estimates are in accordance with PSAS. The Region has appropriately disclosed in the Financial Statements the nature of measurement uncertainties that are material, including all estimates where it is reasonably possible that the estimate will change in the near term and the effect of the change could be material to the Financial Statements.

The measurement methods, including the related assumptions and models, used in determining the estimates, including fair value, were appropriate, reasonable and consistently applied in accordance with PSAS and appropriately reflect management's intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity. No events have occurred subsequent to December 31, 2020 that require adjustment to the estimates and disclosures included in the Financial Statements.

There are no changes in management's method of determining significant estimates in the current year.

3. The Region has identified all related parties in accordance with Section PS 2200, *Related Party Disclosures* ("PS 2200"). This assessment is based on all relevant factors, including those listed in paragraph 16 of PS 2200.
4. We have determined that the Financial Statements are complete as of the date of this letter as this is the date when there are no changes to the Financial Statements (including disclosures) planned or expected. The Financial Statements have been approved in accordance with our process to finalize financial statements.
5. We have completed our review of events after December 31, 2020 and up to the date of this letter.
6. The Financial Statements are free of material errors and omissions.

Internal controls

7. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.
8. We have disclosed to you all known deficiencies in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting identified as part of our evaluation, including separately disclosing to you all such deficiencies that we believe to be significant deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting.

Information provided

9. We have provided you with:
 - a. Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the Financial Statements, such as records, documentation and other matters.
 - b. All relevant information as well as additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and,
 - c. Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
10. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the Financial Statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
11. We have no knowledge of any information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the entity and involves:
 - a. Management;
 - b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c. Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the Financial Statements.
12. We have no knowledge of any information in relation to allegations of actual, suspected or alleged fraud, or illegal or suspected illegal acts affecting the Region.
13. There have been no communications with regulatory agencies concerning actual or potential noncompliance with or deficiencies in financial reporting practices. There are also no known or possible instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or governmental authorities.
14. We have disclosed to you the identity of the entity's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration.

Independence matters

For purposes of the following paragraphs, "Deloitte" shall mean Deloitte LLP and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, including related member firms and affiliates.

15. Prior to the Region having any substantive employment conversations with a former or current Deloitte engagement team member, the Region has held discussions with Deloitte and obtained approval from the Audit Committee.
16. We have ensured that all services performed by Deloitte with respect to this engagement have been pre-approved by the Audit Committee in accordance with its established approval policies and procedures.

Other matters

Except where otherwise stated below, immaterial matters less than \$1,500,000 collectively are not considered to be exceptions that require disclosure for the purpose of the following representations. This amount is not necessarily indicative of amounts that would require adjustment to or disclosure in the Financial Statements.

17. All transactions have been properly recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the Financial Statements.
18. The Region has identified all related parties in accordance with Section PS 2200, Related Party Disclosures ("PS 2200"). Management has made the appropriate disclosures with respect to its related party transactions in accordance with PS 2200.
19. There are no instances of identified or suspected noncompliance with laws and regulations.
20. We have disclosed to you all known, actual or possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with our lawyers, whose effects should be considered when preparing the Financial Statements. As appropriate, these items have been disclosed and accounted for in the Financial Statements in accordance with PSAS.
21. All events subsequent to the date of the Financial Statements and for which PSAS requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed. Accounting estimates and disclosures included in the Financial Statements that are impacted by subsequent events have been appropriately adjusted.
22. We have disclosed to you all liabilities, provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, and they are appropriately reflected in the Financial Statements.
23. We have disclosed to you, and the Region has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the Financial Statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
24. The Region has satisfactory title to and control over all assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets. We have disclosed to you and in the Financial Statements all assets that have been pledged as collateral.

Selection of accounting policies and recording of transactions

25. The Region's accounting policies and their method of application have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the audited consolidated financial statements as at and for the year ended December 31, 2019.

Work of management's experts

26. We agree with the work of management's experts in evaluating the landfill liability and employee future benefits liability, and have adequately considered the competence and capabilities of the experts in determining amounts and disclosures used in the Financial Statements and underlying accounting records. We did not give any, nor cause any, instructions to be given to management's experts with respect to values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not aware of any matters that have impacted the independence or objectivity of the experts.

Plans or intentions affecting carrying value/classification of assets and liabilities

27. We have disclosed to you all plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the Financial Statements.

Loans and receivables

28. The Region is responsible for determining and maintaining the adequacy of the allowance for doubtful notes, loans, and accounts receivable, as well as estimates used to determine such amounts. Management believes the allowances are adequate to absorb currently estimated bad debts in the account balances.
29. We have identified to you all forgivable loans and loans with concessionary terms and have appropriately reflected these instruments in the financial statements.

Investments

30. With regard to the Region's investments, we have disclosed to you any events that have occurred and facts that have been discovered with respect to such investment that would indicate any other than temporary impairment of the investment's value.

Employee future benefits

31. Employee future benefit costs, assets, and obligations have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the Financial Statements including those arising under defined benefit and defined contribution plans as well as termination arrangements. We believe that the actuarial assumptions and methods used to measure defined benefit plan assets, liabilities and costs for financial accounting purposes are appropriate in the circumstances.
32. We have disclosed to you any intentions of terminating any of our pension plans or withdrawing from the multi-employer plan, or taking any other action that could result in an effective termination or reportable event for any of the plans. We have disclosed to you any occurrences that could result in the termination of any of our pension or multi-employer plans to which we contribute.
33. We are unable to determine the possibility of a withdrawal liability in a multi-employer benefit plan.
34. We do not plan to make frequent amendments to our pension or other post-retirement benefit plans.

Liabilities for contaminated sites

35. We have evaluated all of our tangible capital assets that we own or accept responsibility, and have not identified any sites in which contamination exceeds an environmental standard.

Various matters

36. The following have been properly recorded and, when appropriate, adequately disclosed and presented in the Financial Statements:
- a. Economic dependence on another party;
 - b. Losses arising from sale and purchase commitments;

- c. Agreements to buy back assets previously sold;
- d. Provisions for future removal and site restoration costs;
- e. Sales with recourse provisions
- f. Sales incentives, including cash consideration provided to customers and vendor rebates
- g. Loans that have been restructured to provide a reduction or deferral of interest or principal payments because of borrower financial difficulties.
- h. Financial instruments with significant individual or group concentration of credit risk, and related maximum credit risk exposure;
- i. Arrangements with financial institutions involving compensating balances or other arrangements involving restriction on cash balances and line-of-credit or similar arrangements;
- j. All impaired loans receivable.

Yours truly,

Regional Municipality of Niagara

Ron Tripp
Acting Chief Administration Officer

Todd Harrison
Commissioner, Corporate Services/Treasurer

Appendix 5 – New and Revised Accounting Standards

The following is a summary of certain new standards, amendments and proposals that will become effective in 2022 and beyond.

To review all recent amendments that will impact your organization in the foreseeable future, we invite you to review our revamped [Standard-setting Activities Digest](http://www.cfr.deloitte.ca), included in our Centre for Financial Reporting (www.cfr.deloitte.ca).

Public Sector Accounting Standards

Topic	Description	Effective Date
Section PS 1201 - Financial statement presentation	This Section establishes general reporting principles and standards for the disclosure of information in government financial statements.	This Section applies in the period Section PS 2601 Foreign currency translation, and Section PS 3450 - Financial instruments, are adopted. Earlier adoption is permitted.
Section PS 2601 Foreign currency translation.	This Section establishes standards on how to account for and report transactions that are denominated in a foreign currency in government financial statements.	This Section is effective for (i) Government organizations - April 1, 2012; and (ii) Governments - April 1, 2022. Earlier adoption is permitted.
Section PS 3280 - Asset retirement obligations	This Section establishes standards on how to account for and report a liability for asset retirement obligations.	Effective April 1, 2022, earlier application is permitted.
Section PS 3041 - Portfolio investments	This Section establishes standards on how to account for and report portfolio investments in government financial statements.	This Section applies in the period Section PS 1201 - Financial statement presentation, Section PS 2601 Foreign currency translation, and Section PS 3450 - Financial instruments, earlier application is permitted.
Section PS 3400 - Revenue	This Section establishes standards on how to account for and report on revenue. Specifically, it differentiates between revenue arising from transactions that include performance obligations and transactions that do not have performance obligations.	Effective for fiscal years beginning on or after April 1, 2023. Earlier adoption is permitted. The Section may be applied retroactively or prospectively.
Section PS 3450 - Financial instruments	This Section establishes standards on how to account for and report all types of financial instruments including derivatives.	This section is effective for: (i) Government organizations - April 1, 2012 (ii) Governments - April 1, 2022. Governments and government organizations would also adopt Section PS 2601 Foreign currency translation, at the same time. Earlier adoption is permitted.

Appendix 3: Annual Surplus Reconciliation

AC-C 3-2021
May 10, 2021

<i>(in thousands)</i>	<u>Approved Budget</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Based on budget approach			
Water & Wastewater surplus (deficit)	\$ -	\$ 2,729	\$ (1,684)
Waste Management surplus (deficit)	-	1,493	(1,156)
Levy surplus surplus	-	37,306	3,453
Operating Surplus based on CSD 17-2021	-	41,528	613
PSAS Presentation Adjustments:			
Capital			
Recognize amortization	(92,331)	(92,331)	(87,189)
Recognize in-year capital program revenues	58,182	58,025	45,375
Recognize capital fund expenditures resulting in operating expenses	(20,125)	(20,066)	(10,681)
Recognize operating fund expenditures resulting in capital assets	2,757	2,757	2,040
Recognize proceeds & loss on disposal of assets	(2,183)	(2,231)	(765)
Recognize operating funding transferred to capital program	-	-	6,190
Capital Subtotal	(53,700)	(53,846)	(45,030)
Funded			
Remove principal debt repayments	47,298	31,573	33,936
Remove net transfers to reserves (including interest allocation)	52,777	89,528	72,026
Remove sinking fund activity	-	385	345
Funded Subtotal	100,075	121,486	106,307
Unfunded			
Recognize change in landfill liability	(6,595)	(6,595)	120
Recognize power dams liability	-	422	422
Recognize change in unfunded employee future benefits liability	(6,192)	(6,191)	(5,036)
Recognize change in contaminated sites liability	(576)	(576)	-
Unfunded Subtotal	(13,363)	(12,940)	(4,494)
Annual surplus per PSAS consolidated financial statements	\$ 33,012	\$ 96,228	\$ 57,396

A balanced operating budget, developed for the purposes of setting tax rates and user fees, was approved by Council on December 12, 2019. The operating surplus presented at the top of the chart represents the actual financial results of the Region compared to the operating budget. Since the Region is required to report its annual surplus using Public Sector Accounting standards (PSAS), a number of adjustments are required in order for the financial results to conform with PSAS. For example, in the operating budget, capital projects are recognized when funding is allocated; however, in order to conform with PSAS, an adjustment is required as capital projects should be expensed over time through amortization rather than immediately.

Subject: Appointment of Auditors

Report to: Audit Committee

Report date: Monday, May 10, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Deloitte **BE APPOINTED** as the Niagara Region's (the Region) external auditor for an additional two-year term starting with the calendar year ending December 31, 2021 until the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Audit Committee and Council's approval to extend the external audit services contract with Deloitte for an additional two-year term.
- With the ongoing pandemic resulting in significant impacts to the financial results of the Region and to staff availability to potentially transition auditors, staff believe there is value in retaining Deloitte as the audit firm familiar with our current business and processes.
- Per the audit committee terms of reference, it is the responsibility of the committee to approve the replacement, reappointment and/or appointment of the external auditors to Corporate Services Committee and Council.
- The current five-year contract with Deloitte, which was competitively procured via RFP in 2016, expires with the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.
- Of the proposals evaluated in 2016 that met the benchmark set out in the evaluation criteria, Deloitte had the lowest five-year cost with only inflationary increases in years three to five.
- The requirement for an annual audit of the Region's consolidated financial statements is established in section 294 of the Municipal Act. The Municipal Act Section 296 requires a municipality to appoint an auditor for a term not exceeding five years; however, this does not impact the ability to reappoint the same auditors for a subsequent period of up to five years.

Financial Considerations

The Region has signed a master services agreement with Deloitte that can be leveraged to cover the extended term and external audit service costs included in the

approved Council budget. Deloitte have agreed to maintain their audit fees with a 2% inflationary increase over their 2020/2021 fees for the two-year extension term. Actual fees and proposed fees for the extension term, based on known audits required, are in the table below.

Table 1: Audit fee summary (excluding HST) Actual Audit fees

2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	Total	Proposed Audit Fees (inclusive of 2% increase) 2021/2022	Proposed Audit Fees (inclusive of 2% increase) 2022/2023	Total
173,900	153,100	146,450	152,950	155,600*	\$782,000	154,000	154,000	\$308,000

* Includes \$5,000 one-time audit of a capital project not required in 2021 thru 2023.

In 2020/2021, the Region engaged Deloitte to provide 24 audits of various programs and projects (see Appendix 1). Audit services provided by Deloitte and included in the fees above include the financial statement audits for Court Services and Niagara Regional Housing. The NRPS does not currently have a financial statement audit but has engaged Deloitte to perform specified procedures on their police special bank account in the past. In 2021 and beyond, NRPS would hire an auditor separate from this contract to perform any audit work required.

Analysis

The Region is currently focusing efforts on supporting the COVID-19 pandemic, including significant supports required from the financial management and planning (FMP) division. In addition to playing an active role in supporting the Region's emergency response through the emergency operations centres, FMP staff are supporting various new reporting requirements associated with numerous new funding agreements. These requirements are expected to continue into 2022, as many of them will require final reporting once the 2021 year is complete.

As a result of the new funding available from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Region adjusting service levels to address the needs of the community, the financial results in

2021 are expected to vary from a normal operating year. This may lead to additional variance reporting to fully understand the impacts to our lines of business.

Staff believe the Region would be well served by allowing FMP staff to continue to focus efforts on supporting the pandemic instead of prioritizing planning and evaluating an RFP and potentially transitioning to a new audit services provider, which requires a significant investment of staff time. Additionally, new accounting standards for asset retirement obligations, financial instruments and revenue recognition are coming into effect in 2021 and 2022, which will require staff time.

Deloitte has strong leadership presence in the municipal/public sector. Deloitte's municipal expertise in conjunction with the Region-specific knowledge obtained over the past five years give FMP staff confidence that Deloitte is best suited to most efficiently and effectively navigate any financial variances as a result of the Region's pandemic response. Additionally, with COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 and 2021, the Region and Deloitte have already established an efficient process allowing all audit work to be done remotely.

The two-year contract extension would be considered a negotiation under the Region's procurement by-law section 19 (a) (vi) & (x) outlined below.

19. (a) Notwithstanding that Negotiation may be a component of another procurement process, Negotiation may be used for Purchases of Goods and/or Services when any of the following criteria apply:

- (vi) the extension of an existing Contract would be more effective;
- (x) there is Council authorization to do so.

Alternatives Reviewed

Audit committee could direct staff to complete a competitive procurement process to select an auditor; however, this is not recommended for the reasons described in the report.

Audit committee could recommend only a one-year extension and request staff complete a competitive procurement process in 2022 to select an auditor. This could alleviate some of the current resource concerns; however, given the uncertainty of the duration of the pandemic, this is not recommended.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Ensuring audited financial statements are provided to Council and the public supports the Council Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Environment.

Other Pertinent Reports

AC-C 16-2016 Appointment of Auditors (September 19, 2016)

Prepared by:

Melanie Steele, MBA CPA CA
Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis
Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Jeffrey Mulligan, Procurement Manager and reviewed by Helen Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management and Planning/Deputy Treasurer.

Appendices

Appendix 1 2020-2021 Audit Report List

2020/2021 AUDIT REPORT LIST

Consolidated Regional Municipality of Niagara
Sinking Funds
Trust Funds
Court Services
Niagara Regional Housing
Ambulance Dispatch
General Health Programs (Schedule of Revenues and Expenses)
General Health Programs (Annual Reconciliation Return)
Healthy Babies
Infant and Child Development Program
Mental Health (Schedule of Revenues and Expenses)
Mental Health (Annual Reconciliation Return)
Children's Services (Schedule of Revenues and Expenses)
Community Support Services (Annual Reconciliation Return)
Long-Term Care Facilities (8 separate homes – Annual Reconciliation Returns)
Homeless Partnership Strategy Program
NOTL Water/Wastewater Treatment Plant Capital Project

Subject: Update to Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Report to: Audit Committee

Report date: Monday, May 10, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the updated Audit Committee Terms of Reference, Appendix 1 to Report AC-C 6-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Key Facts

- At the Audit Committee meeting of February 8, 2021 members requested that staff review the current Terms of Reference and provide updates as necessary, including considering the merits of having non-Regional councillors participate as members.
- The previous update to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference was approved by Council on June 29, 2017.
- This update is provided following a scan and discussions with several comparable jurisdictions to ensure best practices are considered and Niagara Region's Audit Committee remains accountable and progressive in its oversight capacity and role.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial impacts related to the recommendations within this report. If Council proceeds with either area of analysis below there could be a financial impact based on potential remuneration and staffing impact.

Analysis

The only change to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference was removing reference to the former Internal Control and Organizational Performance (ICOP) office. All other changes are minor in nature to ensure the document reflect current operating procedures.

Audit Committee Composition Considerations:

- The current Terms of Reference calls for, at a minimum, three councillors, in addition to the Regional Chair. The four members, as is stated, should have

financial literacy and familiarity with the Region's accounting, operating and financial reporting structure.

- Several municipalities, including Peel Region, Cities of Burlington, Vaughan, Thunder Bay, Brampton and London allow for non-councillors to be active and full members of their Audit Committee.
- Niagara Region does not provide any remuneration for non-elected committee members which is consistent with all other municipalities scanned.
- External members' participation could provide a specific skill set or certification that may not exist within the current Audit Committee members, such as CPA, CIA or Forensic Auditing designation.
- Majority of reports are available for public review, however non-council members would be required to sign an oath of confidentiality to fully participate in in-camera sessions.
- Non-council membership should be capped such that the majority of voting members at all Audit Committee meetings should still be elected representatives
- All Audit Committee reports and recommendations are still approved and ratified by Regional Council.

Alternatives Reviewed

Due to the potential confidentiality of reports, the time commitment to implement a process of advertising, interviewing, educating potential new audit committee members and in light of the limited remaining term of Council, staff are not recommending the addition of external committee members at this time.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Effective internal and external audit reporting and processes align with current Council's Strategic Priority – Sustainable and Engaging Government. The goal of this strategic initiative is a commitment to high quality, efficient, fiscally sustainable and coordinated core services through enhanced communication, partnerships and collaborations with the community.

Other Pertinent Reports

AC-C 9-2017 Audit Committee Terms of Reference

AC-C 32-2018 – Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Prepared by:

Helen Chamberlain, CPA, CA
Director, Financial Management and Planning, and
Frank Marcella, MPA, CRMA
Manager, Internal Audit

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner, Corporate Services/Treasurer

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1 – AC-C 6-2021 - Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Audit Committee Terms of Reference

The Audit Committee Terms of Reference outlines the Committee's composition, authority, meetings, reporting, mandate, and procedure.

Composition:

The Audit Committee is an advisory committee of Regional Council and will be comprised of the Regional Chair, and at least three other Councillors.

Members of the Audit Committee should be financially literate which includes:

- understanding of the Region's internal and external reporting, accounting policies and process;
- a general understanding of the Region's major economic, operating, and financial risks;
- a broad awareness of the interrelationship of the Region's operations and its financial reporting; and
- understanding the difference between the oversight function of the Committee and the decision-making function of management

Audit Committee deliberations will normally be supported by staff including the CAO, Internal Auditors, Commissioner of Corporate Services/Treasurer, Director, Financial Management & Planning and other appropriate staff as required.

The length of term to be served by members on the Committee is concurrent with the term of Regional Council, giving consideration to the benefits of periodic rotation of committee membership.

The Audit Committee Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from the Committee members for a two year term at the first meeting of the year and two years subsequent to that date.

Authority:

Regional Council may authorize the Audit Committee to investigate any activity of the Region. All employees are to co-operate as requested by the Committee. In addition, any Standing Committees may request that any activity be considered for an audit with requests submitted directly to Audit Committee.

With approval of Regional Council, the Audit Committee may assign staff (e.g. Internal Audit) or retain persons or a third party having special expertise to assist the Committee in fulfilling its responsibilities.

Meetings:

The Audit Committee shall meet at least four times per year or at the call of the chair as required.

The meetings will be scheduled to permit timely review of internal and external financial reporting and special purpose audit reports. Additional meetings may be held as deemed necessary by the Regional Chair, Audit Committee Chair or as requested by any Committee member or the external auditors.

At the beginning of each year a meeting schedule will be proposed that meets the above criteria and proposes the subject matter to be considered at each meeting.

Reporting:

The minutes of meetings of the Audit Committee will be provided to Regional Council for final approval.

Mandate:

The Audit Committee assists Regional Council in the provision of effective municipal governance by advising on complex accounting policies, accounting estimates, internal controls, financial statement disclosures, safeguarding of corporate assets, compliance with legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements and the efficient and effective use of resources.

The responsibilities of the Audit Committee are to satisfy itself, on behalf of Regional Council on the following matters:

1) External Audit

- Niagara Region's annual consolidated financial statements are fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and to recommend to Council whether the annual financial statements should be approved;

- Audited financial statements of the Niagara Region's boards, agencies, and commissions, and other audited financial statements be received for information purposes following approval by the respective Board or Standing Committee, to assist in its overall assessment of the Region's annual consolidated financial statements and internal controls over financial reporting;
- The Region has implemented appropriate systems of internal control over financial reporting and that these are operating effectively;
- The Region has implemented appropriate systems of internal control to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and ethical requirements;
- The external audit function has been effectively carried out and that any matter which the independent auditors wish to bring to the attention of Audit Committee, and/or Council has been addressed; and
- The Audit Committee will approve the replacement, reappointment and/or appointment of the external auditors to Council.

2) Internal Audit

- Audit Committee will review and approve the mandate for the internal audit function (Internal Audit Charter) and ensure that all of the Region's operations are considered for review based on a risk-based annual work plan;
- The Region has implemented appropriate systems of internal control to ensure compliance with legal, regulatory and ethical requirements;
- The audit function is effectively carried out and that any matter which the independent auditors wish to bring to the attention of Audit Committee, and/or Council has been addressed;
- Audit reports are relevant, reliable, objective and transparent. In making this assessment, the Audit Committee may recommend the use of external subject matter experts. For purposes of efficiency and matters of budgeting expenditures, it is recommended that the use of subject matter experts be determined annually when the Internal Audit work plan is approved;
- As necessary, Quality Assurance reviews are conducted in accordance with the Institute of Internal Auditors' Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing;

- Internal auditing includes a review of the adequacy of internal control systems for safeguarding assets, the effectiveness of corporate reporting systems regarding administrative and program performance and the level of compliance with legislation, regulations, corporate objectives, policies and ethics;
- Assess the Region's system of internal financial controls and the control environment to gain reasonable assurance that such controls are effective and efficient and assist Audit Committee in assessing whether management has created a culture of integrity and an effective control environment throughout the organization;
- Review all internal audit reports and provide advice to Regional Council on significant issues identified in audit reports and action to be taken on issues raised, including identification and dissemination of best practice; and
- Monitor management's implementation of internal audit recommendations.

Applicability of Procedural By-Law:

As an advisory committee of Council, the Audit Committee is governed by the sections of the Region's Procedural By-law relating to advisory committees.

Subject: Management Action Plan Update

Report to: Audit Committee

Report date: Monday, May 10, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Report AC-C 5-2021 regarding the current status of audit recommendations **BE RECEIVED.**

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Audit Committee with a status update on management responses to audit recommendations that are not fully implemented.
- Management Action Plan (MAP) status updates are considered a mandatory best practice by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) to ensure Audit Committee is aware of any outstanding risk areas within the corporation.
- A total of 14 outstanding high and medium risk audit recommendations and related management responses are summarized in this audit report.

Financial Considerations

There are no immediate budgetary considerations associated with this report. The audit recommendations and subsequent Management Action Plans (MAPs) had budgetary implications associated with their implementation which are accommodated within current operating budgets.

Analysis

Many of the program areas have continued the implementation of management action plans as noted in the attached summary. Since the last report all recommendations related to Payroll Audit and VFM Road Maintenance have been fully addressed and removed from the list. HR/Total Rewards has continued working with the benefits carrier on strengthening controls in two identified areas noted in the audit report to successfully meet its planned completion date.

In addition, the final outstanding recommendations related to the 2016 Burgoyne Bridge VFM Audit have been transferred to stand alone projects with revised timelines. Each of these projects – Project Cost Estimating and Enterprise Content Management will be

monitored by Internal Audit until such time as they have been fully addressed or a subsequent audit is completed.

Niagara Region has implemented several of project management recommendations identified in the initial Burgoyne Bridge VFM Audit. For several completed and active Tier 1 projects the Region has improved its estimating, reporting, contract oversight and documentation standards with noticeable positive results. Examples of successful projects include the Long Term Care redevelopments in Fort Erie and St. Catharines, South Niagara Falls Water/Waste Water Treatment Facility and NRPS District 1 building construction.

Finally, many of the recommendations related to the three Procurement-related audits have been addressed or are on target to be completed within the prescribed timeframes.

Alternatives Reviewed

No other alternatives were reviewed at this time.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Internal Audit along with related audit functions such as Value-for-money (VFM) audits and compliance reviews were identified and approved within the current Council's Strategic Priority – Sustainable and Engaging Government. The goal of this strategic initiative is a commitment to high quality, efficient, fiscally sustainable and coordinated core services through enhanced communication, partnerships and collaborations with the community.

Management Action Plan status updates satisfy IIA Performance Standard 2500 – Monitoring Progress. “The Chief Audit Executive must establish a follow-up process to monitor and ensure that management actions have been effectively implemented.”

Other Pertinent Reports

AC-C 12-2020 – Management Action Plan Update

Prepared by:

Frank Marcella, MPA, CGAP
Manager, Internal Audit

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner, Corporate
Services/Treasurer

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1 AC-C 5-2021 Management Action Plan Update

MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Report Title	Report Issue Date	High & Medium Observations	Closed	In Progress	Past Due	On Hold	Deadline	Follow-up Action Plan
Enterprise Content Management	Feb-16	1		1			Jun-22	Niagara Region initiated Enterprise Content Management (ECM) program to ensure that all corporate information assets and artifacts are properly managed throughout their lifecycle. In answer to gaps identified in a 3 rd party audit and general concerns over document management and auditability, the Region is looking to ensure all content is secured, managed and a clear audit trail of the lifecycle of the content is available.
Project Estimating	Feb-16	1				1		Project Estimating has become the responsibility of Asset Management Office. A 5 year Asset Management Plan will be submitted in Q3 2021 which will include Project Estimating, as well as other subprojects.
Fleet Parts Inventory & Fuel Audit	Nov-17	1				1	n/a	The observation on hold pertains to research the cost and benefit associated with installation of automatic fuel pumps. The research is dependent on Council's direction on Niagara Region's role in Material Recycling Facilities (MRF)
P-Card Audit	Oct-17	10	10				n/a	Follow-up audit planned for 2021

Information Technology Security and Data Backup Controls Audit	Apr-18	16	15	1			Apr-20	The three observations in process pertain to security assessments, remote sites of infrastructure devices and investigation of CMDB tool. Internal Audit is currently scoping out plans to conduct audits next year focussing on cyber security, access and control measures and penetration testing.
Grants and Incentive Program	Jun-18	4		4			Dec-20	In September 2019 Regional Council identified four priority areas for Regional incentives (Affordable Housing, Brownfield Remediation, Employment, and Public Realm). An interdepartmental Committee, and four subcommittees for each priority area, have been meeting to work through program alignment, financial implications, administrative models, and more. Following final engagement this spring, it is anticipated a presentation and recommendation report regarding incentives will go to Regional Council in summer 2021.
Procurement Audit	Jan-20	4	1	3			Dec-20	One recommendation has been fully addressed while the remaining three are in progress and on time.
Non-competitive Procurement Audit	Jan-20	3	1	2			Jul-20	One recommendation has been fully addressed while the remaining two are in progress and on time.
Health Benefits Claims Audit	Mar-20	2	2	0			Dec-21	HR/Total Rewards has worked with the carrier to receive expanded and improved reporting which will facilitate identification of potential and support contract negotiations. In addition, the carrier has agreed to request additional documentation for vision care to ensure compliance with expected policies.
KPMG Non-Competitive Procurement Audit	Dec-20	4	2	2			Dec-21	Of the HIGH/MEDIUM risks identified by KPMG two have been completed and two are in progress and on time.
		46	31	13	0	2		

Subject: Approval of Court Services 2020 Audited Schedule of Revenues, Expenses and Funds Available for Distribution

Report to: Joint Board of Management

Report date: Thursday, April 8, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the draft audited schedule of revenue, expenses and funds available for distribution for the year ended December 31, 2020, for The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services ("Court Services") (Appendix 1 to Report JBM-C 6-2021) **BE APPROVED**;
2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditor to finalize the statements as presented; and
3. That this report **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee and to The Ministry of the Attorney General as per the Memorandum of Understanding, for information as required.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the 2020 audited schedule of revenue, expense and funds available for distribution (Appendix 1 to Report JBM-C 6-2021).
- Court Services received an unmodified audit opinion which indicates that in Deloitte's opinion the financial information presented, in all material respects, is in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the Niagara Region Courts Inter-municipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000.
- As per Financial Reporting and Forecasting Policy (C-F-020), financial statements and/or schedules prepared for Agencies, Boards or Commissions (ABC) will be approved by the governing board of the ABC. Upon Joint Board of Management – Niagara Courts approval, the Manager, Court Services and Treasurer will be authorized to sign the auditors' representation letter to obtain the auditors' signed final report. The approved schedule will then be forwarded to Audit Committee for information.

Financial Considerations

The draft audited schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution has been prepared in compliance with legislation and in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the Niagara Region Courts Inter-municipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000.

A copy of the draft audited schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution for the year ended December 31, 2020 is attached (Appendix 1 to Report JBM-C 6-2021).

The schedule of revenues, expense and funds available for distribution is prepared specifically for the purpose of meeting the requirements outlined in the Niagara Region Courts Inter-municipal Agreement and may not be suitable for other purposes.

Analysis

The Region's auditors, Deloitte, completed the audit of the financial information in the schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution. The auditors have indicated that, in their opinion, the financial information for the year ended December 31, 2020, is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the Niagara Region Courts Inter-municipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000.

The schedule shows that Court Services had \$686,392 in funds available for distribution (\$343,196 to local area municipalities and \$343,196 to the Niagara Region). The Niagara Region transferred budgeted net revenues for the first and second quarters of the year (\$367,209) to the local area municipalities. This is in excess of the amount to be distributed based on year-end results, and the excess will be recovered in the first quarter of 2021.

Alternatives Reviewed

The audited schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution is prepared in accordance with the Niagara Region Courts Inter-municipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000, and has been approved by Regional Council; therefore no alternative is available.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Providing formal financial reporting to Council and the public supports the Council Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Environment.

Other Pertinent Reports

None

Prepared by:
Melanie Steele
Associate Director Reporting and
Analysis

Recommended by:
Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

This report was prepared in consultation with Blair Hutchings, Program Financial Analyst, Corporate Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft 2020 Schedule of Revenues, Expenses and Funds Available for Distribution

Schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution

The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services

December 31, 2020

The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services

December 31, 2020

Table of contents

Independent Auditor's Report	1-2
Schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution	3
Notes to the schedule	4-6

Draft

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board Members of The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution of The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services (the "Court Services") for the year ended December 31, 2020 and notes to the schedule (collectively referred to as the "schedule").

In our opinion, the accompanying schedule of the Court Services for the year ended December 31, 2020, is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the Niagara Region Courts Intermunicipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedule* section of our report. We are independent of the Court Services in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the schedule in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the schedule, which describes the basis of accounting. The schedule is prepared to assist the Court Services in complying with the financial reporting provisions in the Niagara Region Courts Intermunicipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000. As a result, the schedule may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and the Board of Directors for the Schedule

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the schedule in accordance with the basis of accounting as described in Note 1, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the schedule that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Board of Directors are responsible for overseeing the Court Services' financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Schedule

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the schedule as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this schedule.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the schedule, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Court Services' internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates, if any, and related disclosures made by management.

We communicate with the Board of Directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
April xx, 2021

The Regional Municipality of Niagara

Court Services

Schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution
year ended December 31, 2020

		2020	2019
	Budget	Actual	Actual
	\$	\$	\$
Revenues			
Offence receipts	8,861,747	5,067,719	7,026,052
Proceeds on sale of surplus land	-	-	215,163
	8,861,747	5,067,719	7,241,215
Controllable expenses			
Salaries and benefits	2,572,104	1,521,878	1,609,856
Program support costs (Note 4)	1,150,274	1,179,449	1,158,189
Collection charges	160,000	193,094	242,254
Legal	127,620	22,018	31,688
Payment processing costs	108,583	69,717	75,253
Ticket data capture	32,000	761	784
Telephone	9,700	8,058	8,162
Business forms	4,000	2,864	6,842
Building and equipment rental	500	720	253
Office and administration	71,182	43,271	56,161
	4,235,963	3,041,830	3,189,442
Uncontrollable expenses			
Payments to other municipalities/provinces	250,000	83,992	296,078
Victim fine surcharge	1,763,710	741,955	1,034,291
Adjudication	579,800	182,748	370,536
Dedicated fines	20,000	13,025	31,325
Other provincial expenses	343,438	126,100	214,956
	2,956,948	1,147,820	1,947,186
Total expenses	7,192,911	4,189,650	5,136,628
Excess of revenues over expenses	1,668,836	878,069	2,104,587
Change in employee benefits and other liabilities	-	8,323	(6,547)
Transfer to Niagara Region (Note 2)	(200,000)	(200,000)	-
Funds available for distribution (Note 3)	1,468,836	686,392	2,098,040

The accompanying notes to the schedule are an integral part of this financial statement.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services

Notes to the schedule

December 31, 2020

1. Significant accounting policies

The schedule of revenues, expenses and funds available for distribution of The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services has been prepared by management in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the Niagara Region Courts Intermunicipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000 (the "agreement").

Significant accounting policies are as follows:

Revenues

Revenues are recorded on a cash basis.

Expenses

Court Services follows the accrual method of accounting for controllable expenses. Controllable expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable as a result of receipt of goods or services and/or the creation of a legal obligation to pay.

Uncontrollable expenses are recorded on a cash basis.

Capital assets

Capital assets and amortization of capital assets are not reported as expenses on the schedule of revenue and expenses and funds available for distribution.

Transfers to reserves

Transfers to reserves are based on approval by the Board, as provided for in section 8.6 of the agreement.

Employee future benefits

Court Services provides certain employee benefits which will require funding in future periods. These benefits include sick leave, life insurance, extended health and dental benefits for early retirees.

The costs of sick leave, life insurance, extended health and dental benefits are actuarially determined using management's best estimate of salary escalation, accumulated sick days at retirement, insurance and health care cost trends, long term inflation rates and discount rates. The cost is actuarially determined using the projected benefits method prorated on service. Under this method, the benefit costs are recognized over the expected average service life of the employee group. Any actuarial gains and losses related to the past service of employees are amortized over the expected average remaining service life of the employee group.

2. Transfer to Niagara Region

Court Services transferred \$334,000 (2019 - \$1,226,247) to the Niagara Region for transfer to the Court Services Facility Renewal reserve.

The following represents the transactions through the reserve:

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Reserve held by the Niagara Region, beginning of year	2,876,247	1,650,000
Transfers during the year to reserve from operating budget	200,000	-
Return of funds from Court Facilities Renewal project	134,000	1,226,247
Reserve held by the Niagara Region, end of year	3,210,247	2,876,247

The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services

Notes to the schedule

December 31, 2020

3. Distribution to area municipalities

Court Services revenue distribution by municipality is as follows:

	Budget	2020	2019
	\$	\$	\$
Region of Niagara	734,418	343,196	1,049,020
Niagara Falls	143,138	66,889	204,559
Port Colborne	23,208	10,845	33,674
St. Catharines	183,384	85,695	266,031
Thorold	29,377	13,728	41,646
Welland	59,194	27,662	84,446
Fort Erie	46,709	21,827	67,662
Grimsby	58,313	27,250	81,614
Lincoln	48,398	22,617	67,872
Niagara-on-the-Lake	66,832	31,231	94,726
Pelham	34,004	15,890	48,255
Wainfleet	13,734	6,418	19,407
West Lincoln	28,128	13,144	39,128
	1,468,837	686,392	2,098,040

The Niagara Region transferred the budgeted net revenue distribution for the first and second quarters of the year (\$367,209) to the local area municipalities, in accordance with the Niagara Region Courts Intermunicipal Agreement dated April 26, 2000. This is in excess of the amount to be distributed based on year-end results, and the excess will be recovered in the first quarter of 2021.

The Regional Municipality of Niagara Court Services

Notes to the schedule

December 31, 2020

4. Program support costs

Court Services records direct operating expenses to their respective activity. The Regional Municipality of Niagara has a consolidated cost allocation policy with a guiding principle of more closely aligning indirect costs with the support programs and services as defined by the Province in the Financial Information Return (FIR) guidelines. The methodology allocates these indirect costs to end programs/services based on usage drivers.

Under this methodology, all departments providing program/service support functions will allocate their costs using drivers specific to each type of expense.

Program support costs which have been allocated are:

	Budget	2020	2019
	\$	\$	\$
Finance services	128,344	122,280	128,547
Human resources services	47,852	114,419	37,144
Information technology services	114,538	88,477	107,609
Legal services	47,339	44,818	40,186
Insurance costs	604	566	522
Printing costs	1,621	2,625	3,223
Mail costs	8,994	6,485	7,114
Communications costs	813	-	516
Facilities costs	800,169	799,779	833,328
	1,150,274	1,179,449	1,158,189



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P.O. Box 344
Thorold ON L2V 3Z3

Phone: 905-682-9201
Toll Free: 1-800-232-3292
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1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
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Main Fax: 905-687-4844
Fax – Applications: 905-935-0476
Fax – Contractors: 905-682-8301
Web site: www.nrh.ca

April 16, 2021

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Dear Ms. Norio,

At their April 16, 2021 meeting, the Niagara Regional Housing Board of Directors passed the following motion as recommended in attached report NRH 7-2021:

1. That the draft audited financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing as attached in Appendix 1, for the year ended December 31, 2020 **BE APPROVED**; and
2. That the audit findings report pertaining to the audited financial statements, attached as Appendix 2, of Niagara Regional Housing for the year ended December 31, 2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information.
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditors to finalize the statements as presented.
4. That this report **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee for information.

Your assistance is requested in moving report NRH 7-2021 through proper channels to the Audit Committee.

Sincerely,

Councillor Walter Sendzik
Chair

Subject: 2020 Draft Audited Financial Statements

Report to: Board of Directors of Niagara Regional Housing

Report date: Friday, April 16, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the draft audited financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing as attached in Appendix 1, for the year ended December 31, 2020 **BE APPROVED**; and
2. That the audit findings report pertaining to the audited financial statements, attached as Appendix 2, of Niagara Regional Housing for the year ended December 31, 2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information.
3. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditors to finalize the statements as presented.
4. That this report **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the 2020 draft audited financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing (Appendix 1).
- The requirement for an annual audit is established in the Housing Services Act and the Corporations Act for non profit corporations.
- Niagara Regional Housing received an unqualified audit opinion which indicates that in Deloitte's opinion the financial information presented, in all material respects, is in accordance with Public Sector Accounting Standards (PSAS).
- No management letter points were received.
- Year-end funding surplus results were reported in report 21-196-4.4 in February 2021 and are consistent with the results reported in these audited financial statements adjusted for accrual accounting presentation required by PSAS.
- As per Financial Reporting and Forecasting Policy (C-F-020), financial statements and/or schedules prepared for Agencies, Boards or Commissions (ABC) will be approved by the governing board of the ABC. Upon NRH Board approval, the NRH CEO and Treasurer will be authorized to sign the auditors' representation letter to obtain the auditors' signed final report. The approved schedule will then be forwarded to Audit Committee for information.

Financial Considerations

The draft financial statements have been prepared in compliance with legislation and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.

This report is presenting historical financial information. Niagara Regional Housing's budget is prepared and reported on a quarterly basis whereas the audited financial statements are prepared using PSAS. Appendix 3 reconciles the surplus per the audited Statement of Operations to the funding surplus based on the budget approach.

Analysis

The draft financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing for the year ended December 31, 2020 attached in Appendix 1 have been audited in accordance with Canadian PSAS. The external auditor (Deloitte) has indicated that in their opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the statement of financial position of Niagara Regional Housing as at December 31, 2020 and the statement of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net debt, and cash flows for the year then ended. In addition, Deloitte audit findings report for the year ended December 31, 2020 is attached in Appendix 2.

The financial statements are prepared using PSAS making them comparable to other public sector organizations in Canada.

Alternatives Reviewed

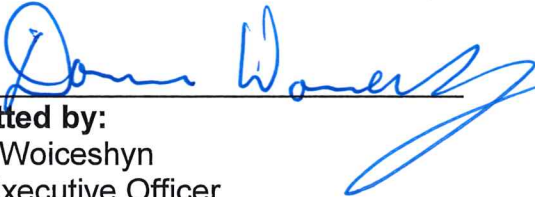
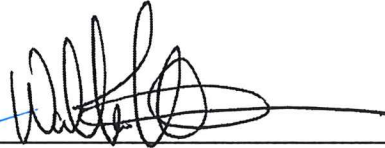
The requirement for an annual audit is established in the Housing Services Act and the Corporations Act for non-profit corporations and therefore no other alternatives are available.

Relationship to NRH and/or Council Strategic Priorities

Providing formal financial reporting to Council and the public supports the Council Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Environment.

Other Pertinent Reports

21-196-4.4	2020 Year-End Transfer Report
CSD 17-2021	2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report

	
Submitted by: Donna Woiceshyn Chief Executive Officer	Approved by: Walter Sendzik Chair

This report was prepared by Donovan D'Amboise, Program Financial Specialist, in consultation with Melanie Steele, Associate Director, Program Financial Support.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Draft 2020 Audited Financial Statements
Appendix 2	2020 Deloitte Audit Findings Report
Appendix 3	2020 Surplus Reconciliation

Financial Statements of Niagara Regional Housing

Year ended December 31, 2020

DR

Niagara Regional Housing

Index

Independent Auditors' Report	3-4
Statement of Financial Position	5
Statement of Operations	6
Statement of Change in Net Debt	7
Statement of Changes in Cash Flows	8
Notes to the Financial Statements	9-25
Schedule of Financial Activities – Operating Fund	26

DRAFT

Independent Auditor's Report

To the Board of Directors of Niagara Regional Housing

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing (the "Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, the statements of operations, change in net debt and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as at December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations, changes in its net debt, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards ("PSAS").

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with PSAS, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
_____, 2021

Niagara Regional Housing

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 12,858,591	\$ 12,478,578
Investments	6,476,231	6,399,246
Accounts receivable	4,611,037	4,267,475
Total financial assets	23,945,859	23,145,299
FINANCIAL LIABILITIES		
Due to Niagara Region	8,480,019	12,086,075
Deferred revenue (note 3)	4,779,114	3,789,124
Mortgages and debentures (note 4)	35,374,917	36,356,548
Employee future benefits (note 5)	1,537,805	1,648,252
	50,171,855	53,879,999
Net debt	(26,225,996)	(30,734,700)
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Tangible capital assets (note 6)	138,349,815	134,582,039
Prepaid expenses and deposits	744,312	718,846
	139,094,127	135,300,885
Commitments (note 9)		
Accumulated surplus (note 7)	\$ 112,868,131	\$ 104,566,185

The accompanying notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this financial statement.

Niagara Regional Housing

Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2020

	2020 Budget (note 11)	2020 Actual	2019 Actual
REVENUES			
Rental revenue	\$ 15,488,979	\$ 15,839,485	\$ 15,292,964
Subsidies			
Niagara Region	42,813,732	42,813,732	38,209,235
Federal and Provincial Government	16,689,685	15,761,117	19,024,147
Investment income	145,000	225,082	334,480
Gain on sale of assets	203	203	-
Development Charge revenue	5,048,354	5,048,354	272,102
Sundry revenue	417,632	271,331	387,348
	80,603,585	79,959,304	73,520,276
Transferred to Niagara Region and transferred to reserves (note 8)	(3,082,927)	(5,183,035)	(6,452,800)
	77,520,658	74,776,269	67,067,476
EXPENSES			
Property taxes	5,156,072	5,181,430	4,966,136
Support services – Niagara Region	2,999,464	2,861,691	3,633,145
Amortization expense	9,068,429	9,068,429	8,521,741
Bad debts	272,100	147,306	132,206
Wages, salaries and benefits	5,104,265	4,931,786	4,893,735
Utilities	4,764,914	4,492,724	4,630,303
Materials and services	5,793,613	6,087,605	6,245,565
Interest on debenture and mortgage payments	883,258	926,305	886,508
Debenture payments (note 9)	1,694,866	1,694,866	2,063,063
Rent supplement program (note 12)	6,571,398	6,324,006	6,032,799
Investment in Affordable Housing (note 13)	185,702	303,216	1,537,537
Administration	1,361,146	983,341	691,469
Supplies and equipment	275,180	231,483	312,806
Non-profit and co-op provider subsidies	19,869,369	19,438,032	19,599,855
Federal provider subsidies	1,069,259	1,080,496	1,121,870
Social Infrastructure Fund	1,014,250	578,268	544,202
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (note 14)	902,880	915,880	158,989
Capital Loan and Grant Program	-	200,365	-
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative	505,381	193,127	229,877
Other subsidies	1,389,712	806,614	289,529
Government land lease	41,030	27,353	30,772
	68,922,288	66,474,323	66,522,107
Annual surplus	8,598,370	8,301,946	545,369
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	104,566,185	104,566,185	104,020,816
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$ 113,164,555	\$ 112,868,131	\$ 104,566,185

The accompanying notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this financial statement.

Niagara Regional Housing

Statement of Change in Net Debt

For the year ended December 31, 2020

	2020 Budget (note 11)	2020 Actual	2019 Actual
Annual surplus	\$ 8,598,370	\$ 8,301,946	\$ 545,369
Acquisition of tangible capital assets, net of disposals	(12,836,002)	(12,836,002)	(15,605,166)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	9,068,429	9,068,429	8,521,741
Gain on disposal of tangible capital assets	(203)	(203)	-
Change in prepaid expenses	-	(25,466)	(2,035)
Change in net debt	4,830,594	4,508,704	(6,540,091)
Net debt, beginning of year	(30,734,700)	(30,734,700)	(24,194,609)
Net debt, end of year	\$ (25,904,106)	\$ (26,225,996)	\$ (30,734,700)

The accompanying notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this financial statement.

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Niagara Regional Housing

Statement of Changes in Cash Flows

For the year ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Annual surplus	\$ 8,301,946	\$ 545,369
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization of tangible capital assets	9,068,429	8,521,741
Gain on disposal of tangible capital assets	(203)	-
Employee future benefit liabilities	(110,447)	(89,848)
Change in non-cash assets and liabilities:		
Accounts receivable	(343,562)	(634,824)
Deferred revenue	989,990	359,704
Prepaid expenses	(25,466)	(2,035)
Net change in cash from operating activities	17,880,687	8,700,107
CAPITAL ACTIVITY		
Cash used to acquire tangible capital assets	(12,836,212)	(15,605,166)
Cash received upon sale of capital assets	210	-
Net change in cash from capital activity	(12,836,002)	(15,605,166)
INVESTING ACTIVITY		
Change in investments	(76,985)	(115,026)
Net change in cash from investing activity	(76,985)	(115,026)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Mortgages and debentures issued	3,300,199	15,170,730
Mortgage and debenture repayments	(4,281,830)	(3,019,363)
Change in due to Niagara Region	(3,606,056)	307,776
Net change in cash from financing activities	(4,587,687)	12,459,143
Net change in cash	380,013	5,439,058
Cash, beginning of year	12,478,578	7,039,520
Cash, end of year	\$ 12,858,591	\$ 12,478,578
Cash paid for interest	926,305	886,508

The accompanying notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this financial statement.

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

1. Description of operations

Niagara Regional Housing was incorporated on December 17, 2001 under the laws of the Province of Ontario to perform all the duties and powers of an administrator under Section 15 of the Social Housing Reform Act. These duties include but are not limited to ownership and management of a real estate portfolio consisting of 2,850 apartments and houses, oversight responsibilities for the administration of social housing by 59 housing providers, administration of programs for the provision of rent-geared-to-income and the power to purchase, construct or make alterations to a housing project.

2. Significant accounting policies

The financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing (the "Corporation" or "NRH") are prepared by management in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards ("PSAS") as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board ("PSAB") of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada ("CPA Canada"). Significant accounting policies adopted by the Corporation are as follows:

Accrued basis of accounting

The Corporation follows the accrual method of accounting for revenues and expenses. Rental revenue is recognized at the time the service is provided. Other revenues are recognized when the services are earned. Expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable as a result of receipt of goods or services.

Non-financial assets

Non-financial assets are not available to discharge existing liabilities and are held for use in the provision of services. They have useful lives extending beyond the current year and are not intended for sale in the ordinary course of operations.

Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which include amounts that are directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. The cost, less residual value, of the tangible capital assets, are amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Land Improvements	5 – 50 years
Buildings	5 – 40 years
Equipment	15 years

One half of the annual amortization is charged in the year of acquisition and in the year of disposal. Work in progress assets are not amortized until the asset is available for productive use.

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

2. Significant accounting policies (continued):

Interest capitalization

The Corporation's tangible capital asset policy does not allow for the capitalization of interest costs associated with the acquisition or construction of a tangible capital asset.

Leases

Leases are classified as operating or capital leases. Leases which transfer substantially all of the benefits and risks incidental to ownership of property are accounted for as capital leases. All other leases are accounted for as operating leases and the related payments are charged to expenses as incurred.

Investments

Investments consist of guaranteed investment certificates and bonds, and are stated at amortized cost.

Government transfers

Government transfers are recognized as revenue in the financial statements when the transfer is authorized, any eligibility criteria are met and a reasonable estimate of the amount can be made except, when and to the extent that, stipulations by the transferor give rise to an obligation that meet the definition of a liability. Government transfers that meet the definition of a liability are recognized as revenue as the liability is extinguished.

Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with PSAS requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Amounts requiring significant estimates include due to Niagara Region, useful lives of tangible capital assets, and employee future benefits. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

2. Significant accounting policies (continued):

Employee future benefits

Vacation entitlements and other compensated absences accrue to employees each year based on terms of employment contracts or by policy. Earned entitlements unused at year-end are accrued based on the wage rates for the employee at year-end.

Workplace Safety & Insurance Board ("WSIB") benefits and sick leave may accrue to employees based on terms of employee. Entitlements are accrued in accordance with the project benefit method, pro-rated on service and management's best estimate of salary escalation and retirement ages of employees. Actuarial valuations, where necessary for accounting purposes, are generally performed every three years. The discount rate used to determine the accrued benefit obligation was determined by reference to the Niagara Region's short term and long-term rate of borrowing. Unamortized actuarial gains/losses are amortized on a straight-line basis over the expected average remaining service life of the related employee groups. Unamortized actuarial gains/losses for event-triggered liabilities, such as those determined as claims related to WSIB, are recorded when determined.

Cost related to prior-period employee services arising out of amendments to entitlements are recognized in the period in which the period is amended.

Where applicable, the Niagara Region has set aside Reserves intended to fund these obligations, either in full or in part. These Reserves were created under municipal by-law and do not meet the definition of a plan asset under PSAS 3250 Retirement Benefits. Therefore, for the purpose of these financial statements, the plans are considered unfunded.

3. Deferred revenue

Deferred revenues reported on the statement of financial position is made up of the following:

	2020	2019
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	\$ 4,496,397	\$ 3,549,349
Other	282,717	239,775
Balance, end of year	\$ 4,779,114	\$ 3,789,124

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

4. Mortgages and debentures

Amounts consist of mortgages secured by the income producing properties of the Corporation. As at December 31, 2020 the unpaid balances of these mortgages and debentures are as follows:

	2020	2019
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.60% to 4.65% paid in full during the year	\$ -	\$ 395,092
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.35% to 3.10% due in 2022	397,000	588,000
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.40% to 3.75% due in 2023	731,104	964,123
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.20% to 3.30% due in 2024	1,076,338	1,327,814
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.15% to 2.80% due in 2025	1,531,000	1,818,000
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at 2.25% due in 2025	575,936	683,588
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.20% to 2.40% due in 2026	3,466,881	4,010,505
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 1.20% to 2.45% due in 2027	1,224,652	1,387,136
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 2.05% to 3.15% due in 2028	5,550,000	6,165,000
Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation amortization debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at 3.74% due in 2042	3,738,595	3,846,560
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 2.00% to 2.40% due in 2029	13,783,212	15,170,730
Debenture for Niagara Regional Housing capital program bearing interest at rates ranging from 0.6% to 1.6% due in 2030	3,300,199	-
	\$ 35,374,917	\$ 36,356,548

The annual principal payments are as follows:

2021	\$ 4,253,327
2022	4,333,061
2023	4,215,515
2024	4,053,104
2025	3,875,699
Thereafter	14,644,211
	\$ 35,374,917

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

5. Employee future benefit liability

The Corporation provides certain employee benefits which will require funding in future periods. These benefits include sick leave, benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ("WSIB") Act, and life insurance, extended health and dental benefits for early retirees.

	2020	2019
Future payments required to WSIB	\$ 1,113,329	\$ 1,203,875
Retiree benefits	91,396	100,788
Vacation pay	317,199	318,928
Other liabilities	15,881	24,661
Employee future benefit liability	\$ 1,537,805	\$ 1,648,252

Information about the Corporation's benefit plans is as follows:

	2020	2019
Accrued benefit obligation:		
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 480,242	\$ 460,170
Current benefit (recovery) cost	(9,206)	42,303
Interest	5,287	5,560
Benefits paid	(14,710)	(27,791)
Balance, end of year	461,613	480,242
Unamortized actuarial gain	1,076,192	1,168,010
Employee future benefit liability	\$ 1,537,805	\$ 1,648,252

Included in expenses is a \$91,818 (2019 - \$109,920) gain for amortization of the actuarial loss/gain.

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

5. Employee future benefit liability (continued)

Information about the Corporation's retiree benefits, which are included in the overall employee future benefit liability noted above, are as follows:

	2020	2019
Accrued benefit obligation:		
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 86,786	\$ 92,237
Current benefit cost	4,093	3,868
Interest	3,118	3,295
Benefits paid	(11,377)	(12,614)
Balance, end of year	82,620	86,786
Unamortized actuarial gain	8,776	14,002
Employee future benefit liability	\$ 91,396	\$ 100,788

The most recent actuarial valuation was completed as at December 31, 2018 with estimates to December 31, 2021.

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

5. Employee future benefit liability (continued)

Accumulated sick leave

Under the accumulated sick leave benefit plan, unused sick leave can accumulate and certain employees may become entitled to a cash payment when they leave the Corporation's employment. The main actuarial assumptions employed for the valuation are as follows:

Interest (discount rate)

The obligation as at December 31, 2020, of the present value of future liabilities and the expense for the 12 months ended December 31, 2020, were determined using a discount rate of 3.75% (2019 – 3.75%).

WSIB

With respect to responsibilities under provisions of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board ("WSIB") Act the Corporation has elected to be treated as a Schedule 2 employer and remits payments to the WSIB as required to fund disability payments. An actuarial estimate of future liabilities has been completed and forms the basis for the estimated liability reported in these financial statements.

The unamortized actuarial gain (loss) on future payments required to WSIB is amortized over the expected period of the liability, which is 10 years.

The main actuarial assumptions employed for the valuation are as follows:

Interest (discount rate)

The obligation as at December 31, 2020 of the present value of future liabilities and the expense for the 12 months ended December 31, 2020 were determined using a discount rate of 3.75% (2019 – 3.75%).

Administration Costs

Administration costs were assumed to be 32% (2019 – 32%) of the compensation expense.

Compensation expense

Compensation costs, which include loss of earnings before, health care costs and non-economic loss awards, were assumed to increase at a rate of 2% per annum (2019 - 2%).

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

5. Employee future benefit liability (continued)

Retiree benefits

The Corporation pays certain life insurance benefits on behalf of the retired employees as well as extended health and dental benefits for early retirees to age 65. The Corporation recognizes these post-retirement costs in the period in which the employees rendered the services.

The unamortized actuarial gain on retiree benefits is amortized over the expected average remaining service life of 13 years.

The main actuarial assumptions employed for the valuations are as follows:

Interest (discount rate)

The obligation as at December 31, 2020 of the present value of future liabilities and the expense for the 12 months ended December 31, 2020 were determined using a discount rate of 3.75% (2019 - 3.75%).

Medical costs

Medical costs were assumed to increase at the rate of 3.42% (2019 - 3.42%) per year, reducing to 2.75% in 2022 and thereafter.

Dental costs

Dental costs were assumed to increase at the rate of 2.75% (2019 – 2.75%) per year.

Mortality table

The mortality table used in determining the obligation at December 31, 2020 is the Uninsured Pensioners 1994 with mortality improvement projections to 2030 (2019 - Uninsured Pensioners 1994 with mortality improvement projections to 2030).

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

6. Tangible capital assets:

	2020					
	Land	Land Improvements	Building	Equipment	Work in progress	Total
Cost						
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 36,923,582	\$ 7,816,809	\$ 172,055,049	\$ 4,101,353	\$ 3,917,612	\$ 224,814,405
Additions	87	253,180	5,595,151	353,917	6,633,877	12,836,212
Disposals	-	-	(13)	(124,764)	-	(124,777)
Balance, end of year	36,923,669	8,069,989	177,650,187	4,330,506	10,551,489	237,525,840
Accumulated Amortization						
Balance, beginning of year	-	2,072,288	86,232,935	1,927,143	-	90,232,366
Disposals	-	-	(7)	(124,763)	-	(124,770)
Amortization expense	-	376,904	8,371,918	319,607	-	9,068,429
Balance, end of year	-	2,449,192	94,604,846	2,121,987	-	99,176,025
Net Book Value, end of year	\$ 36,923,669	\$ 5,620,797	\$ 83,045,341	\$ 2,208,519	\$ 10,551,489	\$ 138,349,815

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

6. Tangible capital assets (continued):

	2019					
	Land	Land Improvements	Building	Equipment	Work in progress	Total
Cost						
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 36,405,071	\$ 6,735,621	\$ 148,149,835	\$ 3,989,300	\$ 14,142,573	\$ 209,422,400
Additions	518,511	1,188,189	23,905,214	218,213	(10,224,961)	15,605,166
Disposals	-	(107,001)	-	(106,160)	-	(213,161)
Balance, end of year	36,923,582	7,816,809	172,055,049	4,101,353	3,917,612	224,814,405
Accumulated Amortization						
Balance, beginning of year	-	1,828,345	78,370,435	1,725,006	-	81,923,786
Disposals	-	(107,001)	-	(106,160)	-	(213,161)
Amortization expense	-	350,944	7,862,500	308,297	-	8,521,741
Balance, end of year	-	2,072,288	86,232,935	1,927,143	-	90,232,366
Net Book Value, end of year	\$ 36,923,582	\$ 5,744,521	\$ 85,822,114	\$ 2,174,210	\$ 3,917,612	\$ 134,582,039

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

6. Tangible capital assets (continued)

Assets under construction

Assets under construction at December 31, 2020 valued at \$10,551,489 (2019 - \$3,917,612) have not been amortized. Amortization of these assets will commence when the asset is put into service.

Contributed tangible capital assets

Contributed capital assets have been recognized at fair market value at the date of contribution.

Tangible capital assets disclosed at nominal values

Where an estimate of fair value could not be made, the tangible capital asset was recognized at a nominal value. Land is the only category where nominal values were assigned.

Write-down of tangible capital assets

The write-down of tangible capital assets during the year was \$NIL (2019 - \$NIL).

7. Accumulated Surplus:

Accumulated surplus consists of individual fund surplus as follows:

	2020	2019
Invested in tangible capital assets	\$ 102,974,898	\$ 98,225,491
Capital fund: Unexpended capital financing	10,549,555	7,107,463
Contributed capital	728,761	728,761
Operating fund	152,722	152,722
Unfunded employee future benefits	(1,537,805)	(1,648,252)
Total accumulated surplus	\$ 112,868,131	\$ 104,566,185

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

8. Surplus transferred to Niagara Region

The Corporation had a current year operating surplus of \$654,957 (2019 - \$1,326,502) of which \$Nil (2019 - \$1,185,178) has been transferred to reserves within the Niagara Region held for NRH and \$654,947 (2019 - \$141,324) has been transferred to Niagara Region operations in accordance with the Niagara Region's Surplus/Deficit Policy. In addition, \$1,148,945 (2019 - \$734,583) has been transferred to the Niagara Region encumbrance reserve.

The following represents transactions within reserves held by the Niagara Region for NRH purposes:

	NRH Reserve	NRH Employee Future Benefit Reserve	NRH Owned Units Reserve	NRH Rent Supplement Reserve	2020 Total	2019 Total
Reserves held by Niagara Region, beginning of year	\$ 8,228,039	\$ 792,733	\$ 5,987,686	\$ 266,301	\$ 15,274,759	\$ 11,232,150
Transfer of year-end surplus to reserves	-	-	-	-	-	1,185,178
Transfer from the Reserve for capital purposes	(3,050,913)	-	(2,317,482)	-	(5,368,395)	(1,522,285)
Transfer to the Reserve for operating purposes	1,540,927	-	1,542,000	-	3,082,927	3,155,820
Transfer from the Reserve for operating purposes	(250,000)	-	-	(17,000)	(267,000)	(11,999)
Transfer to the Reserve from project closures & budget reductions	236,833	-	59,383	-	296,216	1,235,895
Reserves held by Niagara Region, end of year	\$ 6,704,886	\$ 792,733	\$ 5,271,587	\$ 249,301	\$ 13,018,507	\$ 15,274,759

9. Commitments

The Corporation is committed to paying principal and interest payments on provincial debentures issued to finance the properties owned and operated by the Corporation. These debentures amount to \$ 5,487,914 (2019 - \$7,123,897) and payments during the year of \$1,694,866 (2019 - \$2,063,063) have been charged to current operations.

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

10. Pension agreements

The Corporation makes contributions to the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement Fund ("OMERS"), which is a multi-employer plan. The plan is a defined benefit plan which specifies the amount of the retirement benefit to be received by the employees based on the length of service and rates of pay. The Corporation accounts for its participation in OMERS as a defined contribution plan. The OMERS Plan ended 2020 with a funding deficit of \$3.2 billion (2019 - \$3.4 billion). The funded ratio remained unchanged at 97% in 2020, and has either stayed the same or increased for the eighth consecutive year.

The amount contributed to OMERS for 2020 was \$376,732 (2019 - \$365,380) for current service and is included as an expenditure on the statement of operations. Employees' contribution to OMERS in 2020 was \$376,732 (2019 - \$365,380).

Contributions for employees with a normal retirement age of 65 were being made at rate of 9.0% (2019 – 9.0%) for earnings up to the yearly maximum pensionable earnings of \$58,700 (2019 - \$57,400) and at a rate of 14.6% (2019 – 14.6%) for earnings greater than the yearly maximum pensionable earnings.

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Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

11. Budget data

The budget data presented in these financial statements is based upon the 2020 operating and capital budgets approved by the NRH Board on October 18, 2019. Budgets established for tangible capital asset acquisitions are on a project-oriented basis, the costs of which may be carried out over one or more years. Where amounts were budgeted for on a project-oriented basis, the budget amounts used on actual projects that took place during the year to reflect the same basis of accounting that was used to report the actual results. The chart below reconciles the approved budget to the budget figures reported in these financial statements, in accordance with PSAS.

	Budget Amount
REVENUES	
Operating	
Approved Operating Revenue	\$ 67,210,714
Capital	13,392,668
Gain on disposal of tangible capital assets	203
<u>Less:</u>	
Surplus transferred from Niagara Region and transferred from reserves	(3,082,927)
Total revenue	77,520,658
EXPENSES	
Operating	
Approved Operating Expenses	67,210,714
<u>Add:</u>	
Amortization	9,068,429
Expenditures included in capital fund	118,349
<u>Less:</u>	
Employee future benefits	(110,447)
Transfers to reserves	(3,082,927)
Debt principal payments	(4,281,830)
Total expenses	68,922,288
Annual surplus	\$ 8,598,370

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

12. Rent Supplement Program

	Budget	2020	2019
Rent supplement program	\$ 3,315,684	\$ 3,288,737	\$ 3,047,178
In-situ	17,000	20,132	16,557
Strong Communities	1,682,788	1,690,263	1,513,920
Investment in Affordable Housing	215,926	218,822	914,322
Ontario Priority Housing Initiative	800,000	542,636	-
Social Infrastructure Fund	540,000	563,416	540,822
Total, Rent Supplement Program	\$ 6,571,398	\$ 6,324,006	\$ 6,032,799

13. Investment in Affordable Housing

	Budget	2020	2019
New Development Subsidy	\$ -	\$ 10,924	\$ 97,716
Niagara Renovates Payment Assistance	-	96,863	963,658
Housing Allowance	185,702	189,568	296,005
Welcome Home Niagara Down Payment Assistance	-	5,861	180,158
Total, Investment in Affordable Housing	\$ 185,702	\$ 303,216	\$ 1,537,537

14. Ontario Housing Priorities Initiative

	Budget	2020	2019
Niagara Renovates	\$ 545,920	\$ 572,205	\$ 74,194
Housing Allowances	256,960	164,500	-
Home Ownership	100,000	179,175	84,795
Total, Ontario Housing Priorities Initiative	\$ 902,880	\$ 915,880	\$ 158,989

Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

15. Subsequent Event – Local 175

Subsequent to the year-end, on March 9, 2021 approval was obtained from the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario for Local 175 UFCW Residences Inc. (“Local 175”), a Non-Profit Housing Corporation, to transfer their operating agreement and all assets belonging to Local 175 to NRH, effective April 30, 2021. The transfer will occur in accordance with the articles of incorporation of Local 175 which require that the divesting of any assets be to another Non-Profit Housing Corporation for a price of \$1 CAD. NRH will assume all assets and liabilities of Local 175 at fair market value on April 30, 2021.

16. Subsequent Event – Service Manager responsibilities

On October 23, 2020, the NRH Board approved the 2021 NRH budget related to the transfer of the administration of all Service Manager responsibilities to the Niagara Region, effective May 30, 2021. The finalized budget allocation between NRH and the Niagara Region was approved by the NRH Board on March 19, 2021 and Regional Council on March 25, 2021. Assets and liabilities related to the Service Manager operations will be transferred to the Niagara Region at their net book value on May 30, 2021. NRH will continue to provide governance, oversight, and financial management and ownership of all owned units.

DR
A

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Niagara Regional Housing

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended December 31, 2020

17. Risks

Credit risk

The Corporation is subject to credit risks from its tenants as a result of counterparty default. This risk is mitigated by prudent monitoring procedures.

Interest rate risk

The Corporation is subject to interest rate fluctuations on its mortgages and long term debt. The Corporation current does not use any hedging strategies to mitigate this interest rate exposure.

Market risk

Market risk arises as a result of trading in fixed income securities and equities. Fluctuations in the market expose the Corporation to a risk of loss. The Corporation mitigates this risk through cash management processes and compliance with the approved investment policy.

18. Comparative Figures

Certain prior year figures have been reclassified to conform to the financial statement presentation adopted in the current year.

Niagara Regional Housing

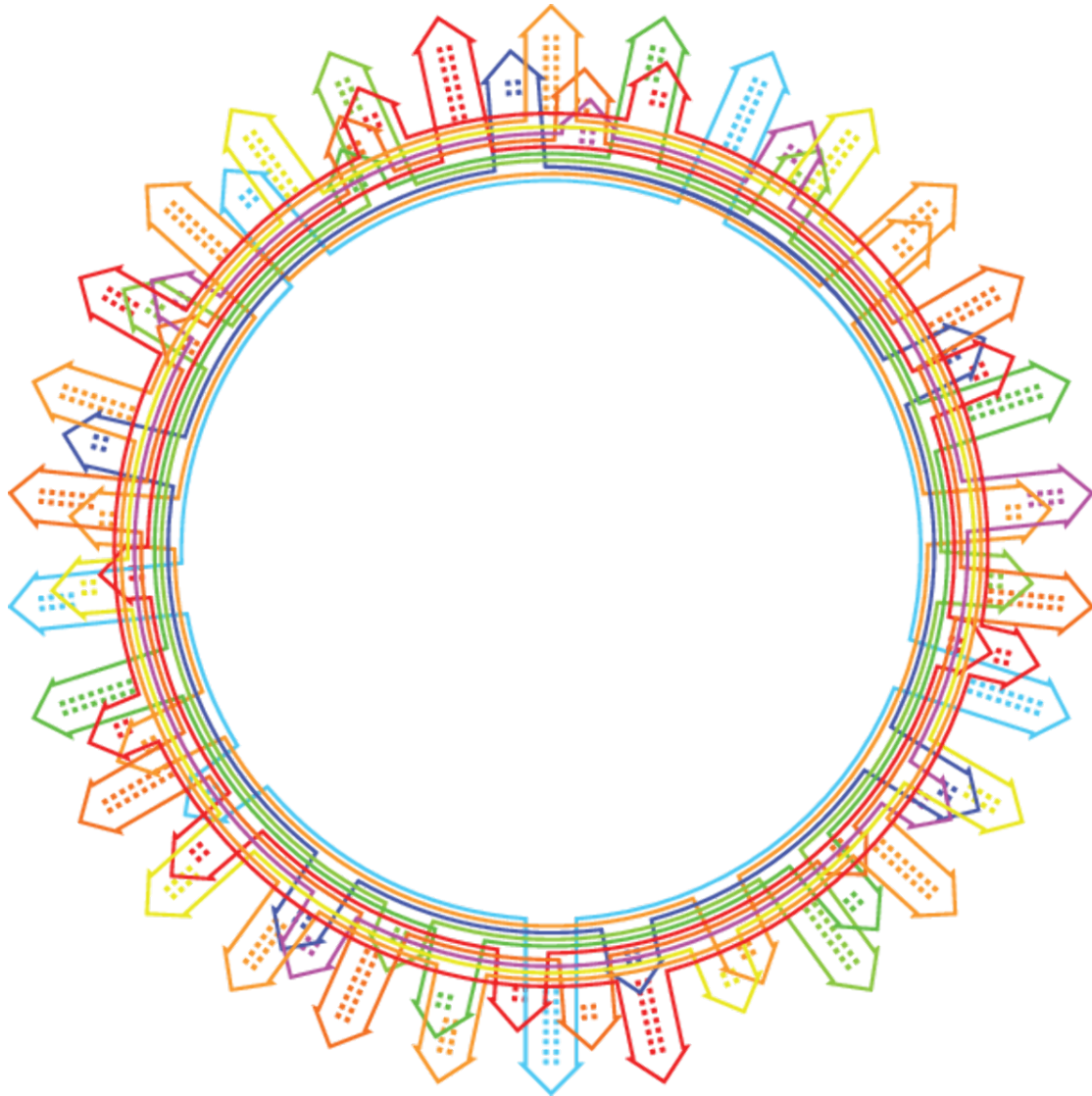
Schedule of Financial Activities – Operating Fund

The Schedule of Financial Activities – Operating Fund is an operating statement that reflects the results of operations that flow through the Operating Fund and therefore exclude capital activities.

For the year ended December 31, 2020

	2020 Budget	2020 Actual	2019 Actual
REVENUES			
Rental revenue	\$ 15,488,979	\$ 15,839,485	\$ 15,292,964
Subsidies			
Niagara Region	37,445,337	37,445,337	36,686,950
Federal and Provincial Government	13,713,766	12,785,199	13,337,304
Investment income	145,000	225,082	334,480
Proceeds from Sale of Assets	-	210	-
Sundry revenue	417,632	271,331	377,149
	67,210,714	66,566,644	66,028,847
EXPENSES			
Property taxes	5,156,072	5,181,430	4,966,136
Support services – Niagara Region	2,999,464	2,861,691	3,633,145
Bad debts	272,100	147,307	132,206
Wages, salaries and benefits	5,104,265	4,931,786	4,893,735
Utilities	4,764,914	4,492,724	4,626,337
Materials and services	5,922,793	6,216,784	5,988,976
Interest on debenture and mortgage payments	883,258	926,305	886,508
Debenture payments (Note 9)	1,694,866	1,694,866	2,063,063
Rent supplement program (Note 12)	6,571,398	6,324,006	6,032,799
Investment in Affordable Housing (Note 13)	185,702	303,216	1,537,537
Administration	1,007,078	629,276	643,665
Supplies and equipment	281,719	238,022	323,531
Non-profit and co-op provider subsidies	19,869,369	19,438,032	19,599,855
Federal provider subsidies	1,069,259	1,080,496	1,121,870
Social Infrastructure Fund	1,014,250	578,268	544,202
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (Note 14)	902,880	915,880	158,989
Capital Loan and Grant Program	-	200,365	-
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative	505,381	193,127	229,877
Other subsidies	1,389,712	806,614	289,529
Government land lease	41,030	27,353	30,772
	59,635,510	57,187,548	57,702,732
Annual surplus	7,575,204	9,379,096	8,326,115
Financing and transfer			
Transfer to reserves (note 8)	(3,082,927)	(4,231,872)	(3,890,402)
Transfer to Niagara Region (note 8)	-	(654,947)	(1,326,502)
Transfer to capital	(100,000)	(100,000)	-
Debt principal payments	(4,281,830)	(4,281,830)	(3,019,363)
Employee benefits	(110,447)	(110,447)	(89,848)
	(7,575,204)	(9,379,096)	(8,326,115)
Operating fund balance, end of year	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

The accompanying notes to the financial statements are an integral part of this financial statement.



Niagara Regional Housing

Report to the Board of Directors on
the 2020 audit

March 26, 2021

Members of the Board of Directors
Niagara Regional Housing
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON L2V 3Z3

Report on audited annual financial statements

Dear Board Members:

We are pleased to submit this report on the status of our audit of Niagara Regional Housing (the "Organization") for the 2020 fiscal year. This report summarizes the scope of our audit, our findings and reviews certain other matters that we believe to be of interest to you.

As agreed in our master service agreement dated November 8, 2016 and subsequent confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020, we have performed an audit of the financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing as at and for the year ended December 31, 2020, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS").

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Board of Directors (the "Board"), management and others within the Organization and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We look forward to discussing this report summarizing the outcome of our audit with you and answering any questions you may have.

Yours truly,

"Original signed by Deloitte LLP"

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Table of contents

Executive summary	1
Audit risks	3
Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates	5
Appendix 1 – Communication requirements and other reportable matters	6
Appendix 2 – Draft management representation letter	8

Executive summary



Audit scope and terms of engagement

We have been asked to perform an audit of the Organization's financial statements (the "financial statements") in accordance with Canadian Public Sector Accounting Standards ("PSAS") as at and for the year ended December 31, 2020. Our audit was conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS").

The terms and conditions of our engagement are described in the master service agreement dated November 8, 2016 and subsequent confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020. We have developed appropriate safeguards and procedures to eliminate threats to our independence or to reduce them to an acceptable level.



Audit risks

- 1 Revenue and deferred revenue
- 2 Management override of controls



Uncorrected misstatements

We are responsible for providing reasonable assurance that your financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement.

Materiality was determined on the basis of total operating expenses.

We are required to inform the Board of Directors of any uncorrected misstatements identified in our audit that are greater than a clearly trivial amount of 5% of materiality, and any misstatements that are, in our judgment, qualitatively material.

In accordance with Canadian GAAS, we request that all misstatements be corrected. There are no uncorrected misstatements aggregated by us during the current engagement and pertaining to the latest period presented to report.



Outstanding Matters & Next Steps

Completion of our subsequent events procedures

Receipt of signed Management's representation letter



Going concern

Management has completed its assessment of the ability of the Organization to continue as a going concern and in making its assessment did not identify any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt upon the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. We agree with management's assessment.

Results



Audit risks

The audit risks identified as part of our risk assessment, together with our planned responses and conclusions, are described below.

Revenue and deferred revenue*

Audit risk	Our audit response	Audit results
Determine completeness of revenue sources. Determine that deferred revenue recorded in the prior year has been recognized appropriately as income when the conditions for revenue recognition have been met. Determine that contributions received for specific purposes are reported as intended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain confirmation of revenue from various government and other funders; review reconciliations to account balances. Review funds received during the year to determine if they should be recorded as revenue, deferred revenue or deferred capital contributions. Obtain funding agreements to determine if any restrictions are placed on contributions received and determine if appropriately recorded in the general ledger accounts. 	We obtained sufficient audit evidence to conclude that there were no material misstatements.

Management override of controls*

Audit risk	Our audit response	Audit results
Assurance standards include the presumption of a significant risk of management override of controls. Management is in a unique position to override internal controls, which could allow manipulation of the accounting records that could result in financial statements that are materially misstated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We engaged in periodic fraud discussions with certain members of senior management and others We tested a sample of journal entries made throughout the period, and adjustments made at the end of the reporting period. We evaluated the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions. We determined whether the judgements and decisions related to management estimates indicate a possible bias, which included performing retrospective analysis of significant accounting estimates. 	We obtained sufficient audit evidence to conclude that there were no material misstatements.

* These areas have been identified as areas of significant risk.

Significant events including subsequent events

The design of our audit plan began with a reassessment of risk areas from last year's audit. We have identified a few significant developments or factors that impacted our current year risk assessment. This is an overview of how these additional developments impacted our audit plan and the results of the audit work we performed.

COVID-19

Impact on our 2020 audit

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the audit work was performed remotely, and the risk assessment and analytical procedures were considered with the potential impact of the pandemic in mind. Despite the audit taking place in a remote work environment, we were able to obtain sufficient evidence for our audit and controls testing with minimal delay. There were no significant changes to the nature of our audit procedures as a result.

Capital Loan and Grant Program

Impact on our 2020 audit

During the 2020 year, the Organization began the Capital Loan and Grant Program to assist non-profit and co-operative housing providers. For the loans and grants advanced during the year, we viewed the associated terms of the agreement as well as support for the advances made. The 2020 expenses related to the Capital Loan and Grant Program are included in the Statement of operations on the Financial Statements.

Subsequent events

Impact on our 2020 audit

Subsequent to the year-end, the Organization agreed to assume all assets and liabilities of another Non-Profit Housing Corporation. We obtained the transfer agreement and agreed the details to the information disclosed in Note 15 to the Financial Statements.

Additionally, during the 2020 year, the Board approved the transfer of the administration of all Service Manager responsibilities to the Regional Municipality of Niagara, which will become effective subsequent to December 31, 2020. We obtained support for the approval of the transfer and agreed the details to the information disclosed in Note 16 to the Financial Statements.

Significant accounting policies, judgments and estimates

The accounting policies described below are those that are most important and representative of the Organization's financial condition and financial performance.

In the course of our audit of the financial statements, we considered the qualitative aspects of the financial reporting process, including items that have a significant impact on the relevance, reliability, comparability and understandability of the information included in the financial statements.

The significant accounting policies of the Organization are disclosed in Note 2 to the financial statements.

In our judgment, the significant accounting practices and policies, selected and applied by management are, in all material respects, acceptable under PSAS and are appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Organization.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's current judgments. These judgments are normally based on knowledge and experience about past and current events, assumptions about future events and interpretations of the financial reporting standards.

During the year ended December 31, 2020, management advised us that there were no significant changes in accounting estimates or in judgments relating to the application of the accounting policies.

In our judgment, the significant accounting estimates made by management are, in all material respects, free of possible management bias and of material misstatement. The disclosure in the financial statements around estimation uncertainty is in accordance with PSAS and is appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Organization.

Appendix 1 – Communication requirements and other reportable matters

Required communication	Reference	Refer to this report or document described below
Audit service plan		
1. Our responsibilities under Canadian GAAS, including forming and expressing an opinion on the financial statements	CAS ¹ 260.14	Refer to our master service agreement dated November 8, 2016 and subsequent confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020.
2. An overview of the overall audit strategy, addressing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Timing of the audit b. Significant risks, including fraud risks 	CAS 260.15	Refer to our master service agreement dated November 8, 2016 and subsequent confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020.
3. Significant transactions outside of the normal course of business, including related party transactions	CAS 260 App. 2, CAS 550.27	None.
Enquiries of those charged with governance		
4. How those charged with governance exercise oversight over management's process for identifying and responding to the risk of fraud and the internal control that management has established to mitigate these risks	CAS 240.21	We are not aware of any fraudulent events.
5. Any known suspected or alleged fraud affecting the Organization	CAS 240.22	None noted.
6. Whether the Organization is in compliance with laws and regulations	CAS 250.15	No concerns noted.
Year end communication		
7. Modification to our audit plan and strategy	CAS 260.A26	None.
8. Fraud or possible fraud identified through the audit process	CAS 240.40-.42	We are not aware of any fraudulent events.
9. Significant accounting policies, practices, unusual transactions, and our related conclusions	CAS 260.16 a.	See page 4 of this report.

¹ CAS: Canadian Auditing Standards – CAS are issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board of CPA Canada

Required communication	Reference	Refer to this report or document described below
10. Alternative treatments for accounting policies and practices that have been discussed with management during the current audit period	CAS 260.16 a.	None
11. Matters related to going concern	CAS 570.25	We concluded that there was no substantial doubt about the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern.
12. Management judgments and accounting estimates	CAS 260.16 a.	See page 4 of this report.
13. Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit	CAS 260.16 b.	No significant difficulties to report.
14. Material written communications between management and us, including management representation letters	CAS 260.16 c.	Refer to our master service agreement dated November 8, 2016 and subsequent confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020 and Draft management representation letter included as Appendix 2.
15. Circumstances that affect the form and the content of the auditor's report	CAS 260.16.d.	None.
16. Modifications to our opinion(s)	CAS 260.A21	None.
17. Our views of significant accounting or auditing matters for which management consulted with other accountants and about which we have concerns	CAS 260.A22	No such consultations noted.
18. Significant matters discussed with management	CAS 260.A.22	None.
19. Matters involving non-compliance with laws and regulations that come to our attention, unless prohibited by law or regulation, including Illegal or possibly illegal acts that come to our attention	CAS 250.23	We are not aware of any illegal acts or matters involving non-compliance with laws and regulations.
20. Significant deficiencies in internal control, if any, identified by us in the conduct of the audit of the financial statements	CAS 265	No significant deficiencies to report.
21. Uncorrected misstatements and disclosure items	CAS 450.12-13	In accordance with Canadian GAAS, we request that all misstatements be corrected. No uncorrected misstatements or uncorrected disclosure to report.
Other reportable matters		
22. Any significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the Organization's related parties	CAS 550.27	None noted.

Appendix 2 – Draft management representation letter

[Organization letterhead]

March 26, 2021

Deloitte LLP
5500 North Service Road, Suite 700
Burlington ON L7L 6W6

**Subject: Financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing for the year ended
December 31, 2020**

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit by Deloitte LLP ("Deloitte" or "you") of the financial statements of Niagara Regional Housing (the "Organization" or "we" or "us") as of and for the year ended December 31, 2020, the notes to the financial statements and a summary of significant accounting policies (the "Financial Statements") for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the Financial Statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, results of operations, and cash flows of the Organization in accordance with Public Sector Accounting Standards ("PSAS").

Certain representations in this letter are described as being limited to matters that are material. Items are considered to be material if they, individually or in the aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

We confirm that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

Financial statements

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities as set out in the terms of the Master Services Agreement between the Organization and Deloitte dated November 8, 2016 and subsequent confirmation of changes letters dated January 30, 2019 and November 12, 2020 for the preparation of the Financial Statements in accordance with PSAS. In particular, the Financial Statements are fairly presented, in all material respects, and present the financial position of the Organization as at December 31, 2020 and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with PSAS.
2. Significant assumptions used in making estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

In preparing the Financial Statements in accordance with PSAS, management makes judgments and assumptions about the future and uses estimates. The completeness and appropriateness of the disclosures related to estimates are in accordance with PSAS. The Organization has appropriately disclosed in the Financial Statements the nature of measurement uncertainties that are material, including all estimates where it is reasonably possible that the estimate will change in the near term and the effect of the change could be material to the Financial Statements.

The measurement methods, including the related assumptions and models, used in determining the estimates, including fair value, were appropriate, reasonable and consistently applied in accordance with PSAS and appropriately reflect management's intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the entity. No events have occurred subsequent to December 31, 2020 that require adjustment to the estimates and disclosures included in the Financial Statements.

There are no changes in management's method of determining significant estimates in the current year.

3. We have determined that the Financial Statements are complete as of the date of this letter as this is the date when there are no changes to the Financial Statements (including disclosures) planned or expected. The Financial Statements have been approved in accordance with our process to finalize financial statements.
4. We have completed our review of events after December 31, 2020 and up to the date of this letter.
5. The Financial Statements are free of material errors and omissions.

Internal controls

6. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.
7. We have disclosed to you all known deficiencies in the design or operation of internal control over financial reporting identified as part of our evaluation, including separately disclosing to you all such deficiencies that we believe to be significant deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting.

Information provided

8. We have provided you with:
 - a. Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the Financial Statements, such as records, documentation and other matters.
 - b. All relevant information as well as additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit;
 - c. Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence; and,
 - d. All minutes of the meetings of directors and committees of directors, or summaries of actions of recent meetings for which minutes have not yet been prepared. All significant board and committee actions are included in the summaries.
9. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the Financial Statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
10. We have no knowledge of any information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the entity and involves:
 - a. Management;
 - b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - c. Others where the fraud could have a material effect on the Financial Statements.
11. We have no knowledge of any information in relation to allegations of actual, suspected or alleged fraud, or illegal or suspected illegal acts affecting the Organization.
12. There have been no communications with regulatory agencies concerning actual or potential noncompliance with or deficiencies in financial reporting practices. There are also no known or possible instances of non-compliance with the requirements of regulatory or governmental authorities.
13. We have disclosed to you the identities of the entity's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration.

Independence matters

For purposes of the following paragraphs, "Deloitte" shall mean Deloitte LLP and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, including related member firms and affiliates.

14. Prior to the Organization having any substantive employment conversations with a former or current Deloitte engagement team member, the Organization has held discussions with Deloitte and obtained approval from the Board of Directors.

Other matters

Except where otherwise stated below, immaterial matters less than \$398,000 collectively are not considered to be exceptions that require disclosure for the purpose of the following representations. This amount is not necessarily indicative of amounts that would require adjustment to or disclosure in the Financial Statements.

15. All transactions have been properly recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the Financial Statements.
16. The Organization has identified all related parties in accordance with Section PS 2200, *Related Party Disclosures* ("PS 2200"). Management has made the appropriate disclosures with respect to its related party transactions in accordance with PS 2200. This assessment is based on all relevant factors, including those listed in paragraph 16 of PS 2200.
17. There are no instances of identified or suspected noncompliance with laws and regulations.
18. We have disclosed to you all known, actual or possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with our lawyers, whose effects should be considered when preparing the Financial Statements. As appropriate, these items have been disclosed and accounted for in the Financial Statements in accordance with PSAS.
19. All events subsequent to the date of the Financial Statements and for which PSAS requires adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed. Accounting estimates and disclosures included in the Financial Statements that are impacted by subsequent events have been appropriately adjusted.
20. We have disclosed to you all liabilities, provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, and they are appropriately reflected in the Financial Statements.
21. We have disclosed to you, and the Organization has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the Financial Statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
22. The Organization has satisfactory title to and control over all assets, and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets. We have disclosed to you and in the Financial Statements all assets that have been pledged as collateral.

Plans or intentions affecting carrying value/classification of assets and liabilities

23. We have disclosed to you all plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the Financial Statements.

Fair value

24. With regard to the fair value measurements and disclosures of certain assets and liabilities, we believe that:
 - a. The completeness and adequacy of the disclosures related to fair values are in accordance with PSAS.
 - b. No events have occurred subsequent to December 31, 2020 that require adjustment to the fair value measurements and disclosures included in the Financial Statements.
 - c. They appropriately reflect management's intent and ability to carry out specific courses of action on behalf of the Organization when relevant to the use of fair value measurements or disclosures.

Loans and receivables

25. The Organization is responsible for determining and maintaining the adequacy of the allowance for doubtful loans and accounts receivable, as well as estimates used to determine such amounts. Management believes the allowances are adequate to absorb currently estimated bad debts in the account balances.
26. We have identified to you all forgivable loans and loans with concessionary terms and have appropriately reflected these instruments in the financial statements.

Employee future benefits

27. Employee future benefit costs, assets, and obligations, as applicable, have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the Financial Statements including those arising under termination arrangements.

Accounting policies

28. The accounting policies selected and application of those policies are appropriate.

Various matters

29. The following have been properly recorded and, when appropriate, adequately disclosed and presented in the Financial Statements:
- a. losses arising from sale and purchase commitments;
 - b. agreements to buy back assets previously sold;
 - c. provisions for future removal and site restoration costs;
 - d. financial instruments with significant individual or group concentration of credit risk, and related maximum credit risk exposure;
 - e. arrangements with financial institutions involving compensating balances or other arrangements involving restriction on cash balances and line-of-credit or similar arrangements;
 - f. all impaired loans receivable;
 - g. loans that have been restructured to provide a reduction or deferral of interest or principal payments because of borrower financial difficulties.

Yours truly,

Niagara Regional Housing

Donna Woiceshyn
Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 3: 2020 Surplus Reconciliation

	<u>Approved Budget</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Based on budget approach			
Niagara Regional Housing Operating Surplus per CSD 17-2021	\$ -	\$ 654,947	\$ 1,326,502
PSAS Presentation Adjustments:			
Capital			
Recognize amortization	(9,068,429)	(9,068,429)	(8,521,741)
Recognize in year capital program revenues	13,392,668	13,392,459	7,491,428
Recognize expenditures included in capital fund	(118,349)	(118,349)	(297,635)
Recognize gain on sale of assets	203	203	-
Capital Subtotal	<u>4,206,093</u>	<u>4,205,885</u>	<u>(1,327,947)</u>
Funded			
Remove principal debt repayments	4,281,830	4,281,830	3,019,363
Remove net transfers to reserves	-	(951,163)	(2,562,397)
Funded Subtotal	<u>4,281,830</u>	<u>3,330,667</u>	<u>456,966</u>
Unfunded			
Recognize change in unfunded employee future benefits liability	110,447	110,447	89,848
Unfunded Subtotal	<u>110,447</u>	<u>110,447</u>	<u>89,848</u>
Annual surplus per PSAS financial statements	<u><u>8,598,370</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 8,301,946</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 545,369</u></u>

A balanced operating budget was approved by Council on December 12, 2019. The operating surplus presented at the top of the chart represents the actual financial results of Niagara Regional Housing compared to the operating budget. Since Niagara Regional Housing is required to report its annual surplus using Public Sector Accounting standards (PSAS), a number of adjustments are required in order for the financial results to conform with PSAS. For example, in the operating budget capital projects are recognized when funding is allocated, however in order to conform with PSAS an adjustment is required as capital projects should be expensed over time through amortization, rather than immediately.

Subject: Approval of Statement of Contributions and Expenditures for Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant

Report to: Public Works Committee

Report date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the draft audited statement of contributions and expenditures for Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) Wastewater Treatment Plant (Appendix 1), **BE APPROVED**;
2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to co-ordinate with the auditor to finalize the statement as presented; and
3. That this report **BE FORWARDED** to the Region's Audit Committee and to The Ministry of Infrastructure and Communities for information as required.

Key Facts

- The purpose of the report is to obtain approval of the audited statement in order to satisfy the funding requirements and release the remaining 10% portion of the agreed funding.
- The audited statement is in accordance to the provisions of the financial reporting provisions in the agreement between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communities and the Niagara Region.
- As per Financial Reporting and Forecasting Policy (C-F-020), other financial statements performed for funding purposes, will be recommended for approval to Council by the standing Committee with oversight of the program. Upon approval by Council, the department Commissioner, or delegated authority, and the Treasurer will be authorized to sign the auditor's representation letter to obtain the auditor's signed report. The approved statements will then be forwarded to Audit Committee for information.

Financial Considerations

The draft audited statement of contributions and expenditures for NOTL Wastewater Treatment Plant has been prepared in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the agreement between the Ministry of Infrastructure and Communities and the Niagara Region dated March 19, 2015 and amended on March 22, 2017 and April 9, 2019 (the agreement).

A copy of the draft audited statement of contribution and expenditures for NOTL Wastewater Treatment Plant for the period of the project is attached (Appendix 1).

The statement of contributions and expenditures for NOTL Wastewater Treatment Plant is prepared specifically for the purpose of meeting the requirements outlined in the agreement and may not be suitable for other purposes.

Analysis

The Region's auditors, Deloitte, completed the audit of the financial information in the statement of contributions and expenditures for NOTL Wastewater Treatment Plant. The auditors have indicated that, in their opinion, the financial information for the period of the project is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the agreement.

The statement shows that the project had \$43.7 million in eligible expenditures to support the maximum funding received \$14.4 million during the claim period.

Alternatives Reviewed

The audited statement of contribution and expenditures for NOTL Wastewater Treatment Plant is prepared in accordance with the agreement; therefore no alternative is available.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Providing formal financial reporting to Council and the public supports the Council Strategic Priority of Sustainable and Engaging Environment.

Other Pertinent Reports

None

Prepared by:

Melanie Steele, MBA CPA CA
Associate Director Reporting & Analysis
Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Public Works Department

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Dan Ane, Manager Program Financial Support

Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Statement of Contributions and Expenditures for NOTL Wastewater Treatment Plant

Statement of Contributions and Expenditures

The Regional Municipality of Niagara
Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project

December 31, 2017

Draft

The Regional Municipality of Niagara
Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project
December 31, 2017

Table of contents

Independent Auditor's Report	1
Statement of Contributions and Expenditures	3
Notes to the Statement of Contributions and Expenditures	4

Draft

Independent Auditor's Report

To Infrastructure Canada

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying Statement of Contributions and Expenditures (the "Statement") of the The Regional Municipality of Niagara (the "Region") - Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project (the "Project") for the period from March 19, 2015 to December 31, 2017 (the "Period"), including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the Statement of the Region with respect to the Project for the period is prepared, in all material respects in accordance with the financial reporting provisions in the Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada, as represented by the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities (formerly known as, Minister of Infrastructure, Communities and Intergovernmental Affairs) and The Regional Municipality of Niagara, dated March 19, 2015 and amended on March 22, 2017 and April 9, 2019 (collectively, the "Agreement").

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Statement* section of our report. We are independent of the Region in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the Statement in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to the fact that the Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Agreement. The Statement is prepared to assist the Region in complying with the financial reporting provisions of the Agreement. As a result, the Statement may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Statement

Management is responsible for the preparation of the Statement in accordance with the Agreement, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the Statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Region's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Statement

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in

the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this Statement.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the Statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Region's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates, if any, and related disclosures made by management.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
_____, 2021

The Regional Municipality of Niagara

Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project

Statement of Contributions and Expenditures

Project claim start date to December 31, 2017

	Estimated Total Expenditures	Eligible Costs	Actuals Ineligible Costs	Total Expenditures
EXPENDITURES:				
Design and Drawings	3,220,000	2,620,777	-	2,620,777
Site Preparation	2,280,000	1,177,886	-	1,177,886
Construction Costs	37,000,000	39,888,253	-	39,888,253
Occupancy - Office Furniture and Lab Equipment	500,000	-	-	-
Ineligible Costs	293,030	-	4,233,149	4,233,149
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	43,293,030	43,686,916	4,233,149	47,920,065

Government of Canada Contributions

	Estimated Contributions by Canada	Claim Amount Paid	Actuals Holdback Amount	Total Contributions
Milestone Claim #1	1,073,333	2,417,200	-	2,417,200
Milestone Claim #2	760,000	5,311,972	-	5,311,972
Milestone Claim #3	12,000,000	2,792,184	-	2,792,184
Milestone Claim #4	333,333	2,462,644	482,864	2,945,508
Milestone Claim #5	166,667	-	959,803	959,803
TOTAL	14,333,333	12,984,000	1,442,667	14,426,667

The Regional Municipality of Niagara

Niagara-on-the-Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant Project

Notes to the Statement of Contributions and Expenditures

December 31, 2017

1. Summary of significant accounting policies

The statement is prepared in accordance with the agreement dated March 19, 2015 between Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities and The Regional Municipality of Niagara as well as Amending Agreement No 1, dated March 22, 2017 and Amending Agreement No 2, dated April 9, 2019. These amounts reported in the Statement of Contributions and Expenditures do not represent the full cost of the project but only the costs incurred during the period of March 19, 2015 to December 31, 2017.

Significant accounting policies are as follows:

a) Revenue and expenses

Revenue is recorded when received.

Eligible expenditures are recorded in the period incurred, in accordance with the eligibility criteria described in the agreement.

b) Tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets acquired are reported as expenditures in the period incurred, amortization is not recorded.

c) Use of estimates

In preparing the Statement of Contributions and Expenditures, management is required to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of expenditures. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

2. Funding agreement

The Minister of Infrastructure and Communities funded one third of eligible project expenditures up to the maximum funding of \$14,426,667. Contributions by The Ministry of Infrastructure and Communities will be payable in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement and may be clawed back if total financial assistance received or due in respect of the total project costs exceeds the total eligible expenditures incurred.

3. Estimated total expenditures and contributions by Canada

The estimated total expenditures and contributions by Canada are presented as per Section B.2 Project Milestones and Cash Flow of the original agreement dated March 19, 2015.

Minute Item No. 5.1
PW 16-2021
Public Works Policy Manual Update

That Report PW 16-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Public Works Policy Manual Update, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the policies listed in Appendix 1 to Report PW 16-2021 **BE REPEALED** and **REMOVED** from the Public Works Policy Manual; and
2. That the revised policies contained in Appendix 2 to Report PW 16-2021 **BE APPROVED** and **ADDED** to the Corporate Policy Manual.

Minute Item No. 5.2
PW 25-2021
Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Order Requests and Purchase Change Order Requests Exceeding \$100,000

That Report PW 25-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Order Requests and Purchase Change Order Requests Exceeding \$100,000, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Single Source Purchase Order Change Requests identified in Appendix 1 of Report PW 25-2021 **BE APPROVED**.

Minute Item No. 5.3
PW 26-2021
Greater Niagara Circle Route – Welland Canal Parkway Trail Extension

That Report PW 26-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Greater Niagara Circle Route – Welland Canal Parkway Trail Extension, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Operating Budget in the amount of \$200,000 for a grant to the City of St. Catharines for the extension of the Welland Canal Parkway Trail north of Lakeshore Road, to be funded from the Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) Reserve, subject to the completion of any required agreements including with the City of St. Catharines in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal & Court Services, **BE CONSIDERED** at the Regional Council meeting of June 24, 2021 with the appropriate public notice in accordance with the Region's Public Notice Policy (corporate policy number C-RC-005); and

2. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Operating Budget in the amount of \$50,000 for Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) wayfinding initiatives, to be funded from the GNCR Reserve, **BE CONSIDERED** at the Regional Council meeting of June 24, 2021 with the appropriate public notice in accordance with the Region's Public Notice Policy (corporate policy number C-RC-005).

Minute Item No. 5.4

PWC-C 21-2021

Recommendations for Consideration from the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meeting held April 19, 2021

That Correspondence Item PWC-C 21-2021, being a memorandum from A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Recommendations for Consideration from the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meeting held April 19, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) Terms of Reference, Appendix B of Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Minute Item No. 6

Consent Items for Information

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

PWC-C 20-2021

COVID-19 Response and Public Works Business Continuity

PW-C 19-2021

Every-Other Week (EOW) Garbage Collection Diversion Impact Analysis

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**PWC 5-2021
Tuesday, May 11, 2021
Committee Room 4 / Video Conference
Niagara Regional Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in Committee Room 4:	Fertich (Committee Vice Chair), Rigby (Committee Chair)
Committee Members Present via Video Conference:	Bradley (Regional Chair), Diodati, Disero, Edgar, Foster, Gale, Heit, Insinna, Junkin, Nicholson, Sendzik, Steele, Ugolini, Witteveen, Zalepa
Absent/Regrets:	Chiocchio
Staff Present in Committee Room 4:	M. Elia, Technology Support Analyst, L. Glynn, Technology Support Analyst, M. Lewis, Client & Support Specialist, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works
Staff Present via Video Conference:	D. Ane, Manager, Program Financial Support, D. Anzolin, Corporate Policy Advisor, C. Habermehl, Director, Waste Management Services, B. Menage, Director, Procurement & Strategic Acquisitions, M. Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office, C. Ryall, Director, Transportation Services, J. Tonellato, Director, Water & Wastewater Services, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, S. Wood, Legal Counsel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Rigby called the meeting to order at 9:59 a.m.

3. PRESENTATIONS

There were no presentations.

4. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 PW 16-2021

Public Works Policy Manual Update

Moved by Councillor Edgar
Seconded by Councillor Heit

That Report PW 16-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Public Works Policy Manual Update, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the policies listed in Appendix 1 to Report PW 16-2021 **BE REPEALED** and **REMOVED** from the Public Works Policy Manual; and
2. That the revised policies contained in Appendix 2 to Report PW 16-2021 **BE APPROVED** and **ADDED** to the Corporate Policy Manual.

Carried

5.2 PW 25-2021

Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Order Requests and Purchase Change Order Requests Exceeding \$100,000

Moved by Councillor Zalepa
Seconded by Councillor Insinna

That Report PW 25-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Order Requests and Purchase Change Order Requests Exceeding \$100,000, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Single Source Purchase Order Change Requests identified in Appendix 1 of Report PW 25-2021 **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

5.3 PW 26-2021

Greater Niagara Circle Route – Welland Canal Parkway Trail Extension

Moved by Councillor Sendzik
Seconded by Councillor Foster

That Report PW 26-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Greater Niagara Circle Route – Welland Canal Parkway Trail Extension, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Operating Budget in the amount of \$200,000 for a grant to the City of St. Catharines for the extension of the Welland Canal Parkway Trail north of Lakeshore Road, to be funded from the Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) Reserve, subject to the completion of any required agreements including with the City of St. Catharines in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal & Court Services, **BE CONSIDERED** at the Regional Council meeting of June 24, 2021 with the appropriate public notice in accordance with the Region's Public Notice Policy (corporate policy number C-RC-005); and
2. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Operating Budget in the amount of \$50,000 for Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) wayfinding initiatives, to be funded from the GNCR Reserve, **BE CONSIDERED** at the Regional Council meeting of June 24, 2021 with the appropriate public notice in accordance with the Region's Public Notice Policy (corporate policy number C-RC-005).

Carried

5.4 PWC-C 21-2021

Recommendations for Consideration from the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meeting held April 19, 2021

Moved by Councillor Ugulini
Seconded by Councillor Witteveen

That Correspondence Item PWC-C 21-2021, being a memorandum from A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Recommendations for Consideration from the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meeting held April 19, 2021, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) Terms of Reference, Appendix B of Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Zalepa
Seconded by Councillor Disero

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

PWC-C 20-2021

COVID-19 Response and Public Works Business Continuity

PW-C 19-2021

Every-Other Week (EOW) Garbage Collection Diversion Impact Analysis

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 National Public Works Week

Bruce Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works, advised that May 16 - 22, 2021 is National Public Works Week celebrating the contributions of all Public Works staff. This year's theme, "Stronger Together", will challenge Niagara Region staff to work with community members to make Niagara an even greater place to live.

7.2 Niagara Stone Road Project Update

Councillor Zalepa requested an update respecting the projected timeline for the Niagara Stone Road improvement project in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Carolyn Ryall, Director, Transportation Services, advised consultation is being undertaken with Niagara-on-the-Lake staff, and stated the project is slated for inclusion in the 2022 budget.

7.3 Lyons Creek Road Improvements

Councillor Gale thanked Carolyn Ryall, Director, Transportation Services, and staff for responding to community member and local business concerns respecting proposed road improvements on Lyons Creek Road at Willowdell Road, in the City of Niagara Falls.

7.4 Lundy's Lane Community Safety Zone Designation

Councillor Nicholson requested information respecting the addition of a community safety zone on Lundy's Lane, between Kalar Road and Montrose Road in the City of Niagara Falls. Carolyn Ryall, Director, Transportation Services, advised that section of road will be included in the next phase of the Vision Zero Road Safety Program, once an assessment of the 12 community safety zones already in place is completed. She additionally advised staff will be providing presentations to the Local Area Municipalities on the program.

8. **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Councillor Rigby
Committee Chair

Matthew Trennum
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Subject: Public Works Policy Manual Update

Report to: Public Works Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the policies listed in Appendix 1 to Report PW 16-2021 **BE REPEALED** and **REMOVED** from the Public Works Policy Manual; and
2. That the revised policies contained in Appendix 2 to Report PW 16-2021 **BE APPROVED** and **ADDED** to the Corporate Policy Manual.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval of changes to departmental policies contained within the Public Works Policy Manual.
- The Public Works Department is undertaking a review of its Policy Manual with the goal of eliminating the departmental manual and transferring required policies to the Corporate Policy Manual.
- As noted in C-A-001-001 Corporate Policy Framework – Administrative Processes and Review, changes to corporate policies require the approval of Regional Council.
- Obsolete policies are listed in Appendix 1 to this report; it is proposed that these policies be repealed and removed from the Policy Manual.
- Two (2) policies have been revised and are presented for approval; they are included in Appendix 2.
- Additional policies are slated for review and revision and will be submitted to Committee/Council under cover of future reports.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations associated with this report.

Analysis

The Public Works Department has initiated a review of the Public Works Policy Manual. The goals of the review are as follows:

- Eliminate any policies that are no longer required;

- Revise/update remaining policies as required to ensure that they reflect current practice;
- Reformat policies using the corporate-approved template;
- Move policies to the Corporate Policy Manual and apply document control measures.

Divisional Representatives have reviewed their respective division's policies and assigned a disposition of "keep and maintain", "keep and revise", or "delete/obsolete". In addition, nine (9) policies were identified for transfer to another department or division.

Policies proposed for deletion are listed in Appendix 1 of this report.

To-date, two (2) policies have been reviewed and revised. They are submitted for approval in Appendix 2 of this report as follows:

- **Appendix 2A:** "Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks and Standpipes";
- **Appendix 2B:** "Tours of Public Works Facilities"

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The recommendations in this report align with Council's Strategic Priority #4, "Sustainable and Engaging Government", and more specifically with Objective 4.1: "High Quality, Efficient and Coordinated Core Services". The Public Works Policy Manual update is a continual improvement exercise. The revised policies provide accurate overviews of departmental programs and operations, allowing the department to communicate more effectively with internal and external customers.

Other Pertinent Reports

Not applicable.

Prepared by:

Rachel Whyte, P.Eng.
W-WW Quality Management Specialist
Public Works Department

Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Public Works Department

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was reviewed by Doran Anzolin, Corporate Policy Advisor and Donna Gibbs, Director, Legal and Court Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Public Works Policies Proposed for Repeal
Appendix 2A	Policy: Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks and Standpipes
Appendix 2B	Policy: Tours of Public Works Facilities

PW 16-2021 Appendix 1: Public Works Policies Proposed for Repeal

Policy No.	Section	Name of Policy	Enacted	Approved By	Last Revision Date	Status	Recommended Action	Comments
PW2.R01.0	Administration	Records Management - Retention, Microfilm, Destruction	10-Jun-97	PWC	n/a	Obsolete	Repeal	Refer to C-IMT-008 Records and Information Management
PW2.T01.1	Administration	Training and Development - Requests to attend workshops, seminars and conferences	28-May-96	PWC	n/a	Obsolete	Repeal	Superseded by C-HR-024-002 Approval to Attend External Learning Events
PW2.T01.2	Administration	Tuition Reimbursement	28-May-96	PWC	n/a	Obsolete	Repeal	Superseded by C-HR-024-001 Tuition Reimbursement
PW3.C04.0	Engineering	CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT HOLDBACKS	06-Nov-84	PWC	16-Jul-98	Obsolete	Repeal	Covered under the Construction Lien Act and the maintenance holdback is covered under the relevant contract documents
PW3.C06.0	Engineering	CONSULTING ENGINEERS & ARCHITECTS RETENTION POLICY	20-Jul-95	PWC	20-Apr-00	Obsolete	Repeal	Covered under By-law 02-2016 Procurement Policies and Procedures
PW3.P01.3	Engineering	EXECUTION OF PROPERTY AGREEMENTS UNDER \$5,000 BY THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS	05-Nov-85	PWC	02-Apr-98	Obsolete	Repeal	Superseded by Document Execution By-law 09-2016
PW4.C01.0	Environmental	CONFINED SPACE ENTRY	02-Feb-86	PWC	16-Mar-00	Delete	Repeal	Refer to C-HS-002 Confined Space Entry Policy. Division-level SOPs also required.
PW4.H01.1	Environmental	HAULED SEWAGE FOR DISPOSAL AT REGIONAL POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITIES, ACCEPTANCE OF	08-Jun-93	PWC	n/a	Delete	Repeal	Superseded by PW4.H01.1a
PW4.H01.2	Environmental	HAULED SEWAGE, RESPONSIBILITY FOR PAYMENT OF FEES FOR RECEIPT OF SEWAGE AT REGIONAL POLLUTION CONTROL FACILITIES	08-Jun-93	PWC	19-Aug-93	Delete	Repeal	Superseded by PW4.H01.1a
PW4.K01.0	Environmental	KEY MANAGEMENT POLICY, POLLUTION CONTROL	11-Jan-94	PWC	n/a	Delete	Repeal	Captured in Divisional SOPs.
PW4.S03.0	Environmental	SEWER SURCHARGE	10-Apr-90	PWC	07-Mar-96	Delete	Repeal	Covered Under Sewer Use By-Law 27-2014.
PW4.W02.0	Environmental	WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES - AREA MUNICIPALITIES	17-Jun-75	PWC	19-Aug-93	Delete	Repeal	Will be incorporated into W-WW ERP
PW1.P04.0	Manual Related	PROCEDURE FOR DISTRIBUTION AND MAINTENANCE OF POLICY MANUAL	24-Oct-95	PWC	n/a	Obsolete		Policies are maintained on the Vine

PW 16-2021

Appendix 2A

Policy: Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks and Standpipes

Public Works

Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks

Page 1 of 3

Policy Owner: Public Works Department, Water-Wastewater Division

Approval Body: Council

Approval Date:

Effective Date:

Review by Date:

1. Policy

That Niagara Region permit the painting of local municipal names, as well as the Region's own logo, on Regional steel water storage tanks, subject to the requirements of:

- i. Applicable American National Standards Institute (ANSI)/American Water Works Association (AWWA) standards and/or Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards, as amended;
- ii. Niagara Region Identity Standards Guide (May 2013, as amended);
- iii. The "Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks and Standpipes" procedure (C-PW-XXX-001).

No other lettering or advertisements will be permitted on a steel water storage tank in order to standardize the appearance and branding of infrastructure.

2. Purpose

The ANSI/AWWA standard D102 for the *Coating of Steel Water Storage Tanks* was updated in 2017. There have been technological advances in exterior coatings for steel water storage tanks. In 2013 the Niagara Region updated the Identity, Standards, Style and Protocol Guide for use of the Niagara Region logo.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure the correct application of the Niagara Region logo and brand on Regional steel water storage tanks.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all steel water storage tanks that reside within the boundaries of the Niagara Region's distribution system.

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1.1. Corporate Communications

- i. Provide direction and guidance regarding the use of the Niagara Region logo.

3.1.2. Water-Wastewater Project Managers

- i. Review and approve artwork for steel tank painting as part of capital project works, ensuring that artwork meets the requirements as outlined in Niagara Region Identity Standards Guide (May 2013, as amended).

4. References and Related Documents.

4.1. Legislation, By-Laws and/or Directives

- i. American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- ii. American Water Works Association (AWWA) standards
- iii. Canadian Standards Association (CSA) requirements

4.2. Procedures

- i. Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks and Standpipes (C-PW-XXX-001)
- ii. Niagara Region Identity Standards Guide (May 2013, as amended)

5. Related Policies

C-A-013 – Logo Identity

6. Document Control

The electronic version of this document is recognized as the only valid version.

Approval History

Approver(s)	Approved Date	Effective Date

Public Works

Lettering on Steel Water Storage Tanks

Page 3 of 3

Revision History

Revision No.	Date	Summary of Change(s)	Changed by
XX	XX	Policy incorporated into new policy template and assigned new policy number to reflect new Public Works policy naming convention. Policy formerly identified as PW3.W01.0.	

References

Report	Committee Date	Council Date
DEA-283-32	June 10, 1986	June 19, 1986
PWA 169-98	June 23, 1998	July 16, 1998
PWA 03-2010	February 2, 2010	February 11, 2010

PW 16-2021

Appendix 2B

Policy: Tours of Public Works Facilities

<i>Public Works</i>	<i>Tours of Public Works Facilities</i>
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Policy Owner: Commissioner, Public Works

Approval Body: Council

Approval Date:

Effective Date:

Review by Date:

1. Policy

Niagara Region's policies with respect to tours of Public Works facilities are:

- i. To encourage public interest in Public Works facilities and operations.
- ii. To provide the public or other interested groups with procedures for walking tours of Public Works facilities, including but not limited to water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, the Garner Road Biosolids facility, and the Recycling Centre.
- iii. To provide bus tours of the Region's compost facility on an annual basis, in conjunction with Waste Reduction Week.
- iv. To restrict tours of water and wastewater treatment plants to participants aged 12 and older.
- v. To not permit public tours at water or wastewater facilities that are undergoing construction.
- vi. To restrict tours of the Recycling Centre to participants aged 10 and older.

2. Purpose

The general public, and particularly educational groups, show a keen interest in Public Works infrastructure. Public Works staff commonly receive requests for tours of water treatment facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, the Garner Road Biosolids facility, and the Recycling Centre; additionally, bus tours of the compost facility are offered annually in conjunction with Waste Reduction Week. Niagara Region will strive to honour tour requests in accordance with this policy and relevant supporting procedures, provided that such tours do not compromise or interfere with operations, safety, or security at the subject facility.

3. Scope

This policy applies in respect of tours conducted at Public Works facilities, including but not limited to water treatment plants, wastewater treatment plants, the Recycling Centre, and the compost facility.

Public Works

Tours of Public Works Facilities

Page 2 of 3

3.1. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1.1. Public Works Staff

- i. Organize, schedule, arrange, and conduct tours in accordance with the requirements of this policy, the *Tours of Public Works Facilities* procedure (), and any applicable divisional procedures.

3.1.2. Tour Participants

- i. Abide by all instructions, procedures, and safety protocols when visiting Regional work sites.

4. References and Related Documents.

4.1. Legislation, By-Laws and/or Directives

4.2. Procedures

- i. Tours of Public Works Facilities (C-PW-XXX-001)
- ii. Waste Management Recycling Tour Scheduling (divisional procedure)
- iii. Touring Water and Wastewater Facilities (divisional procedure)

5. Related Policies

6. Document Control

The electronic version of this document is recognized as the only valid version.

Approval History

Approver(s)	Approved Date	Effective Date

Revision History

Revision No.			
XX	XX	Policy incorporated onto new Corporate policy template and assigned new name and number to reflect current Public Works policy naming convention. Policy formerly identified as PW4.T01. Procedural content	

Public Works

Tours of Public Works Facilities

Page 3 of 3

Revision No.	Date	Summary of Change(s)	Changed by
		<p>from former policy PW4.T01 has been incorporated onto the Corporate's Procedure Template.</p> <p>Added details of Waste Management tour programs.</p> <p>Increased age threshold for W-WW tours from grade 5 (age 10-11) to grade 7 (age 12 and up)</p> <p>Added stipulation that public tours are not permitted at sites under construction</p>	

Subject: Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Order Requests and Purchase Change Order Requests Exceeding \$100,000

Report to: Public Works Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the Single Source Purchase Order Requests identified in Appendix 1 of Report PW 25-2021 **BE APPROVED**.

Key Facts

- At the Special Council meeting on July 30, 2020, Regional Council instructed staff that, “If any single source [Public Works] procurement [over \$5000] is deemed essential there must be approval first received by the Public Works Committee.”
- On August 18, 2020, the CAO provided Confidential Memorandum CONF-C 6-2020 providing key information in response to the July 30, 2020 staff direction. The memo identified that pursuant to a formal competitive procurement process, a change to the resulting contract (via the Change PO process) is required for any additional goods and/or services, which were not part of that formal process (consider Single Source additions). This includes most (if not all) instances where the “work” is underway when a Change PO request initiates.
- At the Council meeting on September 17, 2020, Regional Council approved an increase in the limit to \$100,000 above which approval must first be received by the Public Works Committee.

Financial Considerations

The included Single Source requests have approved funding in place from either Capital or Operating budgets in the respective divisions in Public Works.

Analysis

Niagara Region’s Procurement By-law 02-2016 as amended February 28, 2019 provides controls and methods that ensure, among other things, that the procurement processes undertaken to procure Goods and/or Services achieves, “best value for the Corporation”.

Pursuant to the formal procurement process, which culminates in contract award, there are occasions, when new information identified after award, requires further consideration of how these unforeseen additional requirements will impact the final project deliverable.

When this happens, staff consider the following alternative approaches to addressing the scope change:

1. Is the original project objective still achievable or should it be abandoned?
2. Can the project proceed as originally planned and this new information be deferred to a later time without reducing the integrity of the design, construction, etc.?
3. Is the current work at a point where it can be terminated, and a new competitive procurement for the additional scope items be initiated without excessive costs or negative impacts to the community from the delays?
4. Does the addition of this new work to the current assignment still achieve best value if Staff can validate that it represents fair value?

Staff note, that where a construction project is underway, the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act dictates that, "When an owner undertakes a project by contracting with more than one employer (contractor), the owner is undertaking the project and is the constructor." As a result, if Niagara Region were to initiate additional work on a project site at the same time by two contractors, Niagara Region would assume significant additional liability risk for the safety of all workers on the site. Ideally, the work of first contractor must be completed prior second contractor commencing.

Alternatives Reviewed

Staff have considered the following alternatives for each of the change order requests appended as Appendix 1:

- Closing out the current work. Abandoning the previous approach and re-considering strategy;
- Proceeding as originally planned and addressing the new information/change in scope at a later time through a competitive process; and,
- Terminating the current contract where possible and conducting a competitive procurement process to complete the work with the additional scope items added.

Staff conclude that none of the aforementioned options achieves the desired best value outcome without significant risk to the Region in terms of cost, delay and unavailability of critical infrastructure. Staff have assessed the financial impact of these additionally scoped items, deemed them fair and reasonable hence, the recommendation contained herein is presented for approval as it offers the best value for the Corporation given in the specific circumstances.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

- Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Other Pertinent Reports

- CONF-C 6-2020, July 30, 2020 Closed Session - Update from Special Council Meeting
- PW 42-2020, September 8, 2020 - Approval of Various Single Source Public Works New Purchase Orders and Purchase Order Change Request
- PW 45-2020, October 13, 2020 - Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Requests Over \$100,000
- PW 47-2020, November 10, 2020 Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Requests Over \$100,000
- PW 3-2021, January 12, 2021 Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Requests Over \$100,000
- PW 7-2021, February 16, 2021 Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Requests Over \$100,000
- PW 13-2021, March 9, 2021 Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Requests Over \$100,000
- PW 17-2021, April 13, 2021 Approval of Public Works Single Source Purchase Requests Over \$100,000

Prepared and Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Public Works Department

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Dan Ane, Manager Program Financial Support and Bart Menage, Director Procurement and Strategic Acquisitions

Appendices

Appendix 1 Single Source Purchase Order Requests

Appendix 1: Purchase Order Change Requests to Existing Contracts

1. Project Name: 2017-RFP-19 – RR20 West St, West Lincoln – Phase 4

Consultant: Associated Engineering (ONT)

Purchase Order Number: 0000033408

Increase the contract award amount to the lowest compliant bidder (\$432,139.02 exclusive of HST) with an additional (\$53,510.00 exclusive of HST)

The increase is to complete the following additional tasks which were not previously included in the design assignment;

- Revision of Issued for Tender Package to include the limit extension from the previous completed Phase 3.
- Township of West Lincoln requested the inclusion of municipal servicing works (watermain, storm)
- Additional Illumination analysis

Rationale for Increase

A continuation of the current design assignment, to maintain quality and control to ensure the designs being completed meet the required Regional, Provincial and Municipal standards. Originally Phase 4 was to be included as part of the Phase 2 & 3 construction; however due to internal and Municipal budget constraints, Phase 4 became its own stand-alone project within the original project limits.

During construction of Phase 2 & 3, project scope was increased to incorporate additional sidewalk works requested by the Township of West Lincoln, which subsequently requires an adjustment to the finalized Phase 4 design.

During the RFP process the Consultant was required to undertake specific tasks; infrastructure works were not flagged by the Township of West Lincoln for inclusion at the time of proposal preparation, and have recently been requested for inclusion in the project scope for design and construction.

The accumulated total, including the current change (\$53,510) to the original Purchase Order is \$205,437.06 as summarized below:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| i. Vertical and horizontal design changes to coordinate Township works .. | \$5,100.00 |
| ii. Alignment change to eliminate property acquisitions for the Township (Phases 2 & 3) | |
| | \$9,050.00 |
| iii. Additional storm sewer design and investigation | \$3,301.96 |
| iv. Incorporate Region landscaping into tender set (Phases 2 & 3) | \$1,100.00 |

v. Additional survey works for property at SGR6 (Phases 2 &3).....	\$1,932.00
vi. Re-tendering after initial cancellation (Phases 2 &3)	\$2,711.00
vii. Inspection fees (Phases 2 &3) (competitively procured)	\$128,732.10
viii. Current change request	\$53,510.00

Alternatives Reviewed

- (i) Do Nothing:
 - Without including the Township's infrastructure works, ageing infrastructure would be left under the newly constructed roadway, which could result in infrastructure failure and excavation of the project sites to fix. This is not being recommended.
- (ii) Increase the PO:
 - Allows for the continuation of the current assignment which will maintain quality control over the design completed / to be completed and facilitated during construction in a timely manner.

Recommendation by Transportation Services

Increase PO for an additional \$53,510.00 (excluding HST) to add the additional design assignments to the project.

2. Project Name: 2019-RFP-55 Thorold Stone Road Extension – Stage Two

Consultant: WSP Canada Inc.

Purchase Order Number: 0000088530

Increase the contract award amount to the lowest compliant bidder (\$480,648.00 exclusive of HST) with an additional \$127,763.50 (exclusive of HST)

The increase is to complete the following additional tasks which were not previously included in the design assignment;

- Review additional options for a stormwater outlet to service the proposed roundabout at Stanley Ave./Bridge St., and the proposed Thorold Stone Road Extension between the current cul-de-sac and the roundabout. This requires an hydrology assessment and analysis of five (5) potential options and preparation of a summary report; preparation of schematic plans for each option as well as cost sharing analysis for each; presentation of options and recommendations to various stakeholders including City of Niagara Falls; additional meetings with Region and City staff to reach consensus.

- Upgrades to the landscaping of the Victoria and Bridge roundabout, including illumination, irrigation, upgraded vegetation were requested by the City of Niagara Falls.
- City of Niagara Falls requested the inclusion of municipal servicing works (watermain, sanitary sewer and disconnection of catch basins from the existing combined sewers).
- Additional project management requirements for the coordination of these tasks into the tender package as it is nearing 90% complete.

Rationale for Increase

A continuation of the current design assignment in order to maintain quality and control to ensure the designs being completed meet the required Regional, Provincial and Municipal standards.

During the RFP process the Consultant was required to undertake specific tasks for the storm sewer outlet. However, at preliminary design a number of other alternatives were requested by stakeholders which require a scope change. Landscaping upgrades and infrastructure works were new requests by the City of Niagara Falls for inclusion during design and construction.

The accumulated change, including the current change (iii, iv, v), to the original Purchase Order is \$279,481.50 as summarized below:

i. Designated Substance Survey of 4799 Bridge Street	\$6,350.00
ii. Geotechnical and Excess Soil Management Plan	\$145,568.00
iii. Storm Sewer Outlet Options	\$46,604.50
iv. Municipal Landscape, Irrigation and Infrastructure Additions.....	\$80,959.00

Alternatives Reviewed

- (i) Do Nothing:
- Examination of additional storm outlet options, which includes a potential outlet into the hydro canal, will assist with identifying effective preferred locations in order to properly drain the roadway and neighbouring lands.
 - A vision for this area has been identified by both the City and Region, so the request is to include for the landscaping upgrades to enhance the gateway feature at the roundabout. Not including for this would be a loss to the gateway vision.
 - Without including the City's infrastructure works, ageing infrastructure under the newly constructed roundabout will be left, which could result in infrastructure failure and excavation of the project site in the near future.

- (ii) Increase the PO
 - Allows the continuation of the current assignment which will maintain quality control over the design completed and facilitated during construction.

Recommendation by Transportation Services

Increase PO for an additional \$127,564.50 (excluding HST) to add the additional design assignments to the project.

3. 2015-RFP-14 Regional Road 87 (Lakeshore Road) From Townline Road to Four Mile Creek in Niagara on the Lake – Consulting Services for Design of Road and Drainage Improvements

Request: Updates to tender documents and Phase 2 Contract Administration and Inspection Services.

Consultant: Kerry T. Howe (KTH)

Purchase Order Number: CNV0000139

Increase original contract amount of \$271,721.78 (excl. HST) by \$145,798.00 for a new total of \$616,466.71. *With the launch to the Peoplesoft System, the actual PO amount in the system is \$417,519.78 = \$344,744.93 (accumulated changes) + \$72,774.85 (converted PO in Peoplesoft)

Rationale for Increase

The request is for an extension to an existing contract.

Kerry T. Howe (KTH) was retained through a competitive bidding process under Request for Proposal 2015-RFP-14. The additional fees are required to provide:

- Updates to Contract Documents for Procurement in order to secure a Contractor for 2021 Phase 2 Construction
- Contract Administration and Inspection Services of 2021 Phase 2 Construction

The additional fees requested by Kerry T Howe to undertake the above is \$145,925. A credit in the amount of \$127 will be applied so the change PO request is \$145,798 (\$145,925 - \$127).

The accumulated change, including the current change (vi), to the original Purchase Order is \$344,744.93 as summarized below:

i) Financials not captured during PeopleSoft Conversion	\$18,712.33
ii) Ellis Engineering Culvert Extension	\$29,432.00
iii) Ellis Engineering culvert extension	\$23,680.00
iv) Contract Administration and Inspection for Phase 1 Construction (tendered)	\$127,122.60
v) PO Amendments: Changes Documented but PO value not adjusted	\$0
vi) Contract Administration and Inspection for Phase 2 Construction (current)	\$145,798.00

Alternatives Reviewed

- (i) Do nothing:
 - Impacts tendering of document.
 - Construction requires Contract Administration and Inspection Services. Rates to be applied were tendered under Phase I.
- (ii) New procurement:
 - Increased risk exposure to the Region as a result of the lack of project specific knowledge and decisions.
 - Increase in timeline (three to four months due to project delay).
 - Not considered a viable alternative since compatibility with existing service is a paramount consideration.
- (iii) Extend current assignment to cover the additional services:
 - Compatibility with existing service from a consistency and technical perspective with the current professional services.
 - Mitigates the risk/cost exposure resulting from conflicting information if a new consultant were to be procured.

Recommendation by Transportation Services

Approval of additional fees to support finalization of contract documents in order to procure the construction for 2021 season and for Contract Administration and Inspection Services.

Subject: Greater Niagara Circle Route – Welland Canal Parkway Trail Extension

Report to: Public Works Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Operating Budget in the amount of \$200,000 for a grant to the City of St. Catharines for the extension of the Welland Canal Parkway Trail north of Lakeshore Road, to be funded from the Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) Reserve, subject to the completion of any required agreements including with the City of St. Catharines in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal & Court Services, **BE CONSIDERED** at the Regional Council meeting of June 24, 2021 with the appropriate public notice in accordance with the Region's Public Notice Policy (corporate policy number C-RC-005).
2. That a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Operating Budget in the amount of \$50,000 for Greater Niagara Circle Route (GNCR) wayfinding initiatives, to be funded from the GNCR Reserve, **BE CONSIDERED** at the Regional Council meeting of June 24, 2021 with the appropriate public notice in accordance with the Region's Public Notice Policy (corporate policy number C-RC-005).

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to address two (2) notices of motion made by the Greater Niagara Circle Route Sub-Committee to extend the Welland Canal Parkway Trail north of Lakeshore Road; and, to undertake a wayfinding initiative to propose a consistent strategy for trail signage.
- The grant amount of \$200,000 to the City of St. Catharines for the extension of the Welland Canal Parkway Trail north of Lakeshore Road, is for construction-related costs associated with a stone path extension and two (2) terminal lookouts over the canal.
- The \$50,000 for the wayfinding initiative is to procure a consultant assignment, facilitated by Niagara Region's transportation department, which will review the current entire trail wayfinding and destination routing and propose a consistent navigation strategy.

- These proposed initiatives were not included in the Council approved Niagara Region 2021 capital or operating budgets.
- Any in-year use of reserves not included in the Council approved budget must comply with the Reserve and Reserve Funds Policy (Corporate Policy C-F-013) as well as the Budget Control By-law, and are considered a budget amendment which requires 10 days' notice prior to council approval as per Public Notice Policy (corporate policy C-RC-005). There is no impact on the tax levy as a result of utilizing reserves to fund these initiatives.
- Staff will be seeking direction from this committee at a future meeting on criteria for the use of the unrestricted balance of GNCR Reserve for specified purposes while following the Regional budget process each year.

Financial Considerations

The GNCR Reserve current balance is \$1,382,681. It was funded from prior year surpluses and a \$10,760 donation restricted for use on the GNCR.

Staff is recommending a one-time amendment to the previously adopted 2021 Niagara Region Operating Budget in the amount of \$250,000. This consists of a grant of \$200,000 to the City of St. Catharines for the extension of the Welland Canal Parkway trail north of Lakeshore Road and \$50,000 for a consulting assignment to review the current wayfinding and destination routing throughout the entire trail. The initiatives are proposed to be funded from the GNCR Reserve. It is recommended that the restricted portion of \$10,760 (related to donations for the GNCR) in addition to a portion of the unrestricted portion be used to fund these requests. Any unspent amounts for the above noted initiatives will be returned to the GNCR reserve.

Any in-year use of reserves not included in the Council approved budget must comply with the Reserve and Reserve Funds Policy and the Budget Control By-Law. An in year use of unbudgeted reserves is considered a budget amendment which requires 10 days' notice prior to Regional Council approval as per Public Notice Policy (corporate policy C-RC-005). With endorsement of the recommendations included in this report by the Transportation Steering Committee and subsequently Public Works Committee, a report will be brought forth to Regional Council on June 24, 2021 seeking approval of the budget amendment in accordance with policy. There is no impact on the tax levy as a result of the utilization of reserves to fund these initiatives.

Analysis

- The extension of the Welland Canal Parkway Trail north of Lakeshore Road is directed towards creating a safe and convenient trail extension within the City of St. Catharines to be used by Niagara Region residents and tourists.
- This project will address current operational and geometric deficiencies; while offering active transportation connectivity to the northern part of this trail along the Welland Canal.
- This project will be led by the City of St. Catharines in collaboration with the Transportation Services Division at the Niagara Region.
- There continues to be an increase in all forms of active transportation. This trail extension adds to the appeal of Niagara Region and the Circle Route being a cycling destination.
- Staff will prepare the necessary agreements as required, including with the City of St. Catharines, in a form satisfactory to the Director of Legal & Court Services. The grant will be provided to the City of St. Catharines upon confirmation of the extension costs. If the cost of construction is less than \$200,000, the excess budget will be returned to the GNCR Reserve.
- Staff will procure a consultant assignment that will review the current wayfinding and destination routing throughout the entire trail. A consistent navigation strategy will be proposed using signage and architectural landmarks. The proposed strategy will be reviewed with the Greater Niagara Circle Route Sub-Committee.
- Following completion of the wayfinding consulting assignment, any recommendations for enhancements and/or improvements to the trail will be discussed with Transportation Steering Committee (TSC). Any cost implications associated with these recommendations will be considered as part of future budget processes.
- Property ownership, maintenance and operations fall under the jurisdiction of respective local area municipalities; not that of the Region. As part of the GNCR workplan, roles and responsibilities of the Region and local area municipalities will be identified and brought forward to TSC for consideration and approval.
- Staff will be seeking direction from TSC in Q3 2021 on parameters for future utilization of the GNCR Reserve for active transportation projects in alignment with the annual budget process.

Alternatives Reviewed

The decision to fund a grant to the City of St. Catharines and wayfinding consulting utilizing the GNCR Reserve could be deferred and considered during the 2022 Regional Budget Process in alignment with normal practice.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Alignment to Niagara Regional Council Strategic Priority

Vision:

Niagara Region is a mosaic of diverse communities. We strive to achieve a prosperous, safe and inclusive community that embraces our natural spaces and promotes holistic wellbeing and quality of life.

Mission:

Niagara Region will serve its residents, businesses and tourists through collaborative leadership, responsible policy and the provision of effective and efficient community-focused services, while maintaining environmental and economic sustainability.

Corporate Strategic Priorities:

Priority 2: Healthy and Vibrant Community - Foster a high quality of life through safe, healthy, and inclusive neighbourhoods through the delivery of quality, affordable and accessible human services.

Priority 3: Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning - Sustainable investments in Transportation, transit and infrastructure, while aligning infrastructure planning with preservation of the natural environment.

Other Pertinent Reports

- ICP 19-2013 March 6, 2013 Greater Niagara Circle Route – Asset Management and Management Issues
- Confidential PDS 4-2017 February 22, 2017
- CL-C 34-2018 June 14, 2018 Motion to Release Funds to Support Extension of the Welland Canal Parkway Trail

- TSC-C 5-2021, April 27, 2021 Greater Niagara Circle Route – Welland Canal Parkway Trail Extension

Prepared by:

Carolyn Ryall
Director, Transportation Services
Public Works Department

Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works
Public Works Department

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Dan Ane, Manager Program Financial Support and reviewed by Donna Gibbs, Director Legal and Court Services.

Appendices

Appendix 1: GNCR – Lakeshore Extension – Malcolmson Park to Sunset Beach Link

Appendix 2: GNCR – Lakeshore Extension – Seating Area with Views to Canal



**GNCR Lakeshore Extension-
Malcolmson Park to Sunset Beach**





***GNCR Lakeshore Extension-
Seating Area with views to canal - Typical***



MEMORANDUM

PWC-C 21-2021

Subject: Recommendations for Consideration from the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meeting held April 19, 2021

Date: May 11, 2021

To: Public Works Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

At its meeting held on April 19, 2021, the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee passed the following motion for consideration by the Public Works Committee:

Minute Item No. 5.1

WMPSC-C 12-2021

Updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Terms of Reference

That Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, dated April 19, 2021, respecting Updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Terms of Reference, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix B to Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Subject: Updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Terms of Reference

Report to: Waste Management Planning Steering Committee

Report date: Monday, April 19, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix B to Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, **BE APPROVED.**

Key Facts

- As part of WMPSC-C 14-2021 - Appointment of Citizen Members to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee, WMPSC approved an update to the WMPSC Terms of Reference (ToR) be completed by Niagara Region's Clerk's Department, in consultation with Waste Management staff.
- The purpose of this report is to obtain WMPSC's approval on the updated WMPSC Terms of Reference.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications associated with the approval of this report.

Analysis

Existing WMPSC Terms of Reference

The original WMPSC Terms of Reference was approved in February 2002. Since this date, there have been a few minor amendments made to those terms, which included:

1. WMPSC to provide input and recommendations on a wider range of long-term waste management and planning initiatives (PWA 157-2005, September 13, 2005)
2. Regional Councillor representation on the WMPSC was increased from five (5) members to seven (7) members (CL 16-2014 (Minute Item 16.15) Regional Council, December 18, 2014)
3. Regional Councillor representation on the WMPSC was further increased from seven (7) members to eight (8) members (CL 20-2018 (Minute Item 17.14), Regional Council, December 13, 2018)

4. Regional Councillor representation on the WMPSC was further increased from eight (8) members to nine (9) members (CL-C 25-2019 (Minute Item 11.2.5), Regional Council, March 28, 2019)

Appendix A includes the existing WMPSC Terms of Reference, including the above amendments.

Updated WMPSC Terms of Reference

The updated WMPSC Terms of Reference will reflect any required changes made to Niagara Region's Procedural By-law.

As part of WMPSC-C 14-2021 - Appointment of Citizen Members to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee, the following recommendations were approved by WMPSC, at their February 22, 2021 meeting, in relation to amending the existing WMPSC Terms of Reference:

1. That the Waste Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) **BE DISCONTINUED**, effective immediately;
2. For the remainder of this term of Regional Council, the past WMAC Chair and delegate **CONTINUE** as members of the WMPSC;
3. For future terms of Regional Council, a formal application process for selecting two (2) citizen members to sit on the WMPSC, **BE USED**;
4. That the existing WMPSC's Terms of Reference **BE AMENDED** to include the following composition:
 - Maximum of 12 individuals, including: the Regional Chair, up to nine (9) Regional Councillors and two (2) citizen members.
5. That a complete update to the existing WMPSC's Terms of Reference **BE COMPLETED** by Niagara Region's Clerk's Department, in consultation with Waste Management staff.

As a result, updates to the existing WMPSC Terms of Reference are required to remove any references to the WMAC, and replace it with two (2) citizen members.

Appendix B provides the updated WMPSC Terms of Reference.

Alternatives Reviewed

A review of the Terms of Reference clauses for Niagara Region's comparator municipalities, which have a parallel Waste Management Advisory/Steering Committee that includes both Council and public members, was completed, in order to determine whether any additional amendments were required. Appendix C includes the results of this municipal comparison's Terms of Reference clauses. Niagara Region's WMPSC Terms of Reference generally align with the content of those from the comparator municipalities.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Niagara Region's recommendation to update the WMPSC Terms of Reference supports Council's strategic priority of Sustainable and Engaging Government by promoting an organizational culture that values continuous improvement, collaboration, and innovation.

Other Pertinent Reports

- WMPSC-C 14-2021 – Appointment of Citizen Members to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee, February 22, 2021
- WMPSC-C 35-2019 – Status of the Waste Management Advisory Committee
- PWA 157-2005 – Proposed Amendment to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee Terms of Reference, September 13, 2005

Prepared by:

Brad Whitelaw, BA, CIM, CPM, P.Mgr.
Program Manager, Waste Policy &
Planning
Waste Management Services

Recommended by:

Bruce Zvaniga, P. Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)
Public Works

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, and reviewed by Dan Ane, Manager, Program Financial Support, Corporate Services, and Lydia Torbicki, Manager, Waste Policy & Planning, Waste Management Services Division.

Appendices

- Appendix A Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Existing Terms of Reference
- Appendix B Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Updated Terms of Reference
- Appendix C Review of Terms of Reference Clauses/Content for Comparator Municipalities, which have a Parallel Waste Management Advisory/Steering Committee that includes both Council and Public Members

Appendix A - Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Existing Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (Steering Committee) will be to provide direction to the completion of the waste management planning process. This process will result in the selection and implementation of a long-term waste disposal strategy.

2. Responsibilities

The primary roles and responsibilities of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee are to:

- a) Make recommendations to Regional Council on the selection, siting, development and implementation of alternative waste management technologies, long-term waste disposal site(s) and significant waste diversion facilities and programs;
- b) Promote public interest and involvement in the implementation of new waste management programs and to evaluate and consider recommendations received from the public.

3. Reporting

- a) Figure 1 identifies the relationship and reporting structure of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee and other committees that have a role in providing input into the implementation of the Region's Long-term Waste Management System. The Waste Management Advisory Committee (WMAC), being an advisory committee that acts as the conduit for public input to the planning process, will report to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee.
- b) The recommendation(s) of the long-term Waste Management Planning Study would be reported through the Steering Committee to Public Works and Utilities Committee and then to Council for approval.

4. Applicability of Procedural By-law

- a) As an advisory committee of Council, the Waste Management Steering Committee shall be governed by the sections of the Region's Procedural By-law relating to advisory committees.

5. Composition

- a) The Waste Management Steering Committee shall be a sub-committee of the Public Works and Utilities Committee.
- b) The Waste Management Steering Committee will be comprised of a maximum of 12 individuals, including: the Regional Chair, nine Regional Councillors and two representatives from the Waste Management Advisory Committee. The representatives of the WMAC will not have a vote on legal or financial matters.
- c) Additional Officers and/or employees of the Niagara Region's Waste Management Services Division shall serve on the Committee in a resource capacity.

6. Meetings

- a) The Waste Management Planning Steering Committee shall meet generally, on a Monthly basis prior to the second Public Works Committee meeting of each month, or at the call of the Chair.
- b) Meetings generally will be open to the public and will only be closed to the public when dealing with matters as set out under the Region's Procedural By-law relating to advisory committees.
- c) Opportunities will be provided for formal public input through reports from the WMAC and general public input via the inclusion of public deputations as an item on the agenda for each meeting. Those members of the public who wish to make a deputation would be required to contact the Region at least 24 hours in advance to do so.

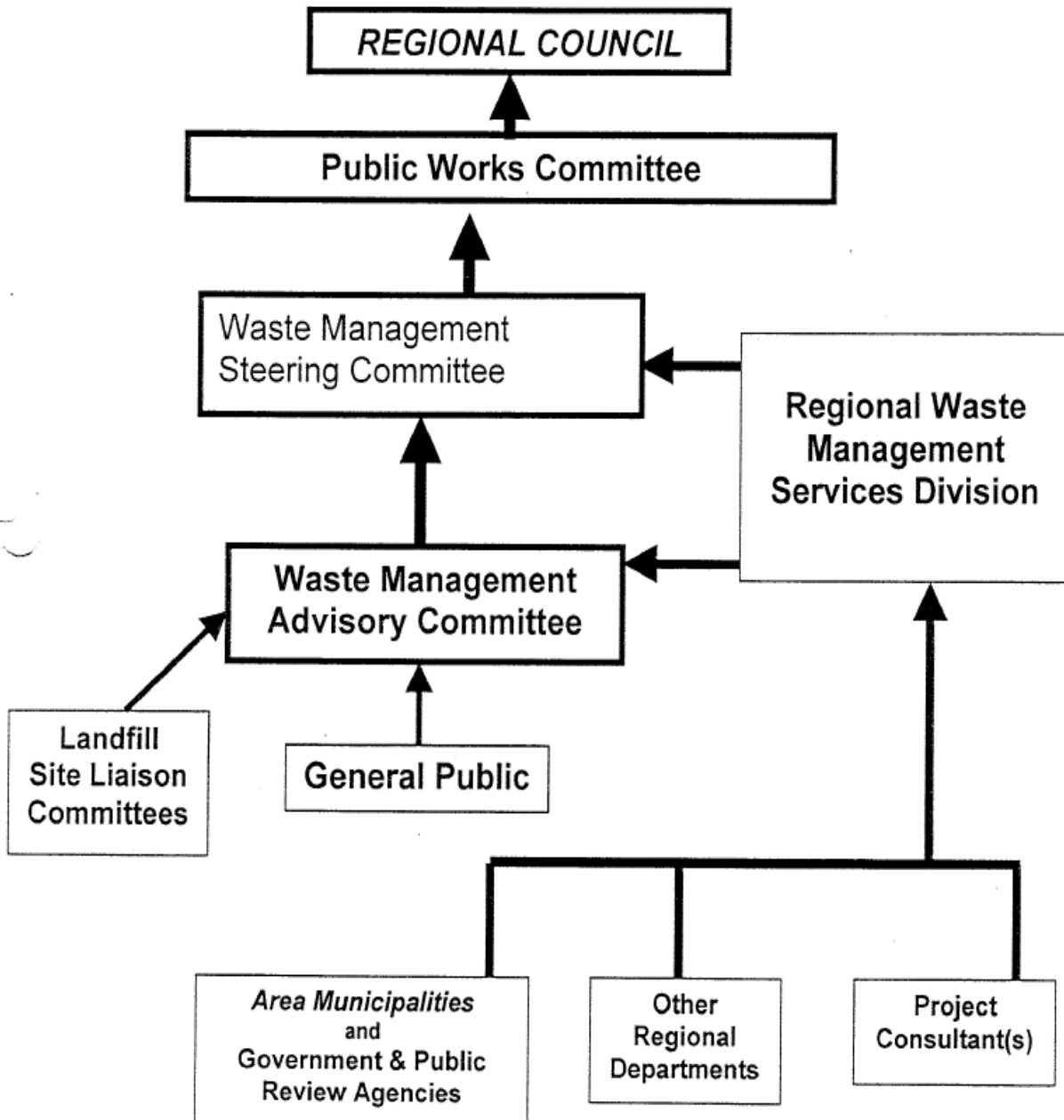
7. Meeting Agenda and Minutes

- a) Meeting agendas will be prepared and distributed to Committee members, the media and other interested participants, at least five (5) working days prior to the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meetings.
- b) The staff of the Clerk's office will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda and minutes.

- c) Any member of the general public can request to be included on a mailing list for distribution of notices for Waste Management Planning Steering Committee meetings.
- d) The minutes and recommendations of all meetings of the Waste Management Planning Steering Committee shall be provided to the Public Works Committee at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting. Oral reports by the Chair on significant matters not yet minuted may be provided to the Public Works Committee at its next meeting. The Steering Committee minutes will be circulated for information to the Waste Management Advisory Committee and the active Landfill Site Liaison Committees.

Figure 1

**Organizational Structure for the Long-term
Waste Management Planning Study**



WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE (WMPSC) TERMS OF REFERENCE

Appendix to Report WMPSC-C 12-2021

Recommended for Approval by the Public Works Committee on <date>

Ratified by Regional Council on <date>

Consolidated Version as of <date>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE	3
2. GOALS/PURPOSE.....	3
3. REPORTING STRUCTURE	3
4. MEMBERSHIP	3
4.1 Composition	3
4.2 Term.....	4
4.3 Privacy	4
5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	4
5.1 Chair & Vice Chair.....	4
5.2 Committee Members.....	4
6. RESOURCES	5
7. MEETINGS	5
8. ABSENTEEISM	6
9. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	6

1. PREAMBLE

The Waste Management Planning Steering Committee was established as a sub-committee of the Public Works Committee in 2002.

2. GOALS/PURPOSE

The goals/purpose of the Committee are to:

- Provide direction to Waste Management staff on recommendations related to the Waste Management Long Term Strategic Plan and other waste management strategic initiatives;
- Make recommendations to Public Works Committee on the selection, siting, development and implementation of alternative waste management technologies, long-term waste disposal site(s) and significant waste diversion facilities and programs;
- Promote public interest and involvement in the implementation of new waste management programs and to evaluate and consider recommendations received from the public.

3. REPORTING STRUCTURE

The WMPSC will report to Regional Council through the Public Works Committee. There shall be no compensation payable to the members of the Committee.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Composition

Membership for the WMPSC shall not exceed a maximum of 12 members.

Membership for the WMPSC shall include:

- Regional Chair
- Up to nine (9) Regional Councillors
- Up to two (2) citizen members

Citizen members recommended for appointment to the Committee will need to possess relevant waste management experience to be considered.

All attempts will be made to stay within the guideline composition; however, if the applications received or the qualifications of applicants do not fully address the guideline composition criteria, the most capable and qualified applicants will be recommended for appointment to fulfill the membership composition.

4.2 Term

- The term of membership shall be four years, concurrent with Regional Council's elected term of office, and the membership shall be approved by Council in accordance with membership requirements in the Terms of Reference.

4.3 Privacy

- The meetings of the WMPSC are public. Members should be aware that their names will be in the public realm and a list of membership may be posted on the Region's website and provided when requested. Member information, other than name or municipality, will be kept confidential in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Chair & Vice Chair

- A Chair and Vice Chair will be elected from Committee members, on an annual basis, at the first meeting of the new year to preside over meetings and Committee business. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee shall be a Regional Councillor.
- It is the role of the Chair to preside over Committee meetings so that its business can be carried out efficiently and effectively, and to act as a liaison between the Committee, the Public Works Committee, and Regional Council.
- It is the role of the Vice Chair to preside over Committee meetings in the absence of the Chair and to perform any other duties delegated by the Chair or as assigned by the Committee through a majority vote.

5.2 Committee Members

All WMPSC members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, have the responsibility to help achieve the WMPSC's Goals/Purposes. Committee members are also responsible for:

- Reviewing meeting materials in advance of the meetings and arrive prepared to provide a broad perspective on the issues under consideration;
- Working diligently to complete assigned activities;
- Participating on working groups, as appropriate;
- Agreeing to describe, process and resolve issues in a professional and respectful manner;

- Providing input to help identify future projects or strategic priorities for future years' work;
- Communicating activities of the Committee to groups represented or those who may have an interest and offer information back to the Committee.

The two citizen members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

6. RESOURCES

The Waste Management Division is the designated lead department providing resource support for the WMPSC; however, the Committee also has access to the technical expertise of staff from other Regional departments as may be required. It is recognized that staff time and the level of participation will be dependent on other departmental priorities as determined by senior management and/or Regional Council. As required, additional resources may be sought. Additional resourcing may be required for projects with senior levels of government.

The Committee shall receive administrative support from the Office of the Regional Clerk for meeting and agenda management.

7. MEETINGS

A meeting schedule following a bi-monthly cycle shall be set for the WMPSC. The schedule will be circulated to the members for approval each year. Should a time sensitive matter arise, the WMPSC may meet at the call of the Chair.

The WMPSC meetings will be held at Regional Headquarters, or by electronic participation, at a time as determined by the members. All meetings will be open to the public.

Meetings shall be governed by the Region's Procedural By-law, being a by-law to govern the calling, place and proceedings of the meetings of Council and its Committees, as may be amended from time-to-time.

If necessary, a schedule setting the due dates for materials to be included on the agenda will be circulated to each member pending adoption of a meeting schedule or the scheduling of a meeting date.

A committee member who is unable to attend a meeting, shall forward his/her regrets to the Office of the Regional Clerk as soon as possible. Should the Office of the Regional Clerk not have confirmation of quorum 24 hours prior to the meeting, the meeting shall be cancelled.

8. ABSENTEEISM

Members who miss three unauthorized consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned from the Committee and will be notified of this in writing by the Committee Chair.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference should be reviewed and refined at a minimum of every four years to ensure that they remain current and meaningful.

Proposals to amend the Terms of Reference shall require the approval of a majority of the members present. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to Regional Council for approval through the Public Works Committee and shall take effect only upon the approval of Council.

Appendix C - Review of Terms of Reference Clauses/Content for Comparator Municipalities, which have a Parallel Waste Management Advisory/Steering Committee that includes both Council and Public Members

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
1.0 Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide direction to the completion of the waste management planning process. This process will result in the selection and implementation of a long-term waste disposal strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice through Regional Staff to Regional Council with respect to the minimization of waste going to the landfill site through such activities as reduction, reuse and recycling (3Rs) of solid waste generated in Halton, as required by Condition 1 of the Conditions of Approval (under the Environmental Assessment Act); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist City of Hamilton with the implementation of the 2020 Solid Waste Management Master Plan and to discuss / make recommendations on other solid waste management initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise Ottawa City Council on policy, programs and service delivery in the area of environmental stewardship.

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice with respect to off-site impacts due to operations at the Halton Waste Management Site and the monitoring of waste haulage practices in the Region, as required by Conditions 5 and 6 of the Conditions of Approval (under the Environmental Assessment Act). 		
2.0 Responsibilities	<p>The primary roles and responsibilities of the WMPSC are to:</p> <p>a) Make recommendations to Regional Council on the selection, siting, development and implementation of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice on activities and programs that should be implemented to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of solid waste, together with plans and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give overall guidance and direction during the implementation and maintenance of the City's long-term Solid Waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides advice to Council on issues pertaining to: • Policy, programs and service delivery

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
	<p>alternative waste management technologies, long-term waste disposal site(s) and significant waste diversion facilities and programs;</p> <p>b) Promote public interest and involvement in the implementation of new waste management programs and to evaluate and consider recommendations received from the public.</p>	<p>programs for the disposal of waste remaining after such 3Rs initiatives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine issues and new ideas which may affect the abilities of the Region and Local Municipalities to reach their 3Rs objectives and to advise Staff on such matters; • Monitor the success of 3R programs, once established, in reaching the reduction, recycling and reuse of solid waste goals approved by Regional Council; • Advise and assist Staff with ideas for the avoidance and/or 	<p>Management Master Plan,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give overall guidance and direction during the preparation and implementation of other solid waste management initiatives 	<p>in the area of environmental services, forests, greenspaces, parks, cycling and pedestrian issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available as a resource to staff, providing input on matters being pursued to achieve Council's strategic priorities. • Responsible for ensuring that its business aligns with, and

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
		<p>minimization of off-site impacts from Halton's Waste Management Site;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor waste haulage practices with a view to improving general traffic safety; • Support Staff in the creation of an update on activities at the end of term and submit them through Staff to Regional Council. 		<p>serves to complement, City Council's strategic priorities.</p>
3.0 Reporting	a) Figure 1 identifies the relationship and reporting structure of the WMPSC and other committees that have a role in providing input into the implementation of the Region's Long-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Regional Council through Staff in the Public Works Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises Council through Public Works Committee of the progress and to receive feedback, advice and direction, as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports through Standing Committee on Environmental Protection, Water and Waste

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
	<p>term Waste Management System. The Waste Management Advisory Committee (WMAC), being an advisory committee that acts as the conduit for public input to the planning process, will report to the WMPSC.</p> <p>b) Recommendation(s) of the long-term Waste Management Planning Study would be reported through the Steering Committee to Public Works and Utilities Committee and then to Council for approval.</p>			<p>Management to City Council;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May also report to another Standing Committee, where appropriate, depending on issue.

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
4.0 Applicability of Procedural By-law	a) As an advisory committee of Council, the WMPSC shall be governed by the sections of the Region's Procedural By-law relating to advisory committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee shall, at all times, follow the procedures and practices set out in the Regional Procedural By-Law. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members are responsible for complying with the Procedural By-law and the Advisory Committee Handbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing included in ToR.
5.0 Composition	a) Sub-committee of the Public Works and Utilities Committee. b) WMPSC comprised of a maximum of 12 individuals, including: Regional Chair, nine (9) Regional Councillors and two (2) citizen members. The two (2) citizen members will not have a vote on legal or financial matters, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 Councillors, one from each Local Municipality, either Regional or Local 8 citizens-at-large (preferably, at least 4 of whom live near the Halton Waste Management Site) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprised of up to five (5) members, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to three members of City Council; and Two citizen members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum membership between 9 and 11. As much as practicable, membership should reflect City's diverse population. Shall also include one (1) Member of

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
	<p>will not be present during closed sessions, or receive confidential information.</p> <p>c) Additional Officers and/or employees of the Niagara Region's Waste Management Services Division shall serve on the WMPSC in a resource capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 member from the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee ○ 1 member from Conservation Halton ○ 1 member of Regional staff who performs the Environmental Inspector duties (advisory, non-voting) 		<p>Council in a liaison capacity.</p>
6.0 Meetings	<p>a) Monthly basis prior to the second Public Works Committee meeting of each month, or at the call of the Chair.</p> <p>b) Meetings generally open to public and only closed when dealing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of two (2) times per year and at any other time, at the call of the Committee Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-monthly, or at the call of the Chair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in ToR.

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
	<p>with matters under Region's Procedural By-law relating to advisory committees.</p> <p>c) Opportunities will be provided for formal public input through reports from the WMAC and general public input via inclusion of public deputations as item on agenda for each meeting. Public required to contact Region 24 hours in advance to do so.</p>			
7.0 Meeting Agenda and Minutes	a) Meeting agendas will be prepared and distributed to WMPSC members, media and other interested participants at least 5	• Clerk's staff will prepare minutes and agendas and provide general administrative coordination for meetings.	• Nothing included in ToR.	• Nothing included in ToR.

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
	<p>working days prior to WMPSC meetings.</p> <p>b) Clerk's staff will prepare agenda and minutes</p> <p>c) Any member of general public can request to be included on mailing list for WMPSC meetings.</p> <p>d) Minutes and recommendations of WMPSC provided to Public Works Committee (PWC) 5 working days prior to meeting. Oral reports by Chair on significant matters not yet minuted may be provided to PWC, at next meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk's staff will co-ordinate and retain Committee records including agendas, minutes, any subcommittee reports (if applicable and as required), annual reports and aims and objectives. 		
Absenteeism (new section)	<p>a) Nothing included in existing ToR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancies on the Committee for positions that are not Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If member is absent for three (3) meetings in a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in ToR.

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
		<p>Appointments or Members of Regional Council shall be advertised to the public at the beginning of the Committee term and mid-term as needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a Committee Member is unable to complete the term, a new Committee Member may be appointed by Regional Council. • All Committee Members that are to be appointed by Regional Council shall be selected by the Interview Committee in accordance with the Regional Procedural By-Law. 	<p>calendar year, without approval from WMAC, the member may be subject to replacement.</p>	

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
Selection of Committee Chair and Vice-Chair (new section)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in existing ToR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected by Committee for the full term, following the procedures set out in the Regional Procedural By-law. • If Chair resigns at any point during term, a new Chair will be elected by the Committee. • Vice-Chair shall only assume the authority and perform all the duties of Chair until such election takes place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in ToR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in ToR.
Term of Office (new section)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in existing ToR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coincides with the term of Regional Council, unless otherwise provided by resolution of Regional Council, or until successors are appointed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coincides with term of Council or until such time as successors are appointed by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing included in ToR.

Niagara Region WMPSC Existing Terms of Reference Clause (if applicable)	Niagara Region Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) (includes existing ToR wording)	Halton Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee	Hamilton Waste Management Advisory Committee	Ottawa Environmental Stewardship Advisory Committee
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of a term, members must reapply to be considered for a subsequent term. • May serve for no more than two consecutive terms. 		

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**WMPSC 2-2021
Monday, April 19, 2021
Meeting held by Video Conference**

Committee Members Present: Councillors Butters, Diodati, Edgar, Fertich, Gibson, Rigby, Ugulini (Committee Chair), Witteveen (Committee Vice-Chair); J. Bacher, H. Washuta

Absent/Regrets: Bellows, Bradley (Regional Chair)

Staff Members Present: K. Ashbridge, Supervisor, Waste Management Services, C. Habermebl, Director, Waste Management Services, P. Kryger, Project Manager, Waste Management Services, L. McGovern, Program Manager, Waste Management Services, S. McPetrie, Waste Management Services Advisor, A. Mosca, Waste Management Engagement and Education Coordinator, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, E. Prpic, Waste Disposal Operations & Engineering, L. Torbicki, Manager, Waste & Policy Planning, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, B. Whitelaw, Program Manager, Policy & Planning, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Ugulini called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Overview of the Waste Management Long Term Strategic Plan

Catherine Habermebl, Director, Waste Management Services, provided information respecting Overview of the Waste Management Long Term Strategic Plan. Topics of the presentation included:

- Long Term Strategic Plan Development
- Key Deliverables:
 - Assessment of Current System - 'Where We Are'
 - Development of Direction and System Options - 'Where We Want to Go'
 - Preferred System - 'How We Are Going to Get There'
- Stakeholder Consultation
- Project Milestones

3.2 Overview of Waste Management Capital Projects

Peter Kryger, Project Manager, Waste Management Services, provided information respecting Overview of Waste Management Capital Projects. Topics of the presentation included:

- Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Design and Implementation
- Humberstone Infrastructure Upgrades
- Drop Off Depot Upgrades
- Glenridge Passive Gas Venting System (PGVS)
- Glenridge Leachate Collection System (LCS) Improvements
- Mountain Road LCS Improvements
- Quarry Road Landfill Leachate Treatment Upgrades
- Capital Budget - 2022

4. DELEGATIONS

There were no delegations.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 WMPSC-C 12-2021

Updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Terms of Reference

Moved by Councillor Diodati
Seconded by Councillor Edgar

That Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, dated April 19, 2021, respecting Updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee's Terms of Reference, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the updated Waste Management Planning Steering Committee (WMPSC) Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix B to Report WMPSC-C 12-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Gibson
Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

WMPSC-C 15-2021
Recycled Glass Sand Used for Stormwater Management

WMPSC-C 17-2021
2019 Waste Management Benchmarking Report

WMPSC-C 18-2021
2021 Illegal Dumping Campaign

WMPSC-C 20-2021
Update on Contractor Performance Following the Commencement of the
Curbside Collection, Haulage of Garbage, Recycling and Organics Contracts

WMPSC-C 19-2021
Councillor Information Request

WMPSC 1-2021
Waste Management Planning Steering Committee Minutes – February 22, 2021

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Waste Management Collection Contract

Councillor Witteveen requested information respecting waste management collection progress since the change from weekly to bi-weekly waste collection. Catherine Habermehl, Director, Waste Management Services, advised that a memorandum would be provided at the Public Works Committee meeting being held on May 11, 2021.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 28, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.

Councillor Ugulini
Committee Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

MEMORANDUM

PWC-C 20-2021

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

Date: May 11, 2021

To: Public Works Committee

From: Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng., Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)

As reported previously, Public Works has remained focused on keeping the critical public infrastructure operational while responding to the COVID19 pandemic. Departmental staff continue to ensure that the community has: safe drinking water, reliable wastewater systems, recycling and waste collection/disposal, regional specialized and regular transit and a well-maintained regional road system. Public Works staff recognize and are dedicated to the essential role they play ensuring that healthcare, social services, emergency responders and the community-at-large can depend upon the reliable availability of these core municipal services.

Public Works leadership is actively participating in the Municipal Emergency Control Group. Working with all other departments, the Business Continuity Plan and staff redeployment strategy is monitored and adjusted to respond to changing conditions.

The Department Leadership team continues to actively participate in virtual meetings with their counterparts in the Local Area Municipalities, and provincial committees to share our successes and learn how others have overcome challenges.

The following provides a brief highlight from each of the four (4) divisions on their respective status, service changes, actions taken and future outlook.

Water & Wastewater Services

Current Status of Operations

The focus continues to be providing high quality safe and reliable water and wastewater services to the residents of Niagara while continuing to implement the necessary safety

and social distancing protocols in accordance with Niagara Region Public Health directives and Ontario Regulations.

Both the Drinking Water and Wastewater Quality Management Systems (QMS) remain active. Capital infrastructure projects are deemed essential and continue to be delivered.

Capital Projects in design, construction and environmental assessment phases continue to move forward. All meetings are held virtually whenever possible.

All W-WW staff, contractors and consultants continue to be reminded of their obligations to comply with the Niagara Region mask by-law and other pandemic mitigation policies and procedures.

Service/Operational Change

The following mitigation measures have been adopted at all W-WW locations as of April 8, 2021 “Stay-at-home” order:

- All non-essential staff must work from home wherever possible and limit any on-site work to essential tasks only; designation of essential staff is as determined by the manager based on business needs identified in the Business Continuity Plan.
- Closure of all plant meeting rooms to non-essential in-person meetings. All essential in-person meetings must adhere to posted occupancy limits.
- Essential outdoor site tours must be limited to a maximum of five (5) people. All participants are to wear a face covering where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Cancellation of all non-essential indoor site visits.
- All in-person mandatory Health and Safety training has been cancelled; all other training compatible with remote learning tools continues to be offered via virtual learning.
- Deferral of non-essential drone flights and Matterport (360 View) scanning.
- Deferral of all non-essential contracted services.
- Limiting operations/maintenance staff from working/moving between multiple W-WW facilities to an as needed basis at the discretion of the operations and/or maintenance managers.
- Provision of manager’s vehicles for staff as per business need and at the discretion of the operations and/or maintenance managers.

- Using Regional courier to send items between facilities instead of in-person drop off as much as possible
- Re-adoption of no-contact drop-off/pick up for courier, deliveries, uniforms and lab supplies if not currently being practised

Operational Outlook

- The focus continues to be on the maintenance of all key components, the sustainable supply of key chemicals and materials and most importantly on the well-being of the staff managing these essential systems.

Transportation Services

Current Status of Operations

Essential bridge, culvert and roadway works, forestry, traffic control, pavement markings and signage are critical services that continue to be provided.

Design, construction management and environmental assessments continue from engineering staff and consultants.

Staff continue to monitor all material shipments, supplies and construction contracts experiencing delays to understand larger impacts to ongoing construction project schedules.

Service/Operational Changes

Transportation continues to operate with the following measures which were implemented January 14, 2021:

- Transportation staff have been redeployed to assist with pandemic needs as required.
- Staff able to perform work duties from home must do so and limit any on-site work to essential tasks only.
- Essential work as outlined by the Province and identified by Management in the Transportation Business Continuity Plan will continue in accordance with the State of Emergency Declaration.

- Essential construction projects and contracted services are under review based on information coming from the Province and staff, contractors, constructors, etc., will be notified as required.
- All non-essential in-person meetings are cancelled until further notice.
- Closure of all Transportation facilities and yards to visitors. Visitors requiring stock items from our stores at Thorold Service Center must now call Fleet Services Department, Materials Technician Leadhand at **905-227-2220, press 2** in order to place and arrange for curbside pick-up only.
- Essential construction project on-site meetings (per bullet 3) must be limited to a maximum of five (5) participants wearing face masks until further notice.
- In-person training has commenced meeting all safety guidelines
- Staggered shifts and locations are under review and will be implemented as deemed necessary.

Staff continue to follow existing measures diligently and already in practice:

- Pre-screening is mandatory before entry into a Regional work location.
- Stay home if you have any of the symptoms and contact manager.
- Sanitation of workstations, regional property and vehicles per procedures put in place.
- Maintain physical distancing and mask wearing, especially in break rooms, vehicles and shared spaces

Operational Outlook

- Essential and critical project interpretation based on Provincial announcements will affect the delivery of projects and levels of service to residents of Niagara region. This continues to be under review. The Business Continuity Plan with Redeployment Strategy of staff for the Division will be administered accordingly.
- Contracts are continuing to be monitored by staff with regards to any shortages (supplies and trades) and updates will be highlighted.

Waste Management Services

Current Status of Operations

- Waste Management services and programs continue to be offered in accordance with Niagara Region Public Health directives and Ontario Regulations. The following

modifications remain in place: Staff who are able to perform work duties from home have been asked not to attend their work location. On-site work has been limited to essential tasks only.

- Essential work as outlined by the Province and identified in the Waste Management Business Continuity Plan will continue.
- Essential site tours outdoors must be limited to a maximum of five (5) with all participants wearing face coverings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Cancellation of all non-essential indoor site visits.
- Continuation of operational modifications at public drop-off depots to ensure appropriate social distancing.
- Enhanced cleaning at all Waste Management Facilities
- Recycling bin distribution centres are closed for in-person sales. Residents are encouraged to visit Niagara Region's website to purchase bins on-line and make arrangements for curbside pick up.
- Compost Give-away event has been postponed until the week of May 17, 2021.

Strategic initiatives are continuing such as the MRF Opportunity Review, administration of new collection contracts and services levels, Strategy Plan, construction projects, and operational tenders.

Operational Outlook

- Continue to provide waste management services as an essential service.
- Review contingency plans with contractors to ensure plans are updated and current.
- RFP will be issued for the division's Long-term Strategic Plan Q2.
- Preparation for the start of the new Humberstone contract.
- Contracts are continuing to be monitored regarding shortages (supplies and trades) and staff continue to adjust to ensure no service disruptions.

Niagara Region Transit/Specialized Transit & GO Implementation

Current Status of Operations

There have been no additional changes to Niagara Region's transit services as a result of the Provincial Government's recent restrictions. Since November 23, 2020, every transit service in Niagara has reduced its onboard passenger capacity to 50% of the vehicle's seated capacity rating. For Niagara Region, this includes NRT, NST and NRT

OnDemand. After additional consultation with the IMT Working Group, these capacity changes will remain in place for an indefinite period of time, however further reductions are not recommended at this time.

Effective March 15, 2021, Niagara's transit services began providing free transit to/from vaccination appointments. This includes all three of Niagara Region's transit services NRT, NST and NRT OnDemand. Riders are required to show proof of their appointment prior to boarding in order to be eligible for the free trips. Transit related questions are being managed by each individual service provider, while vaccination related questions are referred to Public Health.

Niagara Region Transit (NRT) is operating at a reduced level of service when compared to a typical January through April schedule. This is due to Brock University being 95% online, and Niagara College having significant enrollment reductions combined with many online programs and lower Niagara-based student residency:

- 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. operating hours effective Sept 7 (back up from 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. from May 4 to Sept 6)
- Hourly service (60 minutes) on most routes except 40, 45, 60 and 65 as those are typically well utilized student routes.
- The only Express routes currently running are the 60A, 65A but only during typical morning and afternoon peak periods to help prevent potential crowding.

Niagara Specialized Transit (NST) continues operating at the normal level of service, except for trips whose origins or destinations are to/from a location with reported cases of COVID-19 are not being provided. Reducing hours of operation is not a necessity in this case as Niagara Region only pays for trips delivered, rather than an hourly rate. Overall, NST trip requests are significantly reduced, however NST continues to deliver all requested trips within the capacity available. Ridership has continues to show small signs of recovery but still sits at approximately 50% of typical usage.

NRT OnDemand service operates in Grimsby, Lincoln, Pelham, Wainfleet and West Lincoln from Monday to Saturday, 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. and in Niagara-on-the-Lake from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. Staff are monitoring the ridership levels in relation to the Provincial restrictions.

Mandatory mask usage is required as per the Region's Face Covering By-law.

Service/Operational Changes

Despite the reduction of vehicle capacity, there is no need to return to rear door boarding as each vehicle has a partition separating the operator/driver from the passengers.

The "Rear door boarding" policy enacted on March 23 to temporarily limit driver contact and respect physical distancing has been lifted on July 2. Because Niagara's transit providers have installed plexi-glass bio-barriers across the entire fleet of vehicles to protect bus operators, even if COVID-19 numbers increase, there will not be a need to return to rear door boarding and thus fare collection will be maintained as well.

A lower than typical service level began on January 4, however staff attempted to maintain an adequate amount of service as the student demand from Niagara College was unclear. The schedule will remain the same over the summer as those major trip generators are likely to remain largely, if not entirely, closed.

Significant Initiatives or Actions undertaken

- The Niagara Transit Governance Study report was completed in October 2020 with the recommended full commission governance model being supported-in-principle by LNTC. Feedback and input on the governance and financial models was sought and received from each local area municipality through Q1 2021.
- All NRT, and NST fleet vehicles continue to be professionally cleaned/disinfected/sanitized well beyond regular protocols, and Aegis antimicrobial spray was applied to all interior surfaces. This work was completed by the local transit service providers as they manage and operate the NRT fleet as part of their own.
- Due to the low volume of trips, BTS has made every effort to deliver trips with only a single occupant in each vehicle, although this has not been formalized as a public policy.
- NRT OnDemand does not permit the use of the front passenger seat in order to maintain distance between the drivers and passengers.
- Free transit to/from vaccinations.

Operational Outlook

1 month

- Staff will continue to monitor the COVID-19 numbers and categorization for Niagara. Service adjustments may be required as the situation worsens, however the current belief held by the IMT Working Group is to continue offering existing service for essential workers.
- NRT staff continue to review ridership data closely in order to determine appropriate levels of service.
- Staff continues to work with Brock University and the Brock University Student Union to maintain the U-Pass Program for the 2020-2021 academic year. Niagara College terminated the U-Pass agreement in response to COVID-19 and thus students will continue purchasing monthly passes.

3 months

- Staff has set the schedules for May through August 2021 at the same consistent service level as is currently available.
- Possible further service adjustments based on ridership and in reaction to any provincial changes. Staff will continue to work with the IMTWG in reviewing the available data to ensure that adequate service is being provided while being mindful of the financial challenges faced by each municipality.

6 months

- The IMTWG will begin working towards the implementation of a new fare payment technology through the funding provided by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). Due to the complexity of the program, an implementation date in 2021 is being targeted, however orders for the hardware are just beginning to be made. Staff will continue to provide updates once a timeline has been established and at the major milestones.
- Anticipated initiation of the triple-majority approval process for the consolidation of transit in Niagara, following the development of revised financial and governance models that reflect the input received from local area municipalities.

As both the Province and Region move through the recovery process, staff at each of Niagara's transit providers will continue to collaborate in monitoring service levels, processes, and policies to ensure the safety of the residents and employees remain a priority and that decisions are made and communicated jointly wherever possible.

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

Bruce Zvaniga, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works (Interim)

Other Pertinent Reports

CAO 10-2020, April 23, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Departmental Updates

PWC-C 13-2020, May 12, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 20-2020, June 16, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 24-2020, July 14, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 27-2020, August 4, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 33-2020, September 8, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 37-2020, October 13, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 41-2020, November 10, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 47-2020, December 8, 2020 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 1-2021, January 12, 2021 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 3-2021, February 16, 2021 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 7-2021, March 9, 2021 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

PWC-C 17-2021, April 13, 2021 COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Works

MEMORANDUM

PWC-C 19-2021

Subject: Every Other Week (EOW) Garbage Collection Diversion Impact Analysis

Date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

To: Public Works Committee

From: Alison Powell, Business Support Analyst

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Public Works Committee with an update on the waste diversion impact resulting from the change to every-other-week (EOW) garbage collection.

Background

On October 17, 2019, Council approved EOW garbage collection for implementation. Reducing the frequency of garbage collection encourages residents to divert waste through the use of the Blue/Grey Box and Green Bin, both of which are still collected weekly. As seen in comparator municipalities, when residents utilize all diversion programs, there is a reduction in the amount of garbage placed at the curb for collection.

EOW garbage collection pertains to all residential properties, including Multi-Residential (MR) properties, and for those Industrial, Commercial & Institutional (IC&I) and Mixed-Use (MU) properties located outside Designated Business Areas (DBAs) that are using Niagara Region's curbside collection service.

On October 19, 2020, EOW garbage collection commenced with the start of the new waste collection contracts. Green for Life (GFL) Environmental Inc. services Collection Area One (1); and Miller Waste Systems Inc. services Collection Area Two (2).

- Collection Area One (1) – the Town of Grimsby, the Town of Lincoln, the Town of Pelham, the City of Thorold, the Township of Wainfleet, and the Township of West Lincoln. Contracts are continuing to be monitored by staff with regards to any shortages (supplies and trades) and updates will be highlighted.

-
- Collection Area Two (2) – the Town of Fort Erie, the City of Niagara Falls, the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the City of Port Colborne, the City of St. Catharines, and the City of Welland.

Tonnage Analysis

To determine the impact EOW garbage collection has had on the amount of waste collected from the curb, a preliminary review of tonnage data from October 19, 2020 through the end of March 2021 was done, identified as 'After EOW' in this memorandum. This data has been compared with data from the same timeframe in 2019 and 2020 (October 21, 2019, through the end of March 2020), identified as 'Before EOW' in this memorandum. Further review of one (1) year's worth of data will be completed in late 2021.

It is important to note that the data presented in this memorandum pertains to all curbside collected waste from residential properties, MR properties (not including those with front-end garbage collection as an enhanced service), IC&I, and MU properties throughout Niagara region, including those IC&I and MU with weekly collection inside DBAs. However, the majority of the waste is generated by the residential sector through the EOW curbside collection service.

IC&I and MU properties inside the DBA receive enhanced service collection, paid for by local area municipalities, in which garbage is collected at minimum one (1) day per week, sometimes more depending on the DBA. In addition to increased frequency of garbage collection, certain DBAs also have increased bag limits allowed at the curb for collection. Waste collected inside DBAs is not collected separately from waste outside the DBA; therefore, this tonnage data is not tracked separately and is included in the tonnages reported in this memorandum.

The combined amount of curbside collected garbage, organics and recycling after EOW garbage collection began, has increased from 58,260 tonnes to 59,068 tonnes. This is a 1.4 per cent increase in total garbage collected in less than six (6) months.

Additionally since EOW garbage collection began, the amount of curbside collected organics and recycling has increased from 47 per cent to 56 per cent, resulting in significantly reduced demand on the landfill sites.

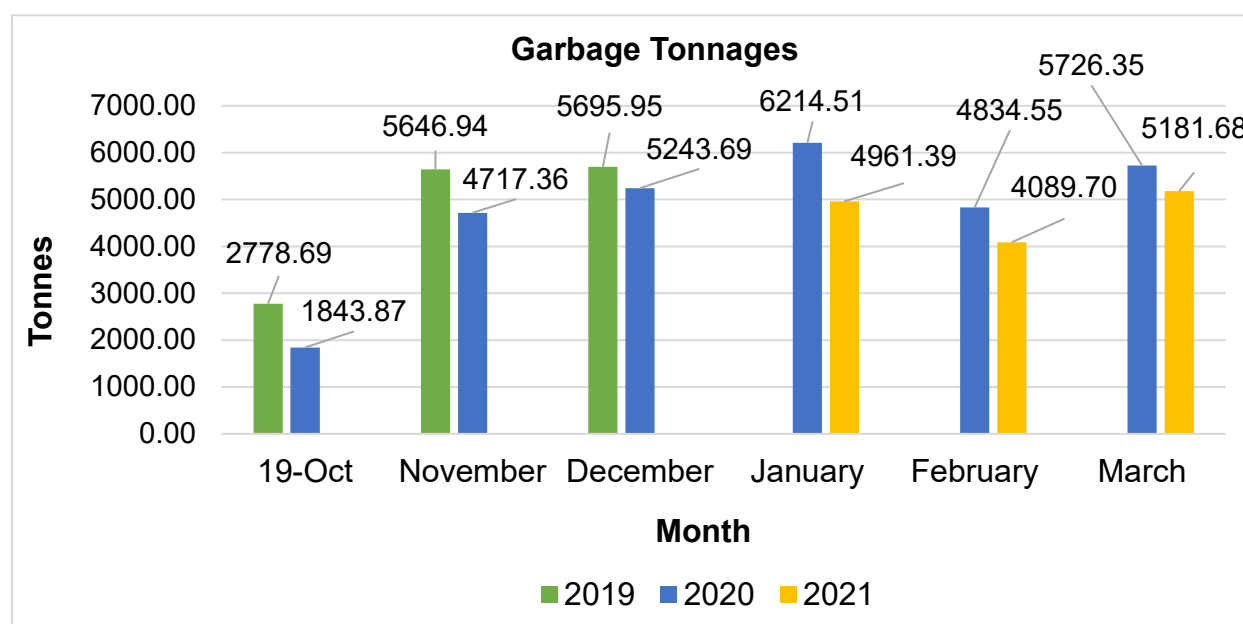
Garbage

Curbside collected garbage tonnages have decreased since the start of EOW garbage collection. From October 19, 2020 through to the end of March 2021, the amount of curbside collected garbage has decreased by 15.7 per cent compared to the same time frame in 2019 and 2020. Table 1 and Figure 1 provide a monthly breakdown of garbage tonnages.

Table 1 Garbage Tonnages

Month	Before EOW (Tonnes)	After EOW (Tonnes)	Difference
October (last two weeks)	2,778.69	1,843.87	-33.6%
November	5,646.94	4,717.36	-16.5%
December	5,695.95	5,243.69	-7.9%
January	6,214.51	4,961.39	-20.2%
February	4,834.55	4,089.70	-15.4%
March	5,726.35	5,181.68	-9.5%
Total	30,896.99	26,037.69	-15.7%

Figure 1 Garbage Tonnages



This decrease can be attributed to residents diverting their waste through organics and recycling, as these diversion programs have seen considerable increases in tonnages collected at the curb in just six (6) months.

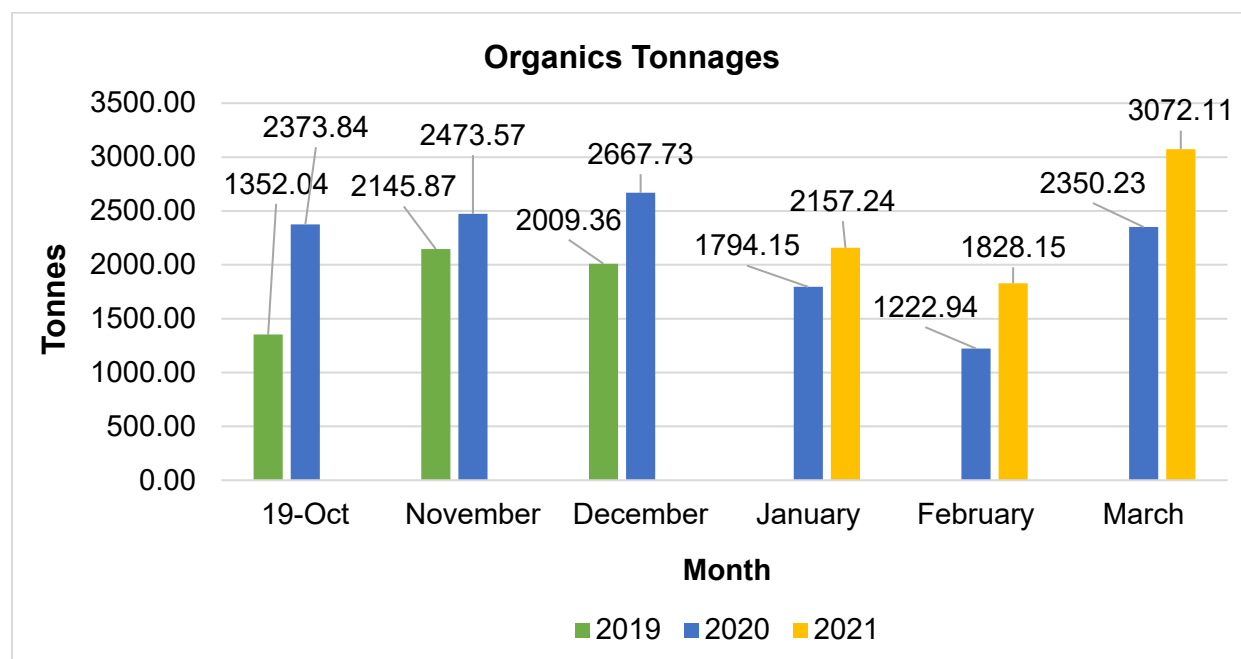
Organics

Tonnages for curbside collected organics have increased 34 per cent since the start of EOW garbage collection compared to the same time frame in 2019 and 2020. See Table 2 and Figure 2 for a monthly comparison.

Table 2 Organics Tonnages

Month	Before EOW (Tonnes)	After EOW (Tonnes)	Difference
October (last two weeks)	1,352.04	2,373.84	75.6%
November	2,145.87	2,473.57	15.3%
December	2,009.36	2,667.73	32.8%
January	1,794.15	2,157.24	20.2%
February	1,222.94	1,828.15	49.5%
March	2,350.23	3,072.11	30.7%
Total	10,874.59	14,580.77	34.0%

Figure 2 Organics Tonnages



Organics collection includes food waste collected in the Green Bin and co-collected leaf and yard waste, with the exception of dedicated leaf and yard waste collection in the spring and fall in urban areas. In 2020, separate leaf and yard waste took place from November 2 to 27. In 2019, it was October 28 to November 22. The 2019 data for October contains one week of non co-collected leaf and yard waste, whereas the October 2020 data only includes co-collected leaf and yard waste. This explains why the larger increase was observed in October 2020 when compared with October 2019. Excluding data from October 2019 and 2020, the increase in curbside collected organics was 28.2 per cent. The increase in organics can be attributed to increased participation in the Green Bin program, and co-collected leaf and yard waste. As per PW 20-2021, the COVID 19 pandemic did affect the amount of organics generated.

In preparation for EOW garbage collection and the expected increase in Green Bin tonnages, staff began to deliver additional supply of Green Bins to distribution centres throughout the region, providing residents the opportunity to purchase additional containers. In 2020, staff delivered 12,077 Green Bins to distribution centres, a near 60 per cent increase over the 7,569 Green Bins delivered in 2019.

Reduction of organics being landfilled will result in the following benefits:

- The extended site life for open Region landfills will result in increased revenue generating capacity from the reduction of divertable materials being landfilled by residents and other service users participating in the curbside recycling and organics programs.
- Deferred capital costs for new disposal infrastructure. As a point of reference, the Humberstone Landfill site vertical expansion will have a total cost of approximately \$11.2 million.
- Cost avoidance/cost reduction in the landfill contract with Walker Environmental due to an increase in the diversion of waste from disposal. This may be offset by increased tonnages of food and organic waste collected at the curb from improved participation and capture rates, which would result in increased processing contract costs, unless the tonnages are reduced through food waste avoidance and other reduction initiatives.
- Long term cost reduction with care and control of landfill sites, due to reduction of organics being landfilled, resulting in improved leachate quality. Based on Niagara Region's Landfill Liability Model, the contaminating life and monitoring would be reduced by approximately five (5) years and thus produce an estimated annual savings for the two (2) Regional landfill sites of \$1.3 million.

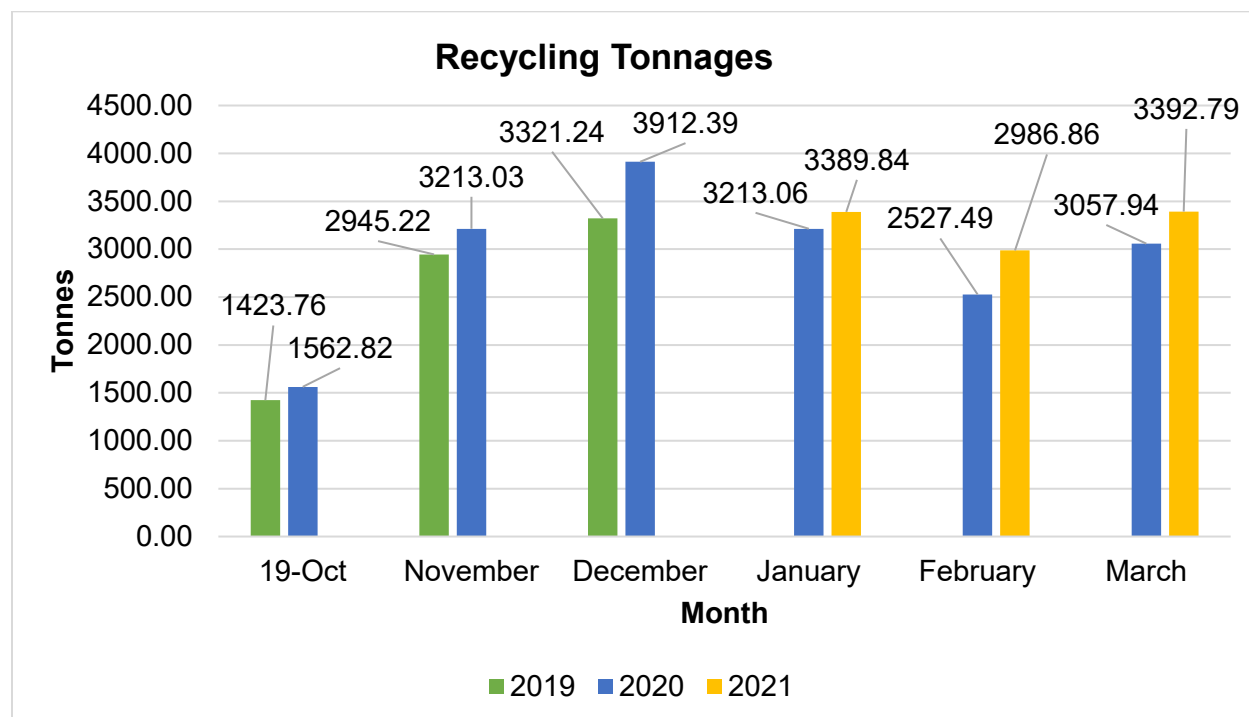
Recycling

Curbside recycling tonnages have increased 11.9 per cent since the start of EOW garbage collection compared to the same time frame in 2019 and 2020. Table 3 and Figure 3 provide a monthly comparison. The tonnages include all recycling collected in Blue/Grey Boxes, Blue/Grey Carts, bundled cardboard and front-end cardboard collection from downtown St. Catharines.

Table 3 Recycling Tonnages

Month	Before EOW (Tonnes)	After EOW (Tonnes)	Difference
October (last two weeks)	1,423.76	1,562.82	9.8%
November	2,945.22	3,213.03	9.1%
December	3,321.24	3,912.39	17.8%
January	3,213.06	3,389.84	5.5%
February	2,527.49	2,986.86	18.2%
March	3,057.94	3,392.79	11%
Total	16,488.71	18,547.73	11.9%

Figure 3 Recycling Tonnages



Similar to the Green Bins, additional Blue and Grey Boxes were delivered to distribution facilities for resident purchase. In 2020, staff delivered 25,464 Blue/Grey Boxes to distribution centres, a 20.5 per cent increase over the 21,131 Blue/Grey Boxes delivered in 2019.

Capture Rates

An expected benefit of EOW garbage collection is an increase in participation and capture rates in the Region's diversion programs. Prior to EOW garbage collection, nearly 50 per cent of one (1) garbage bag/can from the low-density residential sector was organics, and nearly 14 per cent was recyclables.

Seasonal waste audits are currently in progress to determine the material stream composition of a garbage bag after the implementation of EOW garbage collection. Audit results are expected in late 2021.

Illegal Dumping

Based on comments received from municipal comparators who have implemented EOW waste collection, Niagara Region expected that EOW garbage collection would influence illegal dumping for a short term; however, would level off back to normal levels in the long term.

In 2020, there was a total of 678 incidents of illegal dumping investigated by Niagara Region. This is a small increase over the 677 incidents that were investigated in 2019. There has been no evidence of an increase in roadside dumping in Q1 2021. Staff are now proactively monitoring public space litter bins, primarily in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls for illegal dumping. This data will be further reported on later this year.

To address concerns of potential increases in illegal dumping, Region staff are planning an illegal dumping campaign for 2021 as per WMPSC-C 18-2021.

In conclusion, Niagara Region's policy change from weekly garbage collection to EOW has demonstrated a high level of effectiveness for the first six (6) months. Residents and businesses have embraced the weekly diversion programs, which is evident from the aforementioned tonnage data, and should be applauded for their efforts.

Next Steps

Later in 2021, staff will provide an update on the diversion impact of the change to EOW garbage collection as more data is collected, as well as update capture rates based on audit results.

Incidents of illegal dumping will continue to be tracked and monitored throughout 2021 to determine what impact, if any, EOW garbage collection has had on illegal dumping.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Alison Powell
Business Support Analyst

Minute Item No. 5.1

COM 9-2021

COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Procurement Approval

That Report COM 9-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Procurement Approval, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the special circumstance purchase order relating to the rental costs of the COVID-19 Emergency Shelters **BE INCREASED** by \$585,000 (excluding HST) for a total special circumstance purchase order of \$1,583,200 (excluding HST); and
2. That an additional contingency of \$250,000, **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary up to December 31, 2021.

Minute Item No. 5.2

PHD 5-2021

Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report

That Report PHD 5-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Regional Council **APPOINT** the members of the Niagara Region's Municipal Emergency Control Group, as provided in Report PHD 5-2021, by position as required by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

Minute Item No. 6

Consent Items for Information

COM 10-2021 Homelessness Services Report 2020 & COM 11-2021 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update 2020

That Report COM 10-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Homelessness Services Report 2020 & Report COM 11-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update 2020, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Minute Item No. 6

Consent Items for Information

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

COM-C 20-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Community Services

COM 12-2021

New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance, Part II

PHD-C 9-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Health and Emergency Services

COM-C 21-2021

Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission Final Report

Minute Item No. 6

Consent Items for Information

That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the federal government outlining the recommendation provided by Dr. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, requesting the following criteria be considered prior to re-opening the border:

1. Low COVID-19 case numbers on both sides of the border;
2. High percentage of population vaccinated on both sides of the border; and
3. The absence of any unique variant(s) present on one side of the border, not found on the other side.

Minute Item No. 9.1

Confidential MOH 1-2021

A Matter of Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Associate Medical Officer of Health

That Confidential Report MOH 1-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting A Matter of Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 –Associate Medical Officer of Health, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PUBLIC HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION**

**PHSSC 5-2021
Tuesday, May 11, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Niagara Region Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in the Council Chamber:	Chiocchio (Committee Co-Chair), Greenwood (Committee Co-Chair)
Committee Members Present via Video Conference:	Bellows, Bradley (Regional Chair), Butters, Darte, Foster, Gibson, Insinna, Ip, Jordan, Nicholson, Rigby, Sendzik, Villella, Whalen, Witteveen
Other Councillors Present via Video Conference:	Fertich
Staff Present in the Council Chamber:	M. Elia, Technology Support Analyst, Dr. M. M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health/Commissioner, Public Health and Emergency Services, A. Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Staff Present via Video Conference:	A. Alfieri-Maiolo, Director, Clinical Services, C. Cousins, Director, Homelessness and Community Engagement, D. D'Amboise, Manager, Program Financial Support, S. Kearns, Director, Environmental Health, K. Lotimer, Legislative Coordinator, P. Martel, Manager, Emergency Management, J. Mulligan, Procurement Manager, J. Sinclair, Homelessness Action Plan Advisor, K. Smith, Chief/Director, Emergency Medical Services, L. Watson, Director, Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities, D. Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Regional Housing

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Chiocchio called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

4. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

5. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

5.1 **COM 9-2021**

COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Procurement Approval

Moved by Councillor Foster

Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Report COM 9-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Procurement Approval, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the special circumstance purchase order relating to the rental costs of the COVID-19 Emergency Shelters **BE INCREASED** by \$585,000 (excluding HST) for a total special circumstance purchase order of \$1,583,200 (excluding HST); and
2. That an additional contingency of \$250,000, **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary up to December 31, 2021.

Carried

5.2 **PHD 5-2021**

Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report

Moved by Councillor Rigby

Seconded by Councillor Gibson

That Report PHD 5-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Regional Council **APPOINT** the members of the Niagara Region's Municipal Emergency Control Group, as provided in Report PHD 5-2021, by position as required by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

Carried

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Reports COM 10-2021 and COM 11-2021 were considered separately.

Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, provided information respecting Homelessness Services 2020 Report and Action Plan Update. Topics of the presentation included:

- A Built for Zero Community
- COVID-19 Response
- Niagara's Assertive Street Outreach
- Shelter Diversion Pilot Expansion
- Housing-Focused Shelter Pilot
- Niagara's Affordable Housing Need
- Affordable Housing Development
- Bridge Housing Project

Moved by Councillor Insinna

Seconded by Councillor Nicholson

That Report COM 10-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Homelessness Services Report 2020 and Report COM 11-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update 2020, **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Carried

Councillor Information Request:

Provide information respecting local availability of affordable housing and the crisis that it has become in our community, and providing a perspective of where Niagara Region is with local efforts to address affordability. Councillor Sendzik.

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Jordan

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

COM-C 20-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Community Services

COM 12-2021

New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance, Part II

PHD-C 9-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Health and Emergency Services

COM-C 21-2021

Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission Final Report

Carried

At this point in the meeting, Dr. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health/Commissioner, Public Health, provided an update to Committee respecting the status of COVID-19 in Niagara, vaccines and the stay at home order.

Moved by Councillor Insinna
Seconded by Councillor Butters

That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the federal government outlining the recommendation provided by Dr. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health, requesting the following criteria be considered prior to re-opening the border:

1. Low COVID-19 case numbers on both sides of the border;
2. High percentage of population vaccinated on both sides of the border; and
3. The absence of any unique variant(s) present on one side of the border, not found on the other side.

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Vaccination Clinics

Councillor Butters suggested that staff collaborate with Port Cares, Hope Center, Community Care - St. Catharines, and other agencies across the region that provide meal and food security programs, to facilitate access to vaccinations for individuals using their services who may not have the ability to book a vaccination appointment online or by phone. Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services, advised that staff have been working with a number of these agencies throughout the pandemic, and will work with these agencies to develop strategies for providing vaccination opportunities for these individuals.

7.2 Well Water Testing

Councillor Whalen advised Committee members that Public Health staff continue to work on options to enable Niagara residents to drop off water samples.

7.3 Nurses Week and Long-Term Care Week

In recognition of Nurses Week and Long-Term Care Week, Councillor Chiochio thanked nurses and long-term care staff for their dedication and contributions to our communities.

8. CLOSED SESSION

Committee did not resolve into closed session.

9. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

9.1 Confidential MOH 1-2021

A Matter of Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Associate Medical Officer of Health

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Gibson

That Confidential Report MOH 1-2021, dated May 11, 2021, respecting A Matter of Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations and Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual under s. 239(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 –Associate Medical Officer of Health, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Councillor Chiocchio
Committee Co-Chair

Councillor Greenwood
Committee Co-Chair

Kelly Lotimer
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Subject: COVID-19 Emergency Shelter Procurement Approval

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the special circumstance purchase order relating to the rental costs of the COVID-19 Emergency Shelters **BE INCREASED** by \$585,000 (excluding HST) for a total special circumstance purchase order of \$1,583,200 (excluding HST); and
2. That an additional contingency of \$250,000 **BE APPROVED** should system adjustments be necessary up to December 31, 2021.

Key Facts

- The purpose of the report is to seek approval to increase the COVID-19 Emergency Shelter purchase order in accordance to procurement by-law 2019-06 section 17 Special Circumstance and Schedule B where purchases greater than \$1 million require approval by Council.
- Through approval of this report, Niagara Region is able to continue to run the COVID-19 self-isolation and housing focused shelters to December 31, 2021, which have been operating out of the location since late March 2020.
- The increase is to continue to rent 65 rooms (35 rooms specific to self-isolation and 30 rooms for the housing focused pilot).
- A contingency of \$250,000 is being requested as there have been periods where additional rooms are needed temporarily due to outbreaks or rising COVID-19 cases. It is also expected that there will be additional final costs relating to damages on rooms when the self-isolation shelter is no longer required.
- The current purchase order #80132 totals \$998,200 (excluding HST) and was funded through provincial and federal COVID-19 funding to support vulnerable populations.
- Additional provincial funding, announced in March 2021 to cover COVID-19 costs specific to the homelessness division to December 31, 2021, will be the funding source for the recommended increase resulting in no impact to the regional tax levy.

Financial Considerations

The special circumstance purchase order is within the funding available by the provincial and federal governments to stop the spread of the virus within homeless populations in Niagara. When the pandemic was originally declared the province announced funding up to March 31, 2021. In March 2021, the province announced additional funding to cover incremental COVID-19 costs, such as the COVID-19 Emergency Shelters, for the period ending December 31, 2021. Recognizing the benefits of the shelters now in place to protect our most vulnerable residents during this pandemic, it is important that they be extended to the end of the year. Confirmed provincial COVID-19 specific funding from the Social Service Relief Fund (SSRF) 1 and 2, relating to operating dollars for the fiscal year April 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, was \$3,664,729, and SSRF 3 funding for the fiscal period April 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, is \$4,745,507. Federal Reaching Home funding for the period April 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, is \$2,958,617.

The facility changed legal operating names in July requiring a new purchase order to be set up. The following table shows the total costs of the current special circumstance purchase order #80132.

Description	PO Number	Amount (excluding HST)	
Rent 60 rooms (Aug. to Sept. 2020)	80132	\$168,000	
Rent 65 rooms (Oct 2020 to Jun. 2021)	80132	819,000	
Additional 8 rooms April – Outbreak	80132	11,200	
Sub-Total	80132		\$998,200
Extension - Rent 65 rooms (Jul. to Dec. 2021)	80132	585,000	
Sub-Total	80132		\$1,583,200
Contingency			\$250,000
TOTAL			\$1,833,200

Analysis

The Community Services department operationalizes the Region's responsibilities as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the homelessness system in Niagara, through the Homelessness Services division. Its key responsibility is service system planning and administration for the homelessness system, and it operates under rules established by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH).

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Homelessness Services division needed to locate a facility willing to work with Niagara Region in providing a safe place for individuals experiencing homelessness to isolate if presenting with COVID-19 symptoms in order to stop the spread of the virus, particularly within the shelter system. Niagara also needed to obtain this type of site immediately once the province announced the pandemic and the first lockdown. Through the assistance from the Region's Realty division and calls made to a number of potential providers, this provider indicated a willingness to work with Niagara Region, was able to provide a sufficient number of rooms to support the initiative, provided a layout that was essential to the implementation of required infection control measures, was cost effective compared to other sites and the geographical location provided for additional assurances that clients would remain isolated. The facility has been flexible when additional rooms were required due to outbreaks or surges in COVID-19 cases in the homelessness or vulnerable populations. The provincial and federal governments provided funding in order to support this initiative and any additional incremental COVID-19 related costs in relation to the homelessness population in Niagara.

The self-isolation shelter supports the regular shelter system as the only isolation facility in Niagara to support homeless individuals that fail COVID-19 shelter screening and are directed by Public Health to isolate and/or get tested. Partnerships are in place with McMaster family medicine team to support client health monitoring, and with Niagara Region's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to support the swabbing of clients at the facility. In addition to self-isolation, the facility is also being used as part of the Housing Focused shelter pilot. Individuals receive case management and mental health and addiction supports with the goal of individuals moving into stable housing. The housing focused initiative at this facility also achieved the pandemic objective of creating additional shelter spaces to ensure social distancing could be achieved in other shelters and reduce the risks of over crowding.

Alternatives Reviewed

The decision to secure this facility in March 2020 was made with both a great appreciation of urgency and little understanding of the duration and impact of the emerging pandemic. While there is reason to be hopeful that such a facility now may not be needed beyond the end of the year, it is clear that one will remain essential for the present time, to the safety of the homelessness system and the people it services. Council could direct staff to prepare an RFP for an isolation shelter for the homeless for the remainder of the year (as opposed to the recommendation above). However, this would require significant time to go through the procurement process and additional time, and costs to prepare any other site for the same purpose. This could result in Niagara's homelessness populations not having a safe place to isolate if impacted by COVID-19 and no supportive place to live while the two new facilities are being completed placing the vulnerable individuals back on the streets.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Aligns with the goals in Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, including Goal 1: housing individuals who do not have a home and Goal 4: building capacity and improving the effectiveness of the housing system.

Other Pertinent Reports

N/A

Prepared by:

Cathy Cousins
Director, Homeless Services &
Community Engagement
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Margaret Penca, Manager, Homelessness Services; Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist; Jeff Mulligan, Manager Strategic Sourcing.

Subject: Niagara Emergency Management Program Annual Report

Report to: Public Health & Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Regional Council **APPOINT** the members of the Niagara Region's Municipal Emergency Control Group, as provided in Report PHD 5-2021, by position as required by the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management.

Key Facts

- This report is intended to provide a brief summary of the key activities of the Program in 2020
- The Niagara Region Emergency Management was heavily involved in the COVID-19 response in 2020. This work has continued into 2021
- The program has been supporting both the Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) and the Public Health Response to COVID-19
- The REOC has been in full activation since March 18, 2020. This makes the COVID-19 response the longest emergency response to date in Niagara
- The Program is required under the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) Compliance Guide for Municipalities to provide an annual report to Council
- While the province waived the emergency exercise requirement for 2020, the program was still required to undertake all other activities required for compliance including planning, training, public education, hazard identification and risk assessment, and other legislated activities.

Financial Considerations

Due to the response required as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately \$5 million in additional staff supports were required to support the Emergency Operations Centre efforts. Some of these costs were mitigated through the redeployment of existing staff resources from other departments, which required them to re-prioritize their work plans.

Other incidents and responses that required action from the program were provided within budget.

COVID-19 Response

Pandemics are complex and evolving emergencies that are known for having a significant impact on the capacity and business continuity of organizations, including governments. The COVID-19 response has required significant effort from the entire corporation. The pandemic affected capacity in terms of requiring staff to fill roles with the REOC, redeploy to other positions to support the response efforts, and staff absenteeism due to having to isolate and illness.

The Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) was activated to:

- Support Public Health
- Coordinate the corporation's response
- Ensure the continued delivery of critical Regional services
- Support key stakeholders

The REOC went to full activation on March 18, 2020. The state of full activation continues to this day. The complexity of the response required the activation of 27 REOC positions under the provincial Incident Management System (IMS). Each of these positions has unique roles and responsibilities related to managing the response. The duration of the response has required that both the primary and alternate for some of these positions work in the REOC.

A Mid-Response Review for the REOC was conducted by Emergency Management in winter of 2020 to identify any gaps or opportunities to improve REOC practices and procedures. All REOC members participated in the review process. Opportunities for improvements in several areas were identified and activity on addressing these is ongoing.

Impact on Other Regional Business Continuity

Members of Regional staff make up the majority of membership of the REOC, including members of senior management. The amount of staff time dedicated to carrying out the duties required of their membership on the REOC includes preparation of reports, attendance at meetings, being available both during and after hours for emergency response, other responsibilities inherent in their role and to the other areas of the

REOC, completing follow up items, etc., this takes a material level of effort by staff, including the time spent carrying out these duties.

Under normal circumstances staff responsibility to the REOC can last days to several weeks, the Region's response to COVID-19 is extraordinary; the response to this event has gone on for well over a year now creating staff burnout and workload concerns. Further, it is important to note that the time spent by staff carrying out its responsibilities to the REOC has also impacted their ability to focus on their regular role within the corporation, which has only contributed to workload and burnout concerns, as well has delayed or outright suspended staff's ability to deliver certain operational requirements.

Redeployment of staff has continued within departments where staff have moved within their normal division of work and those staff who have crossed divisions, this continues today. In addition, staff redeployment occurred in the spring of 2020 and again in January 2021 cross-departmentally to areas that have been identified as requiring a greater need of staff resources, some more notable examples include: Seniors Services LTC Homes, Public Health, and Homelessness. Overall, staff continue to and were redeployed to services deemed as Priority 1- Essential as outlined in respective business continuity plans (BCP), including in accordance with applicable collective agreement and/or terms and conditions of employment provisions. The Region has continued to have excellent collaboration between unions as witnessed by the cross functional placement between union roles across the organization. There have been a number of staff redeployments to date, at last report there have been 478 staff redeployed with an additional 64 staff supporting the EOC units.

It is important to note that more recently redeployment efforts have also included higher-level priority to the Public Health's Pandemic Division, specifically to the mass immunizations clinics, which has also included coordinating staff from Local Area Municipalities (LAMs) through secondment agreements. In addition to significant recruitment efforts this year by Human Resources and hiring managers, staff have spent a considerable amount of time coordinating with the LAMs, and onboarding and training these externally redeployed staff, while still being responsible for their regular duties and responsibilities which as time has gone on has created significant workload and burnout concerns as well.

Other Incidents and Responses

In addition to the COVID-19 response, there were 39 additional hazards or incidents that required at least some level of action by the Program in 2020. This included a

windstorm that resulted in flooding and other damages along the Lake Erie shoreline, a tornado in Port Colborne, winter storms, and other hazards, which required Regional support to the Local Area Municipalities.

Assistance to Municipalities

The Program provided a significant amount of assistance to local municipalities for a variety of purposes including coordination and guidance during the COVID-19 response and the response to other hazards. Teleconferences were held with both LAM Community Emergency Management Coordinators (CEMCs) and a group of key emergency management stakeholders multiple times a week. Documents, including a Niagara Region Daily Consolidated Situation Report were developed and distributed to LAM CEMCs twice a week to provide them with additional information regarding the COVID-19 response. The program also served as a liaison between the LAM CEMCs and Public Health and ensured that the LAM questions and concerns were addressed in a timely manner. This created a substantial volume of work, which significantly challenged the capacity of the Emergency Management program and staff.

Program Components Required for Compliance

Despite the significant demands related to the COVID-19 response, the Region's Emergency Management Program was still able to complete the required program activities to be deemed compliant by the province in 2020. The response has resulted in a delay in many program initiatives due to capacity issues, however the program continues to strive for excellence in emergency management and is focused on continuing to build towards adopting best practices in emergency management. This work will enable Niagara Region to become a leader in emergency management in Ontario and will increase Niagara's resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Training

The Province created a new Instructor Certification Program in late 2019 for Teaching Provincial Emergency Management Courses. The Emergency Management Program Advisor has now completed the progress and joined the Emergency Management Program Manager as a certified instructor. This has resulted in additional capacity to deliver mandatory provincial training.

All Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) staff are required to attend annual

training by the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA). Multiple opportunities to attend different training session were provided, including the development of a new online course intended for new REOC members. One hundred percent of REOC members completed the training requirements for provincial compliance.

Public Education

Public education is a key function of emergency management programs and is mandated under the EMCPA. COVID-19 and the current capacity of the program resulted in a decrease in public education activities on hazards other than pandemics. Despite this, additional information was added to the program website and copies of the 72-hour booklets were provided to stakeholders.

Symposium

The 2020 Building a Disaster Resilient Niagara Symposium was cancelled due to COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of attendees and due to capacity challenges with Emergency Management program staff heavily involved in COVID-19 response. Despite the cancellation, there were no financial losses due to this event.

Planning

The Regional Emergency Response Plan was reviewed as required by compliance. The response has also highlighted several opportunities to strengthen the plan, which will be incorporated in the 2021 version. Additional Business Continuity Planning support documents were developed to help departments in their planning efforts.

Exercise

The Province waived the requirement for an emergency exercise in 2020 due to the level of involvement of Emergency Management programs in the COVID-19 response. The exercise in the fall of 2019 was focused on running a virtual REOC. This exercise and its outcomes proved to be extremely useful during the COVID-19 response.

Municipal Emergency Control Group

The Province requires that members of the Region's Emergency Control Group (referred to as the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) by the Province) be

appointed by council. This list is provided as an annex to the Region's Emergency Plan. These positions (or their designated alternates) are:

- Niagara Region CAO
- Commissioner of Corporate Services
- Commissioner Public Works
- Commissioner Community Services
- Commissioner Planning & Development Services
- Commissioner Public Health and Emergency Services/Medical Officer of Health
- Director, Chief Emergency Medical Services (CEMC)
- Director, Transportation Services
- Director Corp Strat & Innovation, Corporate Administration

Alternatives Reviewed

The Emergency Management program is constantly assessing priorities and best methodologies for service delivery. Despite the challenges due to the emergency response to COVID-19, the Region's Emergency Management Program met the provincial compliance requirements under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act for 2020 and is well on track to meet and exceed the compliance requirements for 2021.

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Service System Manager Responsibilities

Public Health & Social Services Committee
COM 10-2021 and COM 11-2021

May 11, 2021

Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

Service System Manager Responsibilities

- Provincially mandated to plan and administer the homeless system in Niagara.
- Niagara also acts as the Community Entity for planning and delivery of homeless systems under the Federal funding agreement.
- Niagara currently is receiving additional funding from both the Provincial and Federal Governments to support the response and demands of COVID.

A Built for Zero Community

- Accepted as a Built for Zero Community in 2019.
- Goal is to work toward ending chronic homelessness.
- In 2020 achieved a Quality By Name List.
- Next steps is Coordinated Access; requires standardizing a process for intake, assessment, referral and prioritization of services for homeless clients.

COVID-19 Response

- Communication and support with homeless serving agencies.
- March 2020 established an Isolation Facility – 355 intakes to Dec 31, with 56 moving to permanent housing.
- Expand shelter system, outreach services, shelter diversion, emergency assistance fund and housing stability program to low income.
- Pilot a housing focused shelter for high needs chronic homeless - 48 intakes, with 50% exiting to permanent housing.
- Vaccine clinics for clients held at the shelters.

Niagara's Assertive Street Outreach

- Centralized intake for all residents and clients to access outreach services via 211.
- Services available 7 days a week, response times during services hours generally under one hour.
- Encampment mapping tool developed.
- COVID screening and isolation support for those living rough.

Shelter Diversion Pilot Expansion

- Through the NRFP process, awarded youth diversion pilot to the RAFT.
- Early promising results, expanded to include one adult shelter and an additional youth shelter mid year.
- 2020 Results: Youth - 30% of all youth presenting at shelter diverted, Adults - 9% of all presenting at pilot shelter diverted.

Housing-Focused Shelter Pilot

- Launched June 2020, currently a 30 bed capacity.
- On average clients selected had 318 days of homeless in the past year and 639 in the past three years.
- Clients are selected from the by name list, priority population is youth, seniors and those with the longest experiences of homelessness.
- Operating as an incubator for policy development and system learnings in preparation for Bridge Housing project.

Niagara's Affordable Housing Need

- 2,136 individuals accessed shelter in 2020. Main clients profiles were 30.6% single men, 17% single women, 11.6 % seniors (55+), youth 10.6% and Indigenous 9.2%.
- Core housing need in Niagara: 23,830 households (12.8%), of which 20,002 (84%) were single person households and 3,254 (14%) were lone parent households.
- St. Catharines was trending upward in October 2020 with one bedroom prices of \$1,300 and two bedroom prices of \$1,500 per month. Ranked by Padmapper as 12th most expensive rental market in Canada.

Affordable Housing Development

- 8 Home for Good Supportive Units (Gateway Residential, Port Colborne)
- 30 net new units (Stamford Kiwanis, Niagara Falls)
- Remediation of 3 units, St. Catharines
- 6 net new units, Thorold
- 20 Bridge Housing Units/Recuperative Units, Niagara Falls (Occupancy 2021)
- 73 NRH owned units, including 10 Housing first, Niagara Falls (Occupancy 2022)
- 15 Home for Good Units (YWCA, St. Catharines, Occupancy 2021)

Bridge Housing Project

- Project will include both bridge housing units and recuperative beds.
- Project is in partnership with REACH Niagara.
- Facility will be staffed 24/7.
- Clients will be selected using the by name list.
- Support Niagara's most vulnerable on a transition to permanent living.
- Supports will include case management, mental health and addictions supports and referrals, primary health care, skills development for more independent living (example: teaching kitchen).

Subject: Homelessness Services Report 2020

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

This report provides information regarding Homelessness Services key activities for system transformation, metrics for 2020 and planned activities for 2021.

- Homelessness Services awarded contracts to 18 agencies for a three-year period from April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2023 to deliver homelessness services and participate in system transformation.
- As a Built for Zero community, Niagara achieved a key milestone - the development of a Quality By-Name List - a list of all known individuals experiencing homelessness in the community, updated in real-time.
- Niagara's Assertive Street Outreach team was nationally recognized by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness for its use of mapping software.
- Homelessness Services tested best practices through a 30-bed capacity housing focused shelter pilot (opened June 2020). In the first six months of the pilot, there were 48 admissions with nearly half exiting to permanent housing.
- Niagara's Shelter Diversion program operates in three emergency shelters. The program supports individuals presenting to shelter to access alternate stable housing options with diversion rates of 30% in youth and 9% in adults.
- In 2020, using COVID-19 funding, 20 spaces were added to the Housing First and Home for Good supportive housing programs, bringing the total capacity at the end of the year to 200 and 68, respectively.
- The Housing First and Home for Good Landlord Engagement program expanded to support landlord-tenant relationships, landlord outreach, and housing stability for high acuity clients.
- Homelessness Services responded to COVID-19 through the establishment of a multifaceted system approach.

Financial Considerations

The activities highlighted in this report were provided within the 2020 approved operating budget. As per the 2020 approved budget, Homelessness Services is primarily funded by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) (\$8,518,012 – 70.7% (which includes Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) and Home for Good funding), and also by the federal Reaching Home program (\$945,471 – 7.8%), as well as Regional levy (\$2,590,239 – 21.5%).

Homeless Services received funding specific to incremental costs related to COVID. Available funding from the provincial Social Services Relief Fund for April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 was \$3,664,729 specific to operating expenditures and \$6,146,057 for capital. Available federal Reaching Home operating funding for April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 is \$2,958,617.

Analysis

Community Services operationalizes the Region's provincially mandated responsibilities as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the homeless serving system in Niagara. Its key responsibility is service system planning and administration for the homeless-serving system, and it operates under rules established by the MMAH. Niagara Region also receives federal funding under the Reaching Home program and is identified as the local Community Entity for this funding, operating within directives provided by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Niagara Region is also currently operating within additional, specific COVID-19 funding guidelines and directives for the provincial Social Services Relief Fund and the federal Reaching Home program.

Service system management includes establishing and maintaining relationships with community agencies, setting priorities, identifying gaps and measuring the progress of homelessness goals and objectives. Administrative responsibilities include allocating resources to meet local needs including setting and implementing accountability structures to manage and deliver an outcome-focused service system.

Homelessness Services Metrics

Initiative	2018	2019	2020
Emergency Shelter			
Number of unique individuals accessing shelter	2156	2141	2136
Average length of stay (in days per admission)	25.0	20.9	20.9
Average nightly bed occupancy rate*	104.5%	107.3%	91.6%
Prevention**			
Number of unique households that received a Niagara Emergency Energy Fund (NEEF) issuance	826	802	326
Average value of NEEF issuances	\$681	\$703	\$796
Number of unique households that received a Housing Stability Plan (HSP) benefit	3615	3675	2914
Average value of Housing Stability Plan benefits issued (e.g., rent arrears, last month's rent deposit)	\$738	\$782	\$831
Housing with Related Supports			
Number of unique (new) individuals placed in Housing First	68	63	52
Number of unique (new) individuals placed in Home for Good	33	9	20

*Reasons for decrease in shelter occupancy rate include individuals avoiding shelter related to COVID-19 risk; increase in number of shelter spaces to address changes in shelter policies related to social distancing and COVID-19 protocols; reduced demand for refugee shelter spaces due to policy changes e.g. border closure; and outbreaks not allowing for shelter admissions.

** Reasons for decrease in NEEF and HSP issuances is of the result of temporary measures put in place by the province such as disconnection ban extensions, COVID-19 specific assistance programs and restrictions on evictions.

Homelessness Services Activities

The following are key activities undertaken in 2020 to support continuous improvement within the homeless serving system and drive outcomes related to the reduction of chronic homelessness.

Homelessness Services System Procurement Awards

In the first quarter of 2020, Homelessness Services contracts were awarded based on a negotiated request for proposal process. Approximately \$8.7 M per annum was awarded to 18 agencies in the following priority areas: prevention, outreach, shelter, transitional housing, Niagara Emergency Energy Fund, and Housing First (HF) and Home for Good (HFG) supportive housing programs. As part of Niagara's homeless serving system, agencies deliver services and participate in best practice development opportunities and system transformation efforts.

To achieve an improved integrated homelessness services system, the procurement process resulted in a consolidation of the Housing First and the Home for Good programs, and the formalization of the Niagara Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) team. Gateway Residential and Community Support Services collaborates with The RAFT, Southridge and Port Cares for NASO, and with Southridge for both the HF and HFG programs.

Built for Zero

Through the leadership of Niagara's Built for Zero (BFZ) Home Team, Niagara announced in September 2020 the achievement of a Quality By-Name List - a list of all known individuals experiencing homelessness in the community, updated in real-time.

In order to achieve a Quality By-Name List, Niagara had to score 10/10 on the By-Name List Scorecard, confirm completion of the Provider Participation Tool, and submit three consecutive months of reliable data and set a baseline month. Niagara's baseline month was September 2020; at that time, 306 people were actively experiencing chronic homelessness.

According to Niagara's By-Name List (BNL), 158 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness moved into housing in 2020. Returns from housing for individuals on the BNL were low: 32 during 2020 (fewer than 3 per month, on average). Niagara's dashboard can be found on the [Built for Zero Canada](#) (BFZ-C) website.

Niagara's Homelessness Services team and IT Services won Niagara Region's Corporate Award for Excellence: Innovation and Sustainability. The award was to recognize Niagara as one of a few communities in Canada who have managed to create a BNL solely using real-time client data stored in HIFIS to measure the extent and nature of homelessness in the region.

Niagara Assertive Street Outreach Team

The Niagara Assertive Street Outreach team is a collaboration between Gateway Residential and Community Support Services, The RAFT, Southridge Community Church, and Port Cares. The team expanded, from five members in April 2019 to 13 in April 2020, as part of Niagara's pandemic response to support clients who tend to avoid shelter for safety and social distancing, and generally individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. With the support of the City of St. Catharines, three street outreach workers focused on activities for that specific city. Funding was also obtained through the Niagara Prosperity Initiative for two outreach workers (2019) and a dual diagnosis outreach specialist (2020) which enhanced service delivery and weekend coverage. The NASO team works closely with local area municipalities, St. Lawrence Seaway Corp., the Ministry of Transportation, and hydro companies.

As of May 27, 2020, a centralized community intake line was established to offer a one-stop option for community members and agencies to make a referral to the NASO team by dialing 2-1-1 if they are concerned about someone who is experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

In order to achieve an effective and efficient outreach approach during the pandemic, Niagara developed a customized, online comprehensive mapping and geo-location tool to understand Niagara's hot spots, establishing a new way of tracking street outreach efforts. The [Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness](#) recognized the work as an example of experimenting with new technologies to improve coordinated outreach. The outreach encampment mapping tool has supported the development of new measures that display successes in encampments. The table below includes information on this work.

Encampment information	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020
Number of new encampments	11	5	7
Number of resolved encampments	5	14	6
Number of unique clients supported by Outreach who accessed emergency shelter	26	34	32
Number of unique clients supported by Outreach who accessed housing	10	16	23

Housing Focused Shelter Pilot

In June of 2020, the Housing Focused shelter pilot was established to test best practices of harm reduction, low barrier service and coordinated access approach to housing services. All clients admitted to the housing focused shelter were selected from the By-Name List. Those clients selected for the pilot had experienced an average of 318 days of homelessness in the past year, 639 days of homelessness in the past three years and averaged a score of eight on the VI-SPDAT (indicating an individual with high acuity, complex needs). The 30-bed capacity housing focused shelter pilot has had 48 intakes to date, with almost 50% exiting to permanent housing.

Shelter Diversion Pilot Expansion

Building on the success of The RAFT's Shelter Diversion program, Niagara has expanded the program to two additional emergency shelters (one adult shelter in late 2019 and one youth shelter in mid-2020) in order to support even more individuals presenting to shelter to access stable housing options, where possible, instead of a shelter stay.

In 2020, there were 98 successful diversions for youth (age 16-24 years), representing 30% of possible shelter intakes. In the same period, there were 129 successful diversions for adults (age 25+), representing 9% of possible shelter intakes. The following table contains information on the diversion rates.

Successful Diversion	Youth new to shelter system	All youth presenting at shelter including those that are new	Adults new to shelter system	All adults presenting at shelter including those that are new
No	48.7%	69.9%	74.3%	90.8%
Yes	51.3%	30.0%	25.7%	9.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Housing First and Home For Good

In 2020, in addition to the consolidation of the programs, Housing First and Home for Good have undertaken the following activities in order to align with Built for Zero goals.

- Standardization of policies and procedures between the two programs.
- Pilot the By-Name List to triage individuals into the programs.
- Training and use of the SPDAT suite of tools to support with intensive case management (ICM).
- With the support of provincial COVID-19 Social Services Relief Funding, Niagara added 20 program spaces to Home for Good and enhanced landlord engagement support from one to two staff (FTE) to improve tenant-landlord relations, find appropriate rental opportunities, and improve housing stability for high acuity clients.

Pandemic Response

All of the above successes have been achieved within an environment of COVID-19. Niagara Region and its homelessness partners continued to ensure the ongoing delivery of essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are some examples of how Niagara Region and its partners achieved a coordinated pandemic approach.

1. Establishment of a Self-Isolation Shelter – opened isolation shelter March 30, 2020. As of December 31, 2020, Homelessness Services completed 355 intakes at the isolation shelter with testing administered on site. Of those 355 intakes, 56 individuals moved from isolation into permanent housing, or family reunification took place. Around 1/3 of individuals sought support for mental health and addictions during isolation.
2. As the CMSM, Niagara Region convened the Homelessness Service System on a monthly basis in order to coordinate efforts and provide updates on the COVID-19 response plan.
3. Increased the capacity of the emergency shelter system by securing rooms at motels to provide temporary housing for shelter system clients.
4. One shelter was established dedicated to supporting individuals who are health compromised.
5. Expansion of outreach, Out of the Cold and day programming for unsheltered individuals.
6. Homelessness Services collaborated with Niagara Region Public Health, REACH Niagara (Regional Essential Access to Connected Health) and emergency shelter providers to enhance efforts targeted towards the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 within the homeless population.
7. Homelessness Services worked closely with Public Health on outbreak management within the shelter system.

Other Planned Enhancements

Enhancements planned or started for 2021:

- Continue COVID-19 responses including implementation of vaccine clinics specifically for individuals experiencing homelessness and those staff who work in congregate settings and the rest of the homeless serving system.
- Capital builds for permanent supportive housing units, bridge housing units, and recuperative care beds.
- Increase physical accessibility within the shelter system through a \$60,000 grant obtained from the Inclusive Community Grants Program, Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.
- Built for Zero - continue to work on implementing a coordinated access system, implement a common assessment and mini diversion tool across the homeless serving system.
- In alignment with the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, continue to implement system transformation in the areas of housing focused shelter, prevention and transitional housing.
- Enhance HIFIS through improved data quality and policy projects.
- COVID-19 funding has allowed for additional mental health worker supports for Home for Good supportive housing clients, emergency shelter and high acuity clients of the housing focused shelter.
- Implement a Point-in-Time Count of homelessness, with results reporting in Q3 of 2021.
- Develop the Homelessness Services data strategy to enhance measurement and progress toward program and system-wide key performance indicators

Alternatives Reviewed

N/A.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Homelessness services support the Healthy and Vibrant Community Council Priority.

Other Pertinent Reports

- CWCD 286-2020 Homelessness Plans for Winter 2020
- CWCD 171-2020 Niagara Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) 211 Referral Line

- CWCD 108-2020 Confirmation of Incremental CHPI Funding – Homelessness (COVID-19)
- CWCD 103-2020 Confirmation of Incremental Reaching Home Funding – Homelessness (COVID-19)
- COM C 14-2020 2020 RFPQ-08–Niagara Emergency Energy Fund NEEF
- COM C 13-2020 2019 RFP-305–Prevention Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 11-2020 2019 RFP-308–Housing with Supports – Supported Transitional Housing Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 9-2020 2019-RFP-311 Housing for Good for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 8-2020 2019-RFP-310 Housing First Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM C 7-2020 2019-RFP-300 – Assertive Street Outreach Request for Proposal Award Results
- COM 14-2020 Homelessness System Report
- COM 8-2020 Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update 2019
- COM 6-2020 Homelessness Services Housing First and Home for Good Contract Extensions
- COM 4-2020 Emergency Shelter Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) Award Results
- COM 1-2020 Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative Investment Plan 2020-21
- CWCD 285-2019: Niagara Region Participation in Built for Zero Canada

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This report was prepared in consultation with Stephanie Muhic, Program Financial Specialist, Kristina Nickel, Program Evaluation and Data Advisor and reviewed by Cathy Cousins, Director, Homelessness Services and Community Engagement.

Subject: Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update 2020

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to update Council and the Ministry on actions completed in 2020 related to Niagara's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP).
- Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) are required to report to the public and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) by June 30 each year with respect to efforts of the previous year. This report serves to meet the requirement for 2020.
- The HHAP provides a complete vision for aligning activities to address current and future need in Niagara related to affordable housing and homelessness.
- In 2020, the HHAP focused on activities related to policies and practices that support a shift to better practice and housing-focused homeless services, and increased readiness for developing local affordable and community housing.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic the HHAP continued to guide ongoing homeless services system transformation by informing pandemic responses that were consistent with long term system goals and could be leveraged as part of the ongoing housing and homeless system after the pandemic response has ended.

Financial Considerations

The resources required to facilitate the management of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) are provided within the approved annual budget.

Analysis

The purpose of this report is to update Council and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) on progress achieved in 2020 related to Niagara's updated HHAP. Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) are required by legislation to report

to the public and MMAH by June 30 each year with respect to efforts of the previous year. This report serves to meet the requirement for 2020.

The HHAP was developed in response to the *Housing Services Act 2011, section 6*, which requires municipalities to establish and implement a 10-year plan to address local housing and homelessness needs. The five-year review and updated HHAP was approved by Regional Council in October 2019, pending ministry approval. In March 2020, MMAH confirmed that they had reviewed Niagara's five-year review and updated Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

The HHAP provides a complete vision for aligning activities to address current and future need in Niagara related to affordable housing and homelessness. The plan is expected to be responsive to recent changes in the community and the housing market that affect local demand for homelessness services and affordable housing over the long term. In 2020, Region and Niagara Regional Housing (NRH) staff continued to align the recommended housing strategies of the New Official Plan, Community Housing Master Plan and HHAP.

The HHAP incorporates recognized Canadian best practices and emerging practices in the areas of land use planning, affordable housing, and homeless services. This includes Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C), a national initiative to end chronic homelessness in which Niagara has participated since 2019. BFZ-C focuses on decreasing the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness and ensuring the experience of homelessness is brief and non-recurring.

Niagara Region cannot accomplish the goals of the HHAP on its own, and so must partner broadly with housing and homelessness services providers, across the health, corrections and child welfare systems, with municipal, provincial and federal governments, and with Indigenous organizations and communities. The HHAP working groups support collaboration in nine focus areas by providing opportunities for participants to align initiatives and provide input to the CMSM about service and system planning on an ongoing basis. In 2020 the HHAP working groups included:

- Assertive Street Outreach
- Housing-Focused Shelter
- Supported Transitional Housing
- Housing First and Home for Good
- Coordinated Access and By-Name List
- Lived Experience Advisory
- Homelessness Prevention and Diversion
- Housing Provider Advisory
- Housing Affordability and Innovation

During the COVID-19 pandemic the HHAP continued to guide ongoing homeless services system transformation by informing pandemic responses that were consistent with long-term system goals and could be leveraged as part of the ongoing housing and homeless system after the pandemic response has ended. Mindful of the pandemic, the HHAP work focused on policies and practices that support a shift to housing-focused homeless services and increased readiness for developing local affordable and community housing. Pandemic responses that align with the long-term HHAP strategy include:

- Use of a low-barrier, housing focused approach to support people to exit from homelessness at the isolation shelter and Housing Focused shelter pilot.
- Increased access to appropriate health, mental health trauma, and addictions supports for people experiencing homelessness through a partnership between outreach with EMS and the LHIN.
- The initiation of the Niagara Falls Bridge Housing Project, which includes recuperative beds, which seeks to reduce discharges from hospital to homelessness.

Further to Council direction in October 2019 (COM 40-2019), staff continued to provide regular updates about activities, outcomes and challenges related to the HHAP throughout 2020. Highlights from 2020 related to the four HHAP goals include:

Goal 1 – House People Who do not Have a Home

- Through participation in BFZ-C, Niagara became one of 23 Canadian communities to have implemented a Quality By-Name List (BNL) in November 2020. The BNL provides real time data about people experiencing homelessness in Niagara, and is used to support clients to access appropriate housing and supports and inform system level decision making.
- Increased access to supportive housing through the addition of 20 new Home for Good program spaces. As well, additional spaces became available as a result of the successful discharge of 8 Housing First program participants.
- Expanded and enhanced Niagara's Assertive Street Outreach (NASO) to provide a low-barrier, housing-focused approach to engage those who are living rough (including at encampments) and support them to engage in the broader system of housing and homeless services. In 2020 NASO engaged with 456 unique individuals, 215 of which entered shelter or a more stable housing situation.
- Launched the HHAP Supported Transitional Housing Working Group, to begin transformation of supported transitional housing services.

- There were 905 shelter discharges to a more stable housing situation. The shift continued toward housing-focused shelters that maintain a focus on helping shelter clients move to safe, permanent housing as rapidly as possible, through:
 - The launch of the Housing Focused Shelter pilot, to test coordinated access for entry into the Housing First and Home for Good programs, ensuring consistent prioritization of clients with the longest experiences of homelessness and highest acuity of need for these programs.
 - The introduction of housing focused shelter policies, including use of common assessments across shelter providers, reducing restrictions to shelter access, and increasing continuity of service.

Of the 2,136 unique individuals who accessed emergency shelter in 2020, the largest proportion were single men (30.6%), single women (17.0%), seniors 55+ (11.6%), youth 16-24 without a guardian (10.6%), and Indigenous individuals (9.2%). Seventy-three individuals (3.4% of shelter clients) had 180+ days in shelter.

Goal 2 – Help People to Retain a Home

- Initiated the process to transform homelessness prevention in line with recognized best practices and the BFZ-C model, to reduce inflow into homelessness and the number of homeless individuals who become chronically homeless.
- Expanded youth shelter diversion to the adult shelter system. Shelter diversion supports individuals seeking access to emergency shelter to find and secure safe alternatives to shelter that may be available to them, and maintain their supports in the community while reducing demand for emergency shelter beds. In 2020, there were 98 successful diversions for youth (age 16-24 years), representing 30% of possible shelter intakes and 129 successful diversions for adults (age 25+), representing 9% of possible shelter intakes.
- Expanded the landlord specialist role in the Housing First and Home for Good programs to assist service providers and program participants to have positive relationships with landlords in order to sustain successful tenancies.
- In collaboration with Niagara Region's Mental Health division, a mental health social worker was introduced to enhance service access for those with concurrent disorders who are experiencing homelessness in response to the findings of the concurrent disorders shelter assessment pilot.
- Eviction prevention and supports have been extended to housing providers and the Rent Supplement program on a pilot basis through Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) funding.

- NRH supported affordable home ownership by entering into an agreement with a developer in St. Catharines to provide an opportunity for ten NRH tenants currently paying market rent to purchase a micro condominium with down payment assistance through the Welcome Home Niagara program.
- NRH provided rental assistance to 254 households on the NRH waitlist through the administration of the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB).

Goal 3 – Increase Housing Options and Opportunities for Low- and Moderate-Income Households

- Niagara Region's Planning and Development Services prepared a Joint Report on the new Niagara Official Plan that includes substantial completion of background studies, options and policies on various land use matters, including the Affordable Housing component of the Plan. Substantial public consultation was completed, including the use of virtual engagement methods. Additional public consultation will follow in summer and Fall 2021.
- Planning and Development Services retained the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) to update the forecasts of housing need in the Niagara Housing Statement to 2051. The updated statement defines housing affordability and includes data on affordable housing requirements, core and deep core housing need at the regional and local area municipal level, and income levels and job categories for different submarkets.
- Planning and Development Services delivered existing incentive programs while advancing interdepartmental work on the Regional Incentive Review. The review work included the preparation of programs to align with the four priority areas identified by Council (Affordable Housing, Brownfield Remediation, Employment, Public Realm), engagement with local area municipalities and coordination with other key Region projects.
- NRH awarded the contract for the Community Housing Master Plan in early November, with work beginning immediately. The Master Plan will provide a long-term road map to ensure the sustainability of existing community housing stock and outline the future needs for community housing in Niagara.
- NRH and Region staff participated in local area municipality working groups on affordable housing and provided data and support to local area municipalities developing affordable housing plans and implementing housing initiatives.
- NRH hired an additional project manager to support non-profits and agencies that expressed interest in affordable housing development by completing front-end development planning activities. Community projects supported in 2020 represented a potential of 372 units in seven local municipalities.

- NRH partnered with 37 new in situ units/landlords, which will provide rent-geared-to-income subsidy to tenants in their current homes.
- Progress on new affordable and community housing development included:
 - 8 Home for Good units (Gateway Residential and Support Services, Port Colborne), occupied February 2020
 - 30 net new units (Stamford Kiwanis, Niagara Falls), completed January 2020
 - Remediation of units (St David's Road, St Catharines), 3 units in progress
 - 6 net new units (Ormond Street, Thorold), 2 units in progress
 - 20 Bridge Housing units (Niagara Falls), initiated November 2020 and on track for December 2021 occupancy
 - 73 NRH owned units, including 10 Housing First units, at Hawkins Street (Niagara Falls), 40% complete and on track for target completion January 2022
 - 15 Home for Good units (YWCA Oakdale Commons, St. Catharines), nearing completion at end of 2020

Goal 4 – Build Capacity and Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Housing and Homelessness System

- Increased alignment of contracted homelessness services with the system 2.0 model by introducing concepts and requirements (Housing First Approach, Coordinated Access) to service providers through contracts executed in April 2020.
- Increased the use of system and program standards for funded homelessness programs (Niagara Assertive Street Outreach, housing focused shelter, Housing First and Home for Good) through contract management and HHAP working groups.
- Supported provider capacity through virtual training for Assertive Street Outreach and Housing First and Home for Good workers in summer 2020.
- Collaborated with Regional Essential Access to Connected Healthcare (REACH) Niagara to provide access to primary care for shelter and NASO clients with unmet health needs.
- Introduced peer support into the Housing First and Home for Good programs to formalize how those with previous lived experience of homelessness provide support to people who are experiencing chronic homelessness, to help them to leave the street.
- Successfully applied to the Inclusive Community Grants Program, through the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility for \$60,000 for resources to address barriers for persons with a disability in accessing the Regionally funded shelter system.

- Initiated planning for Niagara's homelessness enumeration in March 2021. The count will be used to validate the information in Niagara's By Name List.

A key component of BFZ-C, the Quality By-Name List supports system planning to meet community need. Of the 365 unique (chronically homeless) individuals on Niagara's Quality By-Name List at December 31, 2020, the largest proportion were single men (29.6%), single women (20.0%), seniors 55+ (14.8%), youth 16-24 without a guardian (13.7%), and Indigenous individuals (12.3%).

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable. Reporting is required under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* per its regulations as noted above.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The HHAP describes actions, outcomes, and targets for the priority project of Affordable Housing that supports the Council Priority of a Healthy and Vibrant Community and contributes to Council's direction to develop and implement an affordable housing strategy.

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 40-2019 Five-Year Review of Niagara's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan
- COM-C 2-2020 HHAP Update January 2020
- COM-C 3-2020 HHAP Update February 2020
- COM-C 18-2020 HHAP Update (March, April and May Activities)
- COM-C 25-2020 HHAP Update (June, July, and August Activities)
- COM-C 33-2020 HHAP Update (September, October, November Activities)
- COM-C 9 2021 HHAP Update (December, January, February)
- COM 10-2021 Homelessness Services Report 2020

Prepared by:

Jeffrey Sinclair, BBA
Homelessness Action Plan Advisor
Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.

Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Wendy Thompson, Community Resource Unit Manager Niagara Regional Housing and Alexandria Tikky, Planner Planning and Development Services, and reviewed by Cathy Cousins, Director Homelessness Services & Community Engagement.

MEMORANDUM**COM-C 20-2021****Subject COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Community Services****Date: May 11, 2021****To: Public Health & Social Services Committee****From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services**

This memo provides continued updates on the measures Community Services has taken to ensure the ongoing delivery of essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the alternate approaches used to support those most vulnerable in Niagara.

Seniors Services – Long-Term Care**Long-Term Care COVID-19 Outbreak Updates**

At the time of writing this report, there are two suspect outbreaks within a Regionally operated long-term care (LTC) home:

- Linhaven is in a suspect outbreak due to positive COVID-19 test results for three employees identified through rapid antigen testing. The anticipated clearance date for the suspect outbreak is May 3, 2021.
- Woodlands of Sunset is in a suspect outbreak due to a positive COVID-19 test result for a vaccinated employee. The anticipated clearance date for the suspect outbreak is May 1, 2021.

Since the last report, there have not been any resident cases of COVID-19 at Regional LTC homes. The following homes did have outbreaks in April, but in each outbreak there was no transmission of cases within the homes:

- Rapelje Lodge: April 7, 2021 – April 20, 2021
- Deer Park Villa: April 13, 2021 to April 27, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Seniors Services continues to encourage staff and essential caregivers to be vaccinated and are sharing emerging guidance to support decision making for those who may be vaccine hesitant. At this time, the vaccination rates across the homes are as follows:

- Residents: 97%
- Staff: 83%
- Essential caregivers: 85%

Public Health is working in collaboration with Seniors Services to offer continued access to first and second dose vaccinations for residents admitted to LTC homes without full vaccination. Staff and essential caregivers continue to be a priority group for vaccination and can access vaccine clinics through Niagara Health, at the Seymour Hannah Recreation Complex.

Changes to LTC Home Admission / Transfer Requirements

Given the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination program, a number of residents admitted to LTC homes from hospital are now either partially or fully vaccinated. Fully vaccinated means, “an individual has received all doses in their COVID-19 vaccine series and more than 14 days have passed since the receipt of their last dose”. The Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC) has issued a number of changes to testing and isolation requirements in recognition of this vaccination status. These changes are as follows:

- Fully immunized residents (two weeks past second dose of immunization)
 - Require a negative lab-based test at time of admission/transfer
 - Do not require isolation (unless the COVID-19 test result is pending)
- Partially immunized or non-immunized residents
 - Require a negative lab-based test at time of admission/transfer
 - Isolation is required for these residents. A lab test will be taken on day 8 of isolation, and if the result is negative, the resident can end isolation on day 10.
- Residents who had COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have recovered
 - Do not need a negative COVID-19 test result
 - Do not need to be isolated

Updated Guidance on Limiting Work to a Single LTC Home

The MLTC has issued an amendment to the restriction that prohibits staff from working in more than one home, or in another health care setting. The amendment now permits staff who are fully vaccinated to work in more than one setting.

Waiving of Co-Payment

The MLTC introduced a program waiving co-payment for patients who accept placement in a home that may not be their preferred choice, to go into effect April 23, 2021. Co-payments for these residents will be waived until they can be transferred to a home of their choice. Residents who accept these placements will maintain priority status on the waitlist for their preferred home. To cover the cost of this incentive program for families, homes will be funded through the regular occupancy funding process.

Transfer of Hospital Patient(s) under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (Amendment to Emergency Order O. 272/21)

The MLTC has introduced a temporary, emergency-based transfer protocol to allow for the transfer of hospital patients to alternate care settings without having to obtain the consent of the patient or their substitute decision-maker.

The intent of this amendment is to enable hospitals to safely and respectfully transfer these patients in order to urgently optimize capacity across the system in the face of rising hospitalization rates, and to allocate ICU and high acuity medicine beds as necessary during the third wave.

Patients transferred out of hospitals under the authority of this order to LTC or retirement homes, who are not placed in their first choice of LTC home, will retain their priority status on the waitlist for their first choice and will be transferred to that home at the earliest available opportunity.

Homelessness Services & Community Engagement

Homelessness Services continues to operate the full emergency shelter system, overflow hotel rooms, the self-isolation facility and an enhanced street outreach service. As of April 27, 2021, 604 individuals have been referred to the isolation facility with testing administered in shelter.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

From April 7 to April 16, five additional COVID-19 vaccination clinics were set up in various emergency shelter locations across the region. The vaccination clinics offered second doses to clients experiencing homelessness, as well as first doses to both clients and staff who may have reconsidered their decision to get vaccinated, or were new to the homeless serving system. The clinics were done in collaboration with Niagara Region Public Health, Niagara Region Homelessness Services, and Regional Essential Access to Connected Healthcare (REACH) Niagara. Through the vaccination clinics, 227 clients have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 89 have received their second dose.

During the COVID-19 vaccination clinics, clients who attended were offered coffee, breakfast and various nourishments. Niagara Region Homelessness services received a generous donation from Starbucks to support the provision of food and refreshments to clients at the clinics.

Prior to implementing the vaccination clinics, Homelessness Services collaborated with REACH Niagara, family health teams, and agencies across the homeless serving system, to inform planning for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccination to this high risk population. REACH Niagara and shelter staff provided clients with information regarding the vaccine, and answered any client questions to address vaccine hesitancy as well as encourage vaccine uptake.

Children's Services

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Beginning on April 9, 2021 and based on guidance from Niagara's Community Coordination Taskforce for COVID-19 Vaccination, child care, elementary and secondary school sectors were prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination in Niagara. Eligible workers within these sectors were contacted by Regional staff to book their vaccination at Niagara Health's immunization clinic at the Seymour Hannah Recreation Complex in St. Catharines. Approximately 2,000 child care staff were eligible and notified to receive their first dose vaccines.

To note, the province announced that as of April 29, 2021, child care workers in licensed child care settings will be eligible to book a vaccine appointment through the

provincial vaccine booking line or directly through public health units that use their own booking system.

Emergency Child Care Update

The provincial government announced that elementary and secondary students across Ontario would move to remote learning, following the April spring break. As a result, emergency child care services were once again made available to eligible health care and frontline workers, with school-aged children, across Niagara. Children's Services has been actively reaching out to service providers to either increase their capacity at current emergency child care sites if possible, and to consider opening new locations for emergency child care to help offset the demand for service. As of April 23, 2021:

- In total, 22 licensed child care centres and home child care programs were operating emergency child care for school-aged children, across Niagara.
- 530 emergency child care spaces were available across Niagara.
- 452 school-aged children were placed in emergency child care.
- 211 school-aged children were on the waitlist to access emergency child care.

Child Care Services Update

Licensed child care centres and home child care programs documented 5,145 COVID-19 related child absent days in March 2021. This does not include any absent days incurred by children for regular occurrences such as non-COVID-19 illness, injury, absence, etc. Children's Services continues to support licensed child care service providers with COVID-19 related costs through one-time funding supports.

Children's Services has regularly provided information regarding provincial or federal subsidy programs, such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), to help licensed child care service providers mitigate some of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 federal budget indicated that the CEWS would be extended until September 25, 2021, and that the subsidy rate would be gradually decreased starting on July 4, 2021. This is welcome news to many licensed child care providers as it will continue to help providers manage various operating costs (e.g. staffing costs), and remain economically viable while revenue from parent fees gradually begin to increase as the economy reopens.

Children's Services continues to monitor the child care system and provide support to service providers in their ability to remain open.

Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities (Ontario Works)

The 2021 federal budget made several announcements regarding temporary recovery benefits for Canadians as well as the Employment Insurance (EI) program:

- The Canada Recovery Benefit will be extended by 12 weeks for those who qualify, for a total of 50 weeks, with payments to be phased out by September 2021. The first four additional weeks will be paid at \$500 a week before tax, then reduced to \$300 a week pre-tax for the remaining eight weeks.
- The Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit will be extended four weeks for a total of 42 weeks, at \$500 per week.
- The universal entrance requirements for eligible workers for the EI program will remain at 420 hours for the next three years. Sickness benefits under the EI program will be extended from 15 to 26 weeks.
- Introduction of a new Canada Recovery Hiring Program to help qualifying employers hire employees as the economy reopens by providing up to \$1,129 per week for employees hired between June 6, 2021 and November 20, 2021.

The availability of federal benefits has helped to mitigate the expected increase in demand for social assistance in Niagara. Demand for Ontario Works is predicted to increase in October 2021, leading to rising caseloads and increased administrative pressure for provincial social assistance programs, when temporary federal recovery benefits expire.

SAEO has continued to adapt its focus to new provincial initiatives including Electronic Document Management, Employment Services Transformation and Centralized Intake. SAEO also continues to operate under a blended service delivery model to provide supports to Niagara's most vulnerable residents.

Niagara Regional Housing (NRH)

NRH has continued to provide essential services, in all business streams, while taking all the necessary safety precautions and protocols, during the stay-at-home order that is currently in effect. NRH has also continued to include and support housing providers in all COVID-19 related information and initiatives.

Targeted communication materials are being distributed to promote the vaccines. Identified COVID-19 "hotspots" will receive flyers and posters that indicate their heightened need for vaccine protection. All communications will include translation

documents noting the importance of the information and advising that translation is recommended. Partners will also be engaged to assist through social media and any other forms of communication available to them.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner

Subject: New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance, Part II

Report to: Public Health and Social Services Committee

Report date: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to outline system changes underway in Niagara, achievements and early learnings, including challenges aligned with the province's New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance.
- On April 15, 2021 proposed amendments to the Ontario Works Act were tabled in the Legislature aligned to the new vision.
- The new vision aims to create an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system that focuses on people by connecting them with a range of local services.
- The province intends to work collaboratively with municipalities to co-design the transformation, with a focus on developing a new operating model for social assistance, including updated roles and responsibilities, the revised human services approach as well as a new funding, performance and accountability framework.
- It is anticipated that municipalities will be responsible to deliver life stabilization and person-centred case management support to both Ontario Works (OW) clients and adults on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), resulting in over 15,000 additional people requiring service from SAEO between 2021 and 2024 when the system reaches a mature state.
- It is unknown if provincial funding will increase relative to the demand for service.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities (SAEO) has an approved 2021 operating budget of \$133.3M (\$11.9M net tax levy). This operating budget is inclusive of program operating costs and income benefits paid to recipients.

Analysis

This is the second of two reports related to the province's New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance.

The purpose of this report is to outline system changes that are underway and share SAEO's achievements and early learnings, including challenges aligned with the new vision.

Need for Change

The new vision builds on previous system redesign efforts to modernize, streamline, reduce administrative burden and advance human services integration to improve client outcomes.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that a new approach is needed as more Ontarians are looking for help with basic needs, stabilizing their family's lives and returning to work, and financial security. Ontario's social assistance system must be poised to focus on supporting people back into employment, independence and stability when federal COVID benefits end.

Legislative Changes

On April 15, 2021, the government proposed amendments to the *Ontario Works Act* (OWA), focusing on two key areas:

- Changes that would enable the re-alignment of Ontario Works functions across municipalities and the Ministry to support a new provincial-municipal delivery model; and,
- Changes that would support an enhanced focus on life stabilization to enable people on social assistance to achieve greater independence and financial resilience, connecting them to a network of supports that are right for them and connected to their communities.

These proposed changes would be critical enablers to implementing a new model that supports a whole-of-government approach to accessing human services that will not only help more people succeed in employment, but also support better outcomes in other areas of life including health and education.

Provincial – Municipal Roles and Responsibilities

The new provincial-municipal delivery model for social assistance looks at provincial and municipal roles and responsibilities, not along the traditional program lines of OW and ODSP, but rather identifying who can best provide a service to get the best results for people.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has started the work of transformation by realigning the following roles and responsibilities:

MCCSS will:

- Deliver centralized intake for financial assistance
- Administer financial controls and back-office functions suited to centralization or automation
- Assume accountability for program decisions

Municipalities & District Social Service Administration Boards will:

- Deliver services such as life stabilization, including needs assessment, service planning, warm referrals, discretionary benefits (e.g. funerals, dental care)
- Person-centred, connected supports, and navigation of broader system (e.g. housing, employment, health)

Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLSTD):

- Deliver employment programs for OW and ODSP as part of the transformed Employment Ontario (EO) service system

In essence, the changes to the provincial-municipal roles and responsibilities result in the province taking over responsibility for how people enter and exit social assistance and the municipality maintains the responsibility for providing support and services to help people move through the system. Municipalities will be expected to deliver person-centred case management support to OW clients and adults on ODSP. The shift in roles and responsibilities from the province to the municipality to provide life stabilization case management support to adults on ODSP will result in over 15,000 additional people requiring service from SAEO between 2021 and 2024, when the system reaches a mature state.

System Changes Underway in Niagara

Centralized Intake

Individuals in need of assistance now apply through a provincial digital application or by contacting a provincial Centralized Intake Unit by phone. Risk based eligibility determination uses the applicant's self-declared information, including household composition, income, assets and living arrangements to validate against information available in proprietary or other government data sources. The assessment is used to determine the timeline for verification at the local level (immediate, within one month or three months). MCCSS has set a target of 70% of applications to be processed without intervention at the local level.

Achievements

In February 2021, SAEO successfully launched centralized risk based intake. To date, approximately 60% of cases require no intervention at the local level. SAEO worked with community partners to explore alternate paths for clients who are experiencing an emergency or have urgent needs. High risk and homeless individuals continue to be assessed at the local level through a warm transfer from MCCSS or a direct referral from community partners. Youth applicants, those requiring interpreters and individuals applying for Temporary Care Assistance will also continue to have their eligibility assessed at the local level due to the increased potential for complexities related to their needs and circumstances.

Early Learnings and Challenges

The shift in roles and responsibilities for the intake function is not, at this time, realizing administrative efficiencies at the local level as anticipated. The process generates a multi-page document outlining the tasks required by SAEO staff for each granted case through MCCSS. Post approval, there are significant technical components and activities required within the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) to complete the granting process. Staff are then required to contact new applicants within one to three months, depending on the outcome of the risk assessment to complete verification and offer other case management supports. In addition, applicants continue to reach out to SAEO seeking information on the status of their application with MCCSS. Time is also spent assessing individuals deemed ineligible through MCCSS and offering local intervention for applicants where additional information is required.

Life Stabilization

There is enhanced focus on life stabilization as a component of the Ontario Works program. The purpose of focusing on life stabilization is to improve clients' individual circumstances by addressing barriers, and better enabling and preparing OW clients and adult family members on ODSP to participate in employment services and employment.

The province recognizes that municipalities have greater expertise in providing life stabilization services and supports, as this always represented a significant portion of their efforts previously with OW clients. Therefore, municipalities will be responsible to deliver life stabilization and person-centred case management support to both Ontario Works clients and adults on ODSP, resulting in over 15,000 additional people requiring service from SAEO between 2021 and 2024, when the system reaches a mature state.

Life stabilization supports are provided in four service areas:

- Basic Needs (food, housing, crisis),
- Health (mental health and addictions, physical health),
- Life Skills (essential skills, education, literacy) and;
- Community Supports (childcare, transportation, cultural, legal).

Achievements

As part of the new operating model, MCCSS introduced a new digital Common Assessment Tool (CAT) to support the enhanced focus on life stabilization. The CAT is administered by OW and ODSP staff and captures information about clients including strengths, barriers to employment and life stabilization needs. Since January 1, 2021, SAEO staff have completed over 6,000 CATS with individuals in order to support life stabilization, service planning, warm referrals to community partners and provision of discretionary benefits.

Early Learnings

SAEO is responsible for the provision of financial supports, for items such as bus passes and internet access to address life stabilization related needs for OW and adults on ODSP. SAEO has adapted local benefit policies to reflect the new operating model. Clients will continue to be assessed for participation benefits on an individual basis by SAEO staff. Further adjustments to policy adjustments will be necessary if provincial funding does not correspond with caseload increase.

Employment Services Transformation (EST)

The vision of employment services transformation is to build a locally responsive employment services system, integrating employment programs for OW and ODSP into a transformed Employment Ontario service to create one system. The new employment services model launched in January 2021, beginning in three prototype catchment areas: Region of Peel, Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula and Muskoka-Kawartha.

The integration of employment programs for OW and ODSP into EO resulted in the reallocation of 22% (\$4.4M per annum; inclusive of both staffing supports and client employment related benefits) of Niagara Region's OW Delivery Funding from MCCSS to MLTSD effective January 1, 2021. As a result, SAEO experienced a staff reduction of 14 permanent full time positions (1 non-union and 13 union) to respond to changes in funding associated with EST.

Achievements

The CAT is used to help inform an OW and ODSP client's readiness for a referral to Employment Ontario for employment services. Of the 6,000 CAT assessments completed to date, approximately 35% of clients were assessed as being ready for a referral to EO for employment services. Prior to EST, approximately 30% of OW clients were referred to EO for employment services. Strong relationships have been fostered between OW, ODSP and the EO service system manager, FedCap, to resolve issues, share best practices and provide transparent service. Through joint collaboration, SAEO has already successfully influenced system improvements and facilitated access to employment services for clients.

Early Learnings

As a prototype site for EST, SAEO has worked with the MCCSS and MLTSD to identify client service and benefit gaps. The provision of benefits/financial supports differ between OW and EO, creating a gap in benefits for clients for items such as transportation and digital access. SAEO continues to monitor the impact of system changes on client benefits. Thus far, the changes have resulted in a reduction in funding available for clients for items such as interview clothing and transportation to attend a job interview. Changes to local policy were required in order to stay within budget while striving to meet the needs of clients.

Provincial-Municipal Co-Design

There is a comprehensive process of co-design and prototyping of the new provincial-municipal delivery model underway to gradually transform the delivery of social assistance across Ontario.

Phases will begin at different times in different regions between now and 2024 with the following timeline:

- Phase 1: 2021-2022. Learning, testing, prototyping the new model and engagement with municipal partners
- Phase 2: 2022-2024. Realign service delivery with human services model ready by the end of 2024

Achievements

Throughout the pandemic and transformative change, SAEO continues to provide seamless, high quality service and support to Niagara's most vulnerable residents. SAEO successfully transitioned to a hybrid model with 80% of staff working remotely and providing uninterrupted service to clients. All five offices remain open and over 4,000 in-person supports have been provided to those in need since July 2020.

SAEO continues to focus on the components of change management in order to support staff through significant change. This has included sharing the province's vision, identifying change agents to support and champion change, sharing clear and frequent communication in various forums including town halls, Q&A's, Zoom meetings and dedicated email addresses to pose questions. SAEO has developed comprehensive in-house training for all staff on new provincial initiatives and frequent changes to the OW directives.

Early Learnings

Social Assistance is undergoing an unprecedented amount of system change. There are factors that are likely to result in increased demand for service by the Region's Social Assistance team including the end of federal pandemic benefits (now anticipated for the end of September 2021) and the expansion of the population served (further to the provincial system transformation) to include adults on ODSP.

As transformation continues for employment services and social assistance, it is anticipated that the funding model will evolve alongside the system changes. The

transformed system is expected to include a new approach to funding and a new performance and accountability framework co-designed between the province and municipalities. As the caseload increases, it is unknown how or if provincial funding will increase relative to the demand for service.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The province's New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance aligns to Council's strategic priority of ensuring a "Healthy and Vibrant Community" by creating an efficient, effective and streamlined social services system.

Other Pertinent Reports

- COM 7–2021 New Provincial-Municipal Vision for Social Assistance
- COM C 4–2020 Provincial Employment Transformation
- CONF C 1-2020 Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development Plan to Transform Employment Services

Prepared by:

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Community Services

Recommended by:

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner
Community Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Melissa Austin, Manager of Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities.

MEMORANDUM

PHD-C 9-2021

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Public Health & Emergency Services (May 2021 Update)

Date: May 11, 2021

To: Public Health & Social Services Committee

From: M. Mustafa Hirji, Medical Officer of Health & Commissioner (Acting)

Current Status as of April 29, 2021

- The latest updates including statistics can be found at the [Niagara Region website](https://niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19). (<https://niagararegion.ca/health/covid-19>)
- Globally, much of the Western world is seeing the resurgence of COVID-19 as variants drive further spread.
- Countries that have had success in acquiring large amounts of vaccine the exception to the above: Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States have managed to lower or flatten their cases through a combination of very widespread vaccination and restrictions on social life. Israel and the UK have endured 3-4 month lockdowns to lower cases, but with high vaccination coverage are now able to reopen widely.
- Canada has not had success in acquiring vaccine early, and similar to what European countries experienced in past months, and most provinces are now experiencing third waves. Hospital and ICU beds are extremely stretched in Ontario which is experiencing the worst wave, and many persons are dying of COVID-19 again.
- As cases have gone up in Ontario, they are also now high in Niagara. Most cases continue to be the result of spread in the community—in household and gatherings in one's home, as well as some outbreaks in workplaces.
- High cases and many outbreaks have overwhelmed Public Health's capacity for follow-up and contact tracing. Most contact tracing is much more cursory. As cases reduce, more fulsome contact tracing will again be possible.
- Retention and recruitment of staff for contact tracing has been a particular challenge. With overwhelmed hospitals and vaccination programs aggressively hiring, staff are leaving to take those opportunities. The difficulty of contact tracing, including the non-cooperation of the public and anger directed towards

Public Health, has made these roles less desirable and more challenging to fill. Attempts are ongoing to recruit more capacity.

- Vaccinations are progressing through Phase 2 priorities, particularly for elderly persons in a sequence of decreasing age categories. Persons with the highest risk chronic conditions are also being vaccinated, and persons with other health conditions will soon become eligible as well. People who cannot work from home will become eligible for vaccination within the next few weeks.
- The increase in vaccinations has come with it an increase in adverse event investigations. Public Health is needed to redeploy and hire additional resources for investigating the hundreds of adverse events being reported.
- Temporary redeployment of chronic disease staff to support mass immunizations has ended, and these staff are resuming work at mitigating and preventing the worsening of chronic diseases that arose over the past year of the pandemic.
- A dedicated partnership with primary care allowed delivering a grade eight school-vaccine catch up clinic during the week-long April School Break.
- In Emergency Services, call volumes for EMS have largely returned to normal levels as business and life has resumed. EMS is also playing a role in vaccination and supporting our hospitals.
- EMS is closely monitoring patient flow within local emergency departments and working with Niagara Health to ensure capacity and surge planning for anticipated COVID-19 related hospitalizations.
- Emergency Management continues to support both Regional and Local Area Municipal EOC's for coordinated response and business continuity planning.

Previous (April 13) Summary on Business Continuity

Public Health & Emergency Services deliver essential services year-round to impact the health and health equity of Niagara residents, and to pursue Council's strategic goal of building a Healthy and Vibrant Community. During the current pandemic, the department is playing a central role in the response to protect and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, while also continuing the essential work around all other health issues that continue to affect residents.

While COVID-19 has commanded the primary focus of Public Health and society at large, it is important to remember that most of the pre-existing health issues continue to exist and are responsible for more deaths (4,500 per year in Niagara) than the projected number of deaths from COVID-19 in Niagara (250–1,000 deaths).

Activity in Public Health & Emergency Services reflects focusing on COVID-19 response, while also ensuring ongoing service to protect the health in other essential areas.

Public Health Emergency Operations Centre for COVID-19/Pandemic Response Division

Current Status of Operations

Public Health began work in response to COVID-19 on January 8, 2020. As volume of activities grew, the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre was partly activated on January 28, 2020 to ensure coordination of work and central leadership. By March 9, staff had begun to be redeployed from regular duties to supporting the activities of the Emergency Operations Centre, which was fully activated at this time. Currently over 200 staff work in COVID-19 emergency response (equivalent to 70% of the staff complement in Public Health), with close to another 100 being recruited currently.

Emergency Operations have now transitioned to the new temporary Pandemic Response Division to consolidate most pandemic response activities, and streamline reporting lines and management processes. This was explained in more detail in [CWCD 299-2020](#).

Significant Initiatives or Actions Taken

There are five principle lines of response to COVID-19:

1. **Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management.** Public Health is following-up with every person diagnosed with COVID-19 to ensure they are isolated and no longer infecting others. Public Health identifies all contacts of that person who may also have been infected, and arranges for those contacts to be isolated as well. That way, if they develop illness, they cannot have exposed anyone. By isolating all persons who may be infected with COVID-19, the chain of transmission can be broken. Case and contact management will be critical to ensuring ongoing control of COVID-19 transmission if and when physical distancing measures are relaxed.

A critical subset of this work is advising and supporting the management of outbreaks in long term care homes, retirement homes, and other health care facilities. We have seen that most cases and deaths in Niagara, Ontario, and Canada as a whole have occurred in these settings. Better protecting them and supporting these facilities to manage outbreaks are our top priority.

Public Health usually has 12 staff working on case, contact, and outbreak management year-round for 75 diseases of public health significance (e.g. measles, influenza, salmonella, HIV). Within the Emergency Operations Centre, this had been scaled-up to over 100 staff. However, with the need to support mass immunizations, and staff choosing to leave due to increased workload stressors (quickly growing workloads, lack of cooperation by the public, high levels of anger directed towards them by clients), the team is now down to only about 25 persons, and grossly insufficient to meet current demands. Work is underway to try and recruit new staff, however, the hiring pool is very thin as all health care organizations are trying to hire more staff during this time.

In addition, Public Health is further expanding its capacity by “out sourcing” some of this work to staff offered by the Public Health Agency of Canada and the provincial government. With Council’s approval received on August 13, 2020, there is now the ability to enter into assistance agreements with other local public health agencies to further expand capacity if needed. However, with most parts of the province experiencing surges of cases, it is unlikely Niagara will be able to leverage the support of others. The case/contact/outbreak management operation now works 7 days a week, 08:00 to 19:30.

2. **Supporting Health Care & Social Services Sector.** The health care and social services sectors play an essential role in supporting those most vulnerable, including diagnosing and caring for those who contract COVID-19. Public Health has been working with the sector to advise and support protocols that will minimize risk of infection to both clients and staff.

A dedicated health care provider phone line supports health care providers in providing advice and latest recommendations around COVID-19.

Approximately 5 FTE currently support the health care and social services sector within the Emergency Operations Centre, all redeployed from normal public health work.

3. **Supporting Schools & Child Care.** A new call line has been created to support schools, teachers, staff, and child care operators with keeping children safe in their reopening's. Supporting these sectors is a priority in terms of protecting vulnerable children as well as older staff who may work in these settings and are at risk of severe illness. However, it is also a priority given the potential for children to spread infections through families and through the large populations in schools which could trigger a second wave. As well, successful reopening of schools and child care is critical for our economic recovery to enable parents to return to work. This is a particular equity issue for women given the disproportionate role women play in child care. Approximately 40 staff, including the 20 new provincially-funded hires are supporting schools and child care.

Since the reopening of schools, the school health team has

- Managed over 1000 clients who are cases or contacts of COVID-19 and associated with a school
- Provided 350 consultations to schools
- Provided, on average, 5 engagements with each school
- Conducted, on average, 4 in-person visits a week to schools in Niagara to do proactive infection prevention work
- Supported 145 school staff with virtual professional development around preventing COVID-19
- Provided resources that have been accessed over 10,000 times (on-line or in hard copy) by school staff or school boards.

4. **Public Messaging.** Given the rapidly changing landscape of COVID-19. Public Health seeks to provide the public with the information to address their fears and concerns, as well as to understand their risk and how to protect themselves. These efforts include a comprehensive web site library of frequently asked questions, an information phone line to speak to a health professional that operates 09:15 to 20:30 on weekdays and 09:15 on 16:15 on weekends, an online chat service with health professionals that operates during the same hours, social media, and approximately 15 media requests per week. Daily, Public Health has over 20,000 interactions with the public across all channels.

Due to recent increase in cases for COVID-19 as well as pressures for mass immunization, Public Health reduced staff available for the informational phone line and online chat, to increase more staff in case and contact management. There will also be a reduction of the hours of the call centre, so that it closes at 16:15; as well, the call centre no longer operates on weekends. With these changes, wait times for callers are unfortunately increasing. Public Health is looking at options to outsource this work.

Approximately 10 staff have been redeployed from usual public health operations to support the Emergency Operations Centre with public messaging. Having a dedicated team of public health professionals specialized in communications and engagement has been invaluable to managing the volume and scientific content of messaging needed through the pandemic. Some regions without dedicated teams have needed to build them with redeployments during the pandemic, a challenge that Niagara did not have.

5. **Vaccination.** Since the start of the pandemic, work has been underway to update and adapt off-the-shelf mass vaccination plans to the current situation. Plans are near complete, and dependent on information on vaccine distribution to finalize and allow execution to begin.

Early parts of the plan, in terms of mobile teams, have already been mobilized to vaccinate in long-term care homes, retirement homes, and congregate care setting with the limited volume of vaccine available.

Public Health has now launched mass immunization clinics. As of late April, clinics are vaccinating up to 1600 persons a day. The goal is to continue to scale this volume up over time to several thousand a day as more staff are hired and trained, and more vaccine supply becomes available.

In addition to these lines of work, there is significant work around data entry, customizing data systems and process management to make the above three lines of work as efficient and effective as possible. As well, there are comprehensive planning teams, logistics teams, a finance and administration team, and liaison activities. Approximately 45 staff have been reallocated to these activities.

Operational Outlook

1 month

- Due to the pressures of mass immunization efforts, quickly growing numbers of cases and outbreaks, and poor retention of staff in case/outbreak/contact management, Public Health is again unable to conduct full contact tracing on all new cases and has significantly curtailed follow-up.
- As cases of COVID-19 decrease, Public Health will resume more fulsome contact tracing in a phased approach, calibrated by capacity and risk.

3 months

~~There is a strong possibility of a third lockdown which would bring cases back to a manageable level. Alternately, with the pressure to staff expanding vaccination activities, staff available for case and contact management are decreasing, and will no longer be able to actively control the pandemic in Niagara.~~

3 months to 6 months

- Projections on operations in the future will depend on Provincial government policy decisions around COVID-19 response and the speed at which vaccines become available. The expectation is that current emergency operations would continue with emphasis shifting based on provincial response and expected high vaccine roll-out which will control the pandemic. The emergence of new variants that could be vaccine-resistant however threaten this outcome.

Clinical Services Division (Excluding Mental Health)

Current State of Operations

Most efforts in this area normally focus on infectious disease prevention. Many staff (60 FTE of 84 total) have been reallocated to the Emergency Operations Centre for COVID-19 response. Current operations are focused on

- case and contact management of sexually transmitted infections
- case and contact management of significant infectious diseases (e.g. tuberculosis, measles)
- distributing provincial vaccination stockpiles to primary care
- advising primary care around complex immunization scenarios
- emergency contraception
- outreach to marginalized populations around vaccination and sexual health

Services/Operational Changes

- Cessation of immunization clinics
- Cessation of school vaccinations
- Cessation of enforcing the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*
- Cessation of supplying the public with immunization records
- Cessation of sexual health clinics
- Cessation of health promotion around vaccinations
- Cessation of health promotion around healthy sexuality

With the current state of COVID-19 cases and the ramping up of COVID-19 vaccinations, it is very unlikely any school vaccinations will take place this year.

Operational Outlook

1 month & 3 months

- Increasing staff investigating adverse events following immunization since these will surge as vaccines are rolled out.

Mental Health

Current State of Operations

Mental Health supports clients in the community who would often otherwise need to be hospitalized. This work is critical to keep people out of the hospital and ensure health system capacity for those with COVID-19. As well, given current challenges around loss of employment, anxiety, and social isolation, delivery of mental health services is more important than ever. With the resurgence of COVID-19, some staff have again been redeployed to the COVID-19 response, affecting waiting times for Mental Health

services. Two staff returned to Mental Health have once again been reassigned to pandemic response.

Services/Operational Changes

- Shift of some in-person clinics to remote delivery
- Reduction in some volume of work to shift 6 FTE to provide mental health case management in shelters.

Operational Outlook

- With the resurgence of COVID-19, staff have been redeployed to COVID-19 response, and likely will remain redeployed for several more weeks.
- Mental Health services are expected to continue to have long waiting times given loss of staff to COVID-19 response.

Environmental Health

Current State of Operations

Several lines of inspection that were discontinued due to closures of certain sectors (e.g. food services, personal services, recreational pools) have resumed as those sectors reopen. In addition, other sectors of inspection remain more important than ever (e.g. infection control inspections of long term care homes and retirement homes). No staff remain completely deployed to support Emergency Operations. However, almost all staff are supporting emergency operations in their home program by inspecting COVID-19 prevention measures as part of their normal inspection work, or taking on roles around non-COVID-19 infection prevention normally done by staff redeployed to Emergency Operations. For early October, 1 staff person has been formally redeployed to emergency operations. Currently staff focus upon

- Investigation of animal bites for rabies prevention
- Investigation of health hazards
- Foodborne illness complaints
- Food premises complaints
- Infection prevention and control lapse investigations
- Inspection of reopened food premises
- Inspection of housing and infection prevention amongst temporary foreign workers

- Support and advice to private drinking water and small drinking water system operators
- Inspection of reopened recreational water establishments
- Inspection of reopened personal services settings
- Surveillance and prevention of West Nile Virus, Lyme Disease, and other vector borne diseases
- Investigation of adverse water quality
- Supporting businesses and other partners with infection prevention and control, especially as many businesses move to re-open
- Supporting operators with other unique health risks from resuming after a period of extended closure, such as flushing and managing stale water in pipes

Services/Operational Changes

- Increase of infection control investigations of long term care facilities and retirement homes
- Simulations of outbreaks with long term care facilities and retirement homes to increase their preparedness for outbreaks have now been discontinued
- Refocusing infection control investigations of day cares to focus on very frequent inspection of those that remain operational
- Inspections conducted as part of COVID-19 case and outbreak investigations in workplaces and public settings

Operational Outlook

1 month

- Environmental Health staff will be supporting mass immunization efforts as well as providing additional support to outbreak prevention.

3 month & 6 month

- Projections on operations in the future will depend on Provincial government policy decisions around COVID-19 response.

Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

Current State of Operations

Chronic illnesses are responsible for 70% of ill health and lead to more deaths (75,000 deaths per year in Ontario) than are likely to be caused by COVID-10 (Ontario government projects 3,000 to 15,000 deaths from COVID-19). Chronic diseases are heavily exacerbated during this period of social restrictions. As well, since chronic disease make one more likely to suffer severe illness from COVID-19, mitigating chronic diseases remains a high priority.

Efforts are being consolidated around three areas:

1. Mental health promotion. This reflects the greater risk of persons suffering mental health challenges including suicide during this time.
2. Substance use prevention. This reflects the risk of greater substance use while people are unemployed and lack other means of recreation.
3. Health eating and physical activity. The goal is to ensure physical activity despite current social restrictions, and support healthy eating when mostly fast food is available to purchase for take-out.

The above three priorities align with the underlying causes of most ill health and most deaths in Canada. In order to support COVID-19 vaccinations, some staff have been redeployed to support data management around vaccinations. Of 35 staff, 24 remain in their role supporting work on these health issues. ~~However, on a temporary basis, 19 additional staff have been redeployed to support mass immunization while hiring and training takes place to fill critical immunization support roles.~~

Services/Operational Changes

- Consolidation of resources around the previously mentioned three priorities
- Elimination of engagement of populations in-person
- Elimination of activities in schools, workplaces, and other public settings
- Cessation of most cancer prevention work
- Cessation of most healthy aging work
- Cessation of most injury prevention work
- Expansion of role of Tobacco Control Officers to also enforce Provincial emergency orders around physical distancing

Operational Outlook

1 month

- ~~Almost all chronic disease prevention work is suspended while staff are temporarily redeployed to fill mass immunization support roles, until new employees can be hired and trained.~~
- Temporary redeployments of staff to support mass immunization have ended, and staff are returning to addressing the increase in chronic diseases as a consequence of the pandemic.

3 month & 6 month

- Resumption of workshops for smoking cessation
- Roll-out of major suicide-prevention initiatives
- Projections on operations in the future will depend on Provincial government policy decisions around COVID-19 response. Loosening of social restrictions will enable delivery of programming with more direct engagement.

Family Health

Current State of Operations

There continues to be redeployment of 79 of 144 staff in Family Health to support Emergency Operations. As well, 20 school health staff while not formally redeployed, work overwhelmingly in COVID-19 response. In addition, most staff working in normal assignments are managing the exacerbated harms from the pandemic on other health issues.

Families in Niagara are burdened now more than ever to try to provide safe and healthy care, environments and opportunities for children. The Family Health division continues to provide essential services for families with a small number of staff. Limited services are provided by phone, live chat and virtual access to nurses through Niagara Parents where families can seek support with breastfeeding, parenting, pregnancy, postpartum mental health and child health issues.

Efforts are now underway to plan with schools on how school health programming may be delivered this fall. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program has begun transitioning back to in-person visits with physical distance to better support families, as

well as in-person screening in the hospitals. The Nurse Family Partnership has also been able to transition to mostly in-person visits using physical distance having maintained visiting at pre-COVID levels for the prior 3 months with more virtual visits.

As of April 2021, limited dental services for those at highest risk has been able to resume.

Staff are focusing their efforts on the following areas:

- Prenatal/postnatal support
- Supporting vulnerable families
- Parenting supports
- Providing enrollment and information towards emergency dental care

Home visiting programs for some of our most vulnerable families are also offering virtual support to assist with

- adjusting to life with a new baby,
- addressing parenting concerns,
- promoting healthy child development,
- accessing other supports and services as they are available, and
- assessing for increased risk related to child protection

Services/Operational Changes

- Cessation of dental screening
- ~~Cessation of dental services~~
- Cessation of breastfeeding clinics
- Cessation of well baby clinics
- Shifting all prenatal/postnatal support to virtual options from in-person service
- Shifting home visits to remote connections

For the period of March 16, 2020 to April 17, 2021:

- 852 registrants for online prenatal education
- 4009 HBHC postpartum screens and assessments completed by PHN
- 2527 HBHC home visits
- 1223 Nurse Family Partnership visits
- 797 Infant Child Development service visits
- 1092 Breastfeeding outreach visits

- 3261 interactions with Niagara Parents (phone, live chat, and email)
- 273 moms received support and skill building through our cognitive behavioural therapy post-partum depression group
- 241 visits to families receiving support and skill building through our Triple P Individualized Parent Coaching

Operational Outlook

1 month

- Resumption of additional support for vulnerable families

3 month & 6 month

- Future operations will depend on Provincial policy decisions around COVID-19 response. Loosening of social restrictions will enable delivery of programming with more direct engagement.
- Breastfeeding clinics may resume in the winter.
- Resumption of dental clinics and fluoride varnish administration is also being planned for the winter.
- Positive Parenting Program being planned for resumption in the fall. There has been high uptake to virtual class options.

Organizational and Foundational Standards

Current State of Operations

Organizational and Foundational Standards supports the data analytics, program evaluation, quality improvement, professional development, communications, engagement, and customer services activities of Public Health. There has been redeployment of 34 of 39 staff to Emergency Operations. Ongoing activity includes

- Opioid surveillance reporting
- Active screening of staff at Regional buildings
- Managing data governance and privacy issues

Services/Operational Changes

- Cessation of public health surveillance work
- Cessation of most public health communications and engagement work

- Cessation of public health data analytics
- Cessation of expanded implementation of electronic medical record system
- Cessation of all public health quality improvement work
- Cessation of Public health applied research
- Cessation of evaluating public health programs
- Cessation of public reception service in Public Health buildings
- Scaling back data governance initiative

Operational Outlook

- Expectation is that resources will remain reallocated to Emergency Operations for at least 6 months.

Emergency Medical Services

Current State of Operations

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) continues to dispatch land ambulance services to the population calling 911, as well as modified non-ambulance response to 911 calls as appropriate (the System Transformation Project). At present, call volumes have returned to expected values and operational response is normal. EMS has moved from the Monitoring stage of their Pandemic Protocol back to the Awareness stage following the recent increase in COVID-19 cases and the impact on resources. EMS is experiencing many staff in all areas of EMS operations needing to self-isolate due to family testing requiring business continuity procedures to be enacted. EMS continues to face pressures around personal protective equipment procurement as global shortages continue.

Services/Operational Changes

- Providing enhanced community support through COVID-19 specific programs (refer to PHD 05-2020 for additional details)
- Additional requests by the Province for EMS to supplement community support through enhanced Mobile Integrated Health services – 100% funding for any new initiatives approved by the LHIN

Operational Outlook

1 month

The Pandemic Plan for response prioritization remains in place. This is a unique plan to Niagara, enabled by Niagara's local control and tight integration of both ambulance dispatch and the land ambulance services.

3 month & 6 month

- Projections on operations in the future will depend on Provincial government policy decisions around COVID-19 response, and the subsequent circulation of COVID-19 in the population. Higher COVID-19 circulation would create demand for more calls to 911 as well as increase risk for EMS staff who must be off work due to COVID-19 infection or exposure. As 911 calls increase and/or staff are unable to work, the Pandemic Plan will prioritize which calls continue to be served, and which 911 calls receive a modified response (e.g. phone call and advice from a nurse) or no response.

Emergency Management

Current State of Operations

Emergency Management is currently fully deployed to supporting the Regional Emergency Operations Centre and advising the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre. Emergency Management is also deeply engaged with supporting emergency operations teams at the local area municipalities, as well as other key stakeholders (e.g. Niagara Regional Police, fire services, Canadian Forces). The CBNRE team has also been supporting emergency operations part time. Paramedics are also assisting with staffing the shelter system.

Services/Operational Changes

- Cessation of preparedness activities to focus fully on current response to COVID-19.
- A mid-response review is being conducted by staff to assess the functionality and effectiveness of emergency management coordination internally and with external stakeholders, primarily LAM EOC's to identify what is/has worked well and opportunities to improve emergency management coordination as the emergency continues

Operational Outlook

Ongoing support of current Emergency Operations Centres and recovery planning efforts. There are some elements of recovery planning that are being implemented.

Recommended by:

M. Mustafa Hirji, MD MPH FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health & Commissioner (Acting)
Public Health & Emergency Services

MEMORANDUM**COM-C 21-2021**

Subject: Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission Final Report
Date: May 11, 2021
To: Public Health and Social Services Committee
From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner

The Ontario Long-Term Care Commission delivered its final report April 30, 2021 ([Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission](#)). The report follows two interim recommendations released in October 2020 (CWCD 290-2020) and December 2020 (CWCD 336-2020).

The Commission details 85 recommendations in 11 categories. The recommendations in the report address interconnected, underlying issues that contributed to why COVID-19 spread through long-term care (LTC) homes in the way it did. The Report details recommendations that are intended to build a community of care' through the promotion and funding of person-centered care.

"The sector's future must be grounded in respect, dignity, compassion and kindness for the people who live and work in long-term care." Justice Marrocco.

Below is a listing of the 11 categories of recommendations and some key highlights.

Pandemic preparedness

- Pandemic plans (provincial and LTC home plans) to be guided by the precautionary principle, "Where there is reasonable evidence of an impending threat to public health, it is inappropriate to require proof of causation beyond a reasonable doubt before taking steps to avert the threat".
- The Ministry must ensure a pandemic stockpile of personal protective equipment and supplies.

Addressing the aftermath of COVID-19 for residents and staff

- The pandemic has had a significant and lasting impact on the emotional and psychological well-being of staff and residents in long-term care. Counselling services should be available to residents and staff living and working in long-term care during the pandemic.
- Infection prevention and control (IPAC) enhancement:
 - Appoint a full-time dedicated nurse per 120 beds as the home's IPAC Practitioner to oversee, implement and maintain the home's infection prevention and control program.
 - Maintain specific minimum IPAC education, training and certification requirements.

Strengthen health care system integration

- Ensure inclusion of long-term care homes in Ontario Health Teams.

Improve resident-focused care and quality of life

- Ensure that essential caregivers who have complied with IPAC training requirements are allowed to enter the home in outbreaks.
- The Residents' Bill of Rights should be amended to include the right to the technology required to permit residents to communicate in confidence, receive visitors of his or her choice and consult in private with any person without interference.
- Physicians must be required to physically attend when needed and within 24 hours of the request for care, when providing care to LTC home residents.
- Diversity and inclusion - the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC), LTC Licensees, management and staff must respect and support diversity in the care and services provided to LTC residents.

French language services

- Design and implement a provincial strategy to increase French language LTC services and increase the number of French language beds.

Address the human resources challenges

- Staffing needs and capacity are paramount. There is an urgent need for skilled staff.
- Accelerate LTC staffing plan implementation (increase staffing to 4 hours of care per resident per day, and workload should be changed so staff can spend more time providing direct care to each resident).
- Increase the number of skilled staff.
- Expand the use of Nurse Practitioners - the Commission supports that the proper ratio for Nurse Practitioners in long-term care facilities to be set at a minimum of one full-time Nurse Practitioner for every 120 residents.
- Retain and attract qualified staff – to be achieved through improve working conditions and compensation, enhanced education, training and development, and the regulation of personal support workers.
- Enhance oversight of the Medical Director – introduce a system of formal oversight by the MLTC, Ministry of Health and College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Funding

- Increased investment in care.

Increase accountability and transparency in long-term care

- Improved public performance indicators and standards (continue the existing 6 indicators; introduce further indicators including family and staff experience, Medical Director engagement, and staffing indicators such as direct care staffing mix and direct care staff-to-resident ratios).
- The government should consult with the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) and long-term care stakeholders and then create a transition plan to introduce a new assessment and reporting system in Ontario.

Comprehensive and transparent compliance and enforcement

- Compliance – establish a compliance unit to encourage and assist with compliance training tools, compliance coaching, sharing best practices and tracking and reporting on improvements.

- Inspections – introduce a coordinated system between Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ministry of Labour and Public Health (sharing of information and reports).
- Enforcement – introduce proportionate and escalating consequences.

Health Protection and Promotion Act investigations

- Ensure opportunity for continued access to reports / documents from the pandemic.

Responding to the Commission's Report

- The MLTC should, on the first and third anniversaries of the release of this report, provide follow-up reports.

The Report acknowledges that the recommendations may require additional funding, legislative or regulatory amendments and will certainly require considerations of other supporting actions by government actors and long-term care homes.

For the Region's directly operated homes, the recommendations outlined in the Commission Report clearly align with the priority areas that Niagara Region Seniors Services has been focusing on – relational resident centered care, leveraging technology, staff training and engagement to optimize care outcomes, inclusion, and staff recruitment.

Seniors Services is reviewing the recommendations to initiate (or continue) work on those that can be completed within current resources, and to develop plans for implementation of the remainder of the recommendations. Progress updates related to these recommendations and provincial directives will be provided to the Public Health and Social Services Committee through ongoing quality reports.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner

Minute Item No. 3.2.1

CLK 5-2021

Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* - Lowe's Store - McLeod Road, City of Niagara Falls

That Report CLK 5-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* – Lowe's Store – 7959 McLeod Road, City of Niagara Falls, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the application from Lowe's store, requesting a tourism exemption under the *Retail Business Holidays Act*, to permit the store located at 7959 McLeod Road, in the City of Niagara Falls, to open on all statutory holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., **BE APPROVED**; and
2. That the necessary by-law **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Regional Council for consideration.

Minute Item No. 6.1

CSD 27-2021

Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) 1 District – Amending Agreement with Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd.

That Report CSD 27-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) 1 District – Amending Agreement with Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd. , **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract of \$17,111,289 (including 13% HST) awarded to Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd. ("Merit") **BE INCREASED** by \$53,221 (including 13% HST) for a total revised Contract of \$17,164,510 (including 13% HST) for the construction of the NRPS 1 District Facility in St. Catharines;
2. That the Gross Budget for Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) 1 District Facility in St. Catharines **BE INCREASED** by \$47,927 and that the increase **BE FUNDED** from the Capital Variance – Levy Project; and
3. That the Regional Chair and the Regional Clerk **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute an amendment to the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract between Niagara Region and Merit as proposed in Recommendation 1 above.

Minute Item No. 6.2

CLK 6-2021

**Community Member Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Advisory Committee**

That Report CLK 6-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Community Member Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the recommended community member appointments for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, contained in Confidential Appendix 1 to Report CLK 6-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Minute Item No. 6.3

CSC-C 17-2021

Referred Motion - Municipal Act Revisions for Code of Conduct Violations

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa Integrity Commissioner found that a Member of Ottawa City Council engaged in “incomprehensible incidents of harassment” involving job candidates and staff;

WHEREAS the Municipal Act, 2001 does not provide a mechanism to have a Councillor vacated from their seat despite any acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa has sent correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001, to address such acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the Women’s Advisory Committee is supportive of requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001 to address these matters;

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has opened a formal consultation process to invite members of public and municipalities to provide comments on ways to strength codes of conduct; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has released a position statement regarding this consultation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions be made to the Municipal Act, 2001, that would provide for the vacating of the seat of a member of council who has been found on clear and convincing evidence to have committed serious misconduct;
2. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** AMO’s position in regards to this matter; and
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to actively participate, on behalf of Regional Council, in the ongoing provincial consultation on this matter; and
4. That the letter from the Regional Chair **BE CIRCULATED** to the local area MPPs.

Minute Item No. 6.4
CAO 7-2021
Communications Overview

That Report CAO 7-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Communications Overview, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the report from the Boulevard Strategy Group entitled “Communications Overview” attached as Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE RECEIVED**;
2. That the principles articulated in Section 5.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE ADOPTED** as a frame for considering options to reorganize the communication work of the Region;
3. That further analysis of the potential options proposed in Section 6.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE UNDERTAKEN** in the context of the development of a communication masterplan for the Region and against the principles articulated in Section 5.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021;
4. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to report back to Council before the end of the year on the status of the development of the communication masterplan and on the analysis of potential options for consolidation of the communications functions of the Region;
5. That Council **APPROVE** the retention of consulting services to assist with the development of the communications masterplan and organizational options for communication functions within the Region with funding to be found within the current budget of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer; and
6. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to continue to find opportunities in all communication portfolios to engage in new partnerships, improve communication strategic alignment as an enterprise, improve processes, procedures and services, and that progress be reported on as part of the report back noted in recommendation 4 above.

Minute Item No. 7.2
CLK 4-2021
Mandatory Lobbyist Registry

That Report CLK 4-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Mandatory Lobbyist Registry **BE RECEIVED**; and

That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide a report on the costs of the establishment of a mandatory Lobbyist Registry with enforcement, including staffing, technology requirements, processes, necessary by-law and Code of Conduct changes, and options for a Lobbyist Registrar and that considerations for the establishment of a Lobbyist Registry form part of the budget proposals for 2022.

Minute Item No. 7

Consent Items for Information

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

CSC-C 15-2021

COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Corporate Services

CSC-C 16-2021

Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board Response to Councillor Information Request Respecting Report CSD 17-2021 - 2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report

Minute Item No. 10.1

Confidential Report CSD 28-2021

A Matter Respecting Litigation and A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor-Client privilege under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Carillion Canada Inc. v. RMON re NRPS Headquarters and 2 District

That Confidential Report CSD 28-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting A Matter Respecting Litigation and A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor-Client privilege under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Carillion Canada Inc. v. RMON re NRPS Headquarters and 2 District, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

Minute Item No. 10.2

Confidential Report CSD 29-2021

A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor Client Privilege and Respecting Litigation under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Summary of Civil Lawsuits Commenced Against The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region), Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Niagara Regional Housing (NRH)

That Confidential Report CSD 29-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor Client Privilege and Respecting Litigation under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Summary of Civil Lawsuits Commenced Against The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region), Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Niagara Regional Housing (NRH), **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE
OPEN SESSION**

**CSC 5-2021
Wednesday, May 12, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Niagara Region Headquarters
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in the Council Chamber: Foster (Committee Chair)

Committee Members Present via Video Conference: Bradley (Regional Chair), Butters, Campion, Diodati, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Gale, Heit, Ip, Redekop, Rigby, Whalen (Committee Vice-Chair)

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: M. Elia, Technology Support Analyst, H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer, N. Early, Director, Corporate Strategy and Innovation, T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, Corporate Services, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: D. Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair, Dr. M.M. Hirji, Acting Medical Officer of Health/Commissioner, Public Health & Emergency Services, K. Lotimer, Legislative Coordinator, S. McElhone, Director, Organizational & Foundational Standards, F. Meffe, Director, Human Resources, B. Menage, Director, Procurement & Strategic Acquisitions, C. Ogunniyi, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program Manager, D. Rurak, Director, Asset Management, D. Vanecko, Director, Clinical Services, B. Wilson, Legal Counsel, N. Wolfe, Director, Construction, Energy & Facilities, S. Wood, Legal Counsel, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

1. CALL TO ORDER

Committee Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

2. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING PURSUANT TO THE *RETAIL BUSINESS HOLIDAYS ACT***

Application for Tourism Exemption under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* - Lowe's Store, 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls

At 9:31 a.m., Committee Chair Foster called the public participation meeting pursuant to the *Retail Business Holidays Act* to order.

The Committee Chair advised that the purpose of the meeting was to receive comments and answer questions from the public regarding the application for tourism exemption under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* from Lowe's store - 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls.

The Committee Chair stated that, in accordance with regional policy, public notice of the meeting was advertised on the Region's website on April 9, 2021, in accordance with notice provisions (at least 10 days prior to this meeting - Corporate Policy - Public Notice - C-RC-005). Additionally, public notice was advertised in the Niagara Falls Review on April 10, 2021.

3.1 **Registered Speakers**

The Committee Chair advised that there were no registered speakers for today's meeting and that members of the public could submit written comments after the public meeting by sending them to the Regional Clerk.

3.2 **Report for Consideration**

3.2.1 CLK 5-2021

Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* - Lowe's Store - McLeod Road, City of Niagara Falls

Moved by Councillor Gale
Seconded by Councillor Whalen

That Report CLK 5-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* – Lowe's Store – 7959 McLeod Road, City of Niagara Falls, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the application from Lowe's store, requesting a tourism exemption under the *Retail Business Holidays Act*, to permit the store located at 7959 McLeod Road, in the City of Niagara Falls, to open on all statutory holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., **BE APPROVED**; and

2. That the necessary by-law **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Regional Council for consideration.

Carried

3.3 Adjournment of the Public Participation Meeting under the Retail Business Holidays Act

The Committee Chair declared the public participation meeting pursuant to the *Retail Business Holidays Act* adjourned at 9:39 a.m.

4. **PRESENTATIONS**

There were no presentations.

5. **DELEGATIONS**

There were no delegations.

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

6.1 CSD 27-2021

Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) 1 District – Amending Agreement with Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd.

Moved by Councillor Fertich
Seconded by Councillor Ip

That Report CSD 27-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) 1 District – Amending Agreement with Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd., , **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract of \$17,111,289 (including 13% HST) awarded to Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd. (“Merit”) **BE INCREASED** by \$53,221 (including 13% HST) for a total revised Contract of \$17,164,510 (including 13% HST) for the construction of the NRPS 1 District Facility in St. Catharines;
2. That the Gross Budget for Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) 1 District Facility in St. Catharines **BE INCREASED** by \$47,927 and that the increase **BE FUNDED** from the Capital Variance – Levy Project; and
3. That the Regional Chair and the Regional Clerk **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute an amendment to the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract between Niagara Region and Merit as proposed in Recommendation 1 above.

Carried

6.2 CLK 6-2021

Community Member Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Moved by Councillor Diodati

Seconded by Councillor Fertich

That Report CLK 6-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Community Member Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendation **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the recommended community member appointments for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, contained in Confidential Appendix 1 to Report CLK 6-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

6.3 CSC-C 17-2021

Referred Motion - Municipal Act Revisions for Code of Conduct Violations

Moved by Councillor Butters

Seconded by Councillor Redekop

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa Integrity Commissioner found that a Member of Ottawa City Council engaged in “incomprehensible incidents of harassment” involving job candidates and staff;

WHEREAS the Municipal Act, 2001 does not provide a mechanism to have a Councillor vacated from their seat despite any acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa has sent correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001, to address such acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the Women’s Advisory Committee is supportive of requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001 to address these matters;

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has opened a formal consultation process to invite members of public and municipalities to provide comments on ways to strength codes of conduct; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has released a position statement regarding this consultation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions be made to the Municipal Act, 2001, that would provide for the vacating of the seat of a member of council who has been found on clear and convincing evidence to have committed serious misconduct;
2. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** AMO's position in regards to this matter; and
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to actively participate, on behalf of Regional Council, in the ongoing provincial consultation on this matter.

The following friendly **amendment** was accepted by the Committee Chair and the mover and seconder of the motion as follows:

4. That the letter from the Regional Chair BE CIRCULATED to the local area MPPs.

The Committee Chair called the vote on the motion, as amended, as follows:

That Correspondence Item CSC-C 17-2021, being a memorandum from A-M Norio, Regional Clerk, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Referred Motion - Municipal Act Revisions for Code of Conduct Violations, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions be made to the Municipal Act, 2001, that would provide for the vacating of the seat of a member of council who has been found on clear and convincing evidence to have committed serious misconduct;
2. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** AMO's position in regards to this matter;
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to actively participate, on behalf of Regional Council, in the ongoing provincial consultation on this matter; and
4. That the letter from the Regional Chair **BE CIRCULATED** to the local area MPPs.

Carried

6.4 CAO 7-2021
Communications Overview

Natalie Early, Director, Corporate Strategy and Innovation, provided information respecting Communications Overview. Topics of the presentation included:

- Core communications functions in municipal government
- Current state of core communications functions
- Operating needs and obligations
 - Public Health
 - Other operating departments
- Proposed Guiding Principles
- Potential Options
- Conditions for Success

Moved by Councillor Edgar
Seconded by Councillor Campion

That Report CAO 7-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Communications Overview, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the report from the Boulevard Strategy Group entitled “Communications Overview” attached as Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE RECEIVED**;
2. That the principles articulated in Section 5.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE ADOPTED** as a frame for considering options to reorganize the communication work of the Region;
3. That further analysis of the potential options proposed in Section 6.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE UNDERTAKEN** in the context of the development of a communication masterplan for the Region and against the principles articulated in Section 5.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021;
4. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to report back to Council before the end of the year on the status of the development of the communication masterplan and on the analysis of potential options for consolidation of the communications functions of the Region;
5. That Council **APPROVE** the retention of consulting services to assist with the development of the communications masterplan and organizational options for communication functions within the Region with funding to be found within the current budget of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer; and

6. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to continue to find opportunities in all communication portfolios to engage in new partnerships, improve communication strategic alignment as an enterprise, improve processes, procedures and services, and that progress be reported on as part of the report back noted in recommendation 4 above.

Carried

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Report CLK 4-2021 was dealt with separately as follows:

7.2 CLK 4-2021

Mandatory Lobbyist Registry

Moved by Councillor Ip

Seconded by Councillor Rigby

That Report CLK 4-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Mandatory Lobbyist Registry **BE RECEIVED** for information.

The following friendly **amendment** was accepted by the Committee Chair, and the mover and seconder of the motion, so the motion reads as follows:

That Report CLK 4-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Mandatory Lobbyist Registry **BE RECEIVED**; and

That staff BE DIRECTED to provide a report on the costs of the establishment of a mandatory Lobbyist Registry with enforcement, including staffing, technology requirements, processes, necessary by-law and Code of Conduct changes, and options for a Lobbyist Registrar and that considerations for the establishment of a Lobbyist Registry form part of the budget proposals for 2022.

The Committee Chair called the vote on the motion, as amended, and declared it,

Recorded Vote:

Yes (14): Bradley, Butters, Campion, Diodati, Easton, Edgar, Fertich, Foster, Gale, Heit, Ip, Redekop, Rigby, Whalen.

No (0).

Carried

7. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Gale
Seconded by Councillor Redekop

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

CSC-C 15-2021
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Corporate Services

CSC-C 16-2021
Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board Response to Councillor
Information Request Respecting Report CSD 17-2021 - 2020 Year-End Results
and Transfer Report

Carried

8. OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Former Niagara Regional Police (NRP) 1 District Property

Moved by Councillor Rigby
Seconded by Councillor Heit

That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide a verbal update at the Corporate
Services Committee meeting being held on June 16, 2021, respecting the
former NRP 1 District Office site located at 68 Church Street.

Carried

9. CLOSED SESSION

Committee did not resolve into closed session.

10. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

10.1 Confidential Report CSD 28-2021

A Matter Respecting Litigation and A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor-Client privilege under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Carillion Canada Inc. v. RMON re NRPS Headquarters and 2 District

Moved by Councillor Whalen

Seconded by Councillor Edgar

That Confidential Report CSD 28-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting A Matter Respecting Litigation and A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor-Client privilege under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Carillion Canada Inc. v. RMON re NRPS Headquarters and 2 District, **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

10.2 Confidential Report CSD 29-2021

A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor Client Privilege and Respecting Litigation under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Summary of Civil Lawsuits Commenced Against The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region), Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Niagara Regional Housing (NRH)

Moved by Councillor Gale

Seconded by Councillor Ip

That Confidential Report CSD 29-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting A Matter of Advice that is Subject to Solicitor Client Privilege and Respecting Litigation under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Summary of Civil Lawsuits Commenced Against The Regional Municipality of Niagara (Niagara Region), Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Niagara Regional Housing (NRH), **BE RECEIVED** and the recommendations contained therein, **BE APPROVED**.

Carried

10.3 Confidential Appendix to Report CLK 6-2021

A Matter Respecting Personal Matters About Identifiable Individuals under s. 239 (2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 - Recommended Citizen Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

This item was dealt with under Minute Item 6.2.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Councillor Foster
Committee Chair

Kelly Lotimer
Legislative Coordinator

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Subject: Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* – Lowe’s – 7959 McLeod Road, City of Niagara Falls

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Report CLK 5-2021, respecting Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* – Lowe’s – 7959 McLeod Road, City of Niagara Falls, **BE RECEIVED**;
2. That the application from Lowe’s store, requesting a tourism exemption under the *Retail Business Holidays Act*, to permit the store located at 7959 McLeod Road, in the City of Niagara Falls, to open on all statutory holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., **BE APPROVED**; and
3. That the necessary by-law **BE PREPARED** and **PRESENTED** to Regional Council for consideration.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek Committee’s approval for the application for tourism exemption, under the *Retail Business Holidays Act*, to permit Lowe’s store located at 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls, to open on all statutory holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- Documentation supporting this application, received from the City of Niagara Falls, in response to the Region’s request for comments, is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations.

Analysis

An application received from Lowe's, 7959 McLeod Road, Niagara Falls, requests a tourism exemption under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* to permit the store to open on all statutory holidays, except Christmas Day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

This application has been processed in accordance with By-law No. 6728-92, being a by-law to establish procedures and fees for the processing of applications for holiday openings for tourism under the *Retail Business Holidays Act* and related Ontario Regulation 711/91. The application is available as Appendix 1 to this report.

By-law 6728-92 requires that a public meeting be held in order that any interested persons have the opportunity to comment on the application. A notice of the public meeting respecting this application was posted on the Region's website on April 9, 2021, and in the Niagara Falls Review on April 10, 2021.

On April 8, 2021, a letter was sent to the Clerk of the City of Niagara Falls requesting comments regarding this application. Correspondence dated April 22, 2021, received from the City of Niagara Falls, in support of this request for the tourism exemption for Lowe's, is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

The following two requirements of "Tourism Criteria" in O. Reg. 711/91. s. 2, must both be met by the applicant:

- a) The tourist attractions which the retail establishment must be "within 2 km" of are "natural", "outdoor recreational", "historical", "cultural, multi-cultural or educational" as defined in s. 2 of O. Reg. 711/91. The applicant has stated that Lundy's Lane historical district, and related shopping, hotel and recreational venues are located within two kilometres of the Lowe's store.
- b) The applicant may be exempted from closing on holidays if "it is directly associated with the tourist attraction or relies on tourists visiting the attraction for business on a holiday." The applicant has stated that Lowe's sells many items that are in demand for those travelling to Niagara Falls by automobile. Goods and services provided directly to tourists include recreational products, electric cords and chargers, cleaning supplies, gift items and garden items. In addition, Lowe's offers many products and services that assist the retail, recreation, accommodation and arts establishments that service tourism in Niagara Falls to meet the needs of the tourists who use their facilities.

Alternatives Reviewed

Council could decide not to approve this application for a Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings for this store.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report aligns with Council's Strategic Priority of Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth, specifically Economic Growth and Development (Strategic Objective 1.1).

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P. Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1	Application for Tourism Exemption
Appendix 2	Letter of Support from the City of Niagara Falls

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

APPLICATION FOR TOURISM EXEMPTION

RE HOLIDAY OPENINGS

The undersigned hereby applies to the Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara for an exempting by-law under subsection 4(1) of the Retail Business Holidays Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter R. 30.

If more than one person carrying on retail business is represented in this application, please list information for each on a separate page and attach to form.

Pursuant to the Regulations under the Act, an application relating to a retail business establishment that on days other than holidays normally uses a total area of 2,400 square feet or more for serving the public or normally has four or more employees serving the public shall be made only by that business establishment.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE AND ADD EXTRA PAGES, IF NECESSARY)

PART 1 – APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Type of applicant (please check one):

- ☒ one or more person carrying on retail business in the Regional Municipality of Niagara
- ☐ an association, whether or not incorporated, representing persons carrying on retail business in the Regional Municipality of Niagara
- ☐ a council of a local municipality

2. Name of Applicant: LOWE'S
COMPANIES CANADA, ULC

Mailing Address of Applicant: 220, Chemin du Tremblay, Boucherville, Québec, J4B 8H7
(Lowe's Canada Head Office)

Telephone No. of Applicant: (905) 374-5520 (Store Fax No.
Manager)

Email Address of Applicant: avisjuridiques-
legalnotices@lowes.ca

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

3. Applicant's Authorized Agent (to whom all correspondence will be sent) Mary Ellen Bench Counsel

Mailing Address of Applicant: Dentons Canada LLP
77 King Street West
Suite 400, TD Centre
Toronto, Ontario
M5K 0A1

Telephone No. of Applicant 416-863-4724 Fax No. 416-863-4592

Email Address of Applicant maryellen.bench@dentons.com

4. Location of Retail Business Establishment

Municipal Address	Street	Lowe's Niagara Falls
Number, Municipality		7959 McLeod Road
		Niagara Falls, Ontario
		L2H 0G5

5. If you wish the exemption to apply to one or more classes of retail business establishments, please define and specify the classes:

Total No. of Sq. Ft. normally used for serving the public: 103,995 square feet

Total No. of Employees normally serving the public: 175 employees

PART II – TOURISM CRITERIA

Tourist attractions are limited to:

- a) Natural attractions or outdoor recreational attractions;
- b) Historical attractions; and
- c) Cultural, multi-cultural or educational attractions.

The two (2) kilometre restriction set out in the Regulations to the Act does not apply to a retail business establishment located in a local municipality within the Regional of Niagara, having a population of less than 50,000.

1. Is business located within two kilometres of a tourist attraction? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, describe the nature of tourist attraction:

Lundy's Lane historical district, and related shopping, hotel and recreational venues.

2. Describe nature of direct association with the tourist attraction or reliance on tourists visiting the attraction for business on a holiday

Tourism is the most important business in the City of Niagara Falls, and a major source of employment in the Region. Lowes sells many items that are in demand for those travelling to Niagara Falls by automobile. In addition, Lowes offers many products and services that assist the retail, recreation, accommodation, and arts establishments that serve tourism in Niagara Falls to meet the needs of the tourists who use their facilities. In addition, Lowes plays an important role in assisting local residents who work in the tourism industry and who must work on statutory holidays, to acquire the goods and services they need for their homes conveniently, given the proximity of the store to the tourism areas of Niagara Falls, most notable Lundy's Lane and Stanley Avenue. The location of Lowes makes it convenient to access the broader tourism areas of Niagara Falls as well.

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

3. Where the application involves a business that one days other than holidays normally uses a total area of 2,400 square feet or more for serving the public, or normally has four or more employees serving the public, please outline the goods or services provided primarily to tourists.

Goods and services provided directly to tourists include recreational products, electric cords and chargers, cleaning supplies, gift items, garden items, and almost everything in the store can be purchased for home delivery. Goods or services that primarily benefit tourists are also provided to restaurants, stores, inns, etc.

This section relates only to applications to grant exemptions on an area basis.

4. a) In what local municipality is it located?

- b) Describe subject area (in words):

(Please attach a map or sketch)

- c) How many businesses are included in this application?
- d) Are all the retail business establishments in the described area within two kilometres of the tourist attraction?
- e) Does the area exceed that necessary to encompass all of the retail business establishments for which an exemption is sought?
- If not, explain how it does not:
- f) How many of the businesses are directly associated with the tourist attraction or rely on tourists visiting the tourist attraction for business on a holiday? (Regulations to the Act require at least 25% of the businesses)
- g) If application is submitted by an association, describe briefly the purpose of the association, the area and type of businesses it represents.

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

PART III – GENERAL

1. Indicate which holidays, and which specific times or specific number of hours you wish to be open on those holidays:

7:00am to 9:00pm, on all holidays except Christmas

2. Is request seasonal in nature, e.g. summer months only?

If yes, what time period is sought?

N/A

3. What is the justification in relation to the seasonal nature, if any, of the tourist attraction, for the time period sought in the exemption?

4. Is request related to a special event?

NOTE: A retail business establishment may be exempted for up to five holidays a year during which a fair, festival or other special event (but not solely a parade) is being held in that municipality.

For what holidays is exemption being sought?

All holidays. The nature of the business means our goods and services are needed to support the tourism industry regardless of holidays. Our gardening supplies and nursery stock should also be available to the public regardless of holidays.

Describe special event, duration and time of year

5. Indicate how the exemption would, if granted, be for the maintenance or development of tourism and briefly identify other material submitted with this application that supports this conclusion:

Tourism is the most important economic generator for the City of Niagara Falls and the industry employs many from the whole of the Niagara Region, both directly and indirectly. Located close the Lundy's Land heritage district, the Lowes store provides goods that are in demand by tourists, but it also contributes significantly to providing for the goods and services needed to support and maintain the hotel, restaurant, recreational and restaurant industries. Their needs do not stop on statutory holidays, and having Lowes nearby allows the tourism businesses to meet their needs without delay. Also, the many who work in these businesses benefit from having the local Lowes store open to meet their needs on a day they are off work or by picking up an item on the way to or from work.

- 6 -

Approximately 20% of the store PRO sales can be attributed to maintenance items for restaurants, inns, stores that are part of the tourism industry, which is in excess of \$2 million annually in sales.

6. What justification is there for the opening of the retail business establishment(s) on holidays in light of the principle, stated in the Retail Business Holidays Act, that holidays should be maintained as common pause days?

Niagara Falls is unique as a world tourism site and has always been an exception to restrictions on store opening laws as a result. The needs of the tourism industry must be met regardless of whether a day is a statutory holiday.

On April 4, 2020 the Ontario government produced a list of essential service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lowes meets the criteria as an essential service in multiple ways: as a store that sells hardware products and safety supplies, and as a business that supplies other essential businesses and services such as the hotel/motel industry, related to tourism. The important role played by Lowes in supplying goods and services is significant, as recognized by the Province. In addition, Lowes is a retailer of Gardening equipment and nursery stock, items that are meant to be available to the public, regardless of holidays.

EXECUTION BY APPLICANT

I, Antonio Cioffi, of the board of directors of Lowe's Compagnies Canada, ULC do solemnly declare that all of the statements contained in this application are true and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously, believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.

Declared before me

Manon Labelle

In the Province of Québec,

this 22 day of March, 2021


(Applicant)

Manon Labelle
Commissioner of oaths
A Commissioner, etc.



Bill 6715, as amended by By-law No. 19-2010

APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORIZED AGENT

I, Antonio Cioffi, hereby appoint Mary Ellen Bench of Dentons Canada LLP to act as Lowe's Companies Canada, ULC authorized agent in this Application.

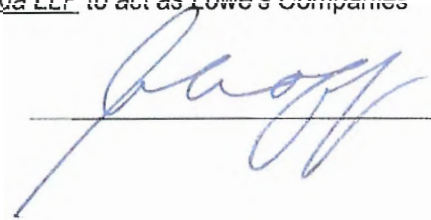
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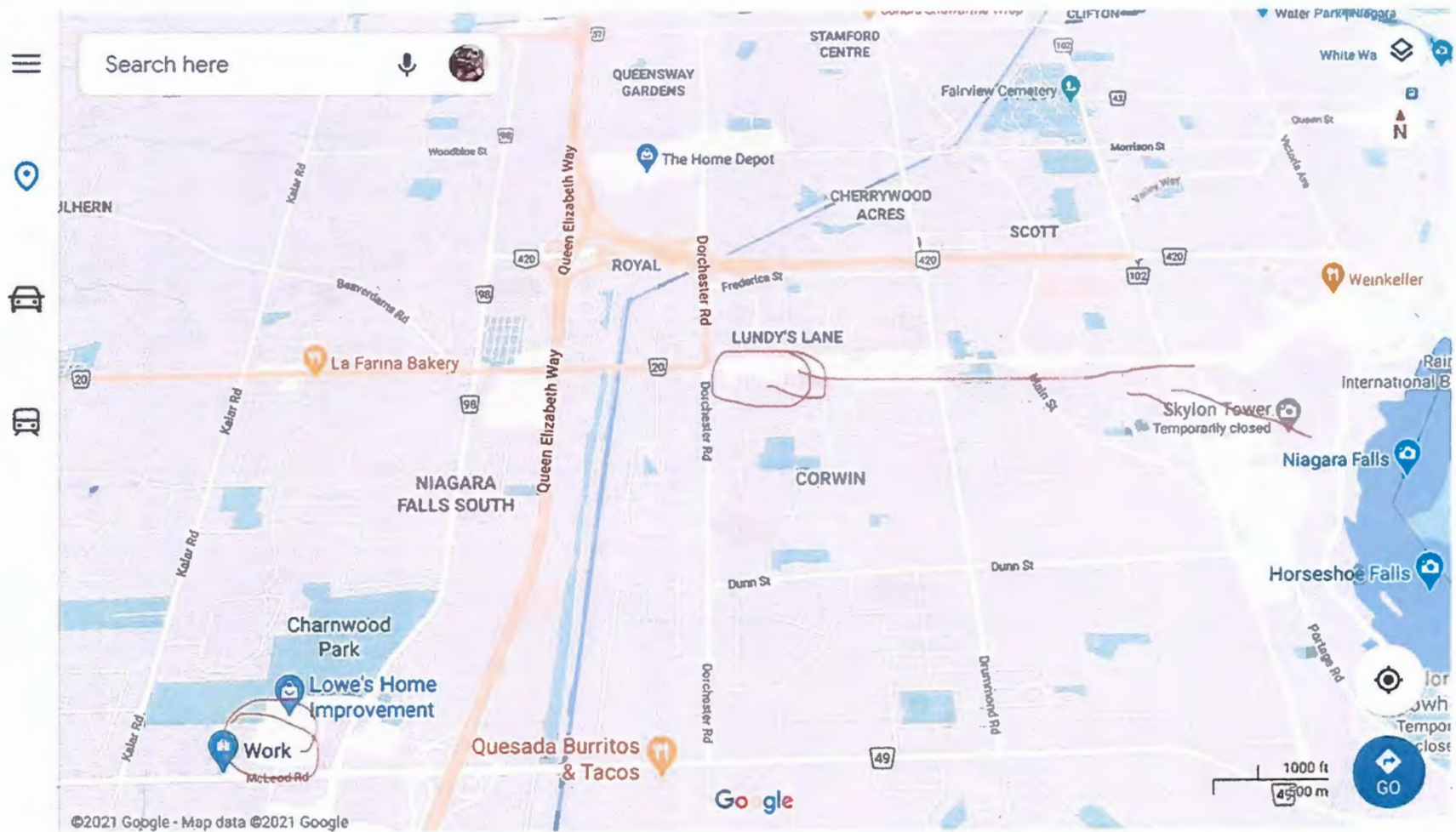
Sharon Weathe

Signed:

Date:

March 22, 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Antonio Cioffi', is written over a horizontal line.



From: Heather Ruzylo <hruzylo@niagarafalls.ca>
Sent: Thursday, April 22, 2021 5:15 PM
To: Norio, Ann-Marie <Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca>
Cc: Bill Matson <billmatson@niagarafalls.ca>; Heather Ruzylo <hruzylo@niagarafalls.ca>
Subject: City of Niagara Falls' Council Approved: Support for Tourist Exemption for Retail Holiday Openings

Ann-Marie:

Please be guided by the following motion that was approved at the City of Niagara Falls' Council meeting on April 20, 2021:

ORDERED on the motion of Councillor Wayne Thomson, Seconded by Councillor Victor Pietrangelo that Council support the Tourist Exemption for Retail Holiday Openings request.

Regards,

Heather Ruzylo | Clerks & Council Services Coordinator | Clerks Services | City of Niagara Falls
4310 Queen Street | Niagara Falls, ON L2E 6X5 | (905) 356-7521 ext 4203 | Fax 905-356-9083 | hruzylo@niagarafalls.ca



CLERKS DEPARTMENT

Inter-Departmental Memo

To: Mayor James M. Diodati & Members of Council
From: Bill Matson, City Clerk
Date: April 20, 2021
Re: Tourist Exemption for Retail Holiday Openings

Whether a business is allowed to open on a statutory holiday is determined by Provincial Legislation known as *The Retail Business Holidays Act*.

The Act does not allow holiday openings except for certain exemptions, which are outlined in the Act.

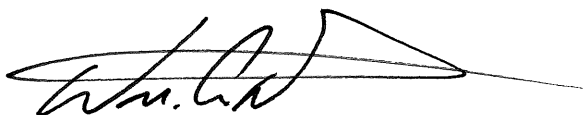
There is a process to apply for a tourist exemption through the Clerks Office at the Region. There is a fee and the Region will hold a public meeting to be held before the Region's Corporate Services Committee on Wednesday May 12, 2021.

The regulations of the legislation state that a retail establishment looking to open on a statutory holiday has to be located within 2km of a tourist attraction and relies on tourists visiting the attraction for business on a holiday. Most applications for such an exemption in Niagara Falls have been approved on the basis that just about every location could be argued to be catering to Tourist in the City.

The Regional Clerks Office has asked the City for its comments on the attached application for Lowe's in Niagara Falls to be open on all holiday's, with the exception of Christmas Day.

As a tourist community, where many businesses are already open on statutory holidays, there seems to be less of a desire to maintain the former "pause" days under the legislation. Council has supported other similar requests of this nature.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council support the request.





Administration

Office of the Regional Clerk

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 1042, Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Telephone: 905-685-4225 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215 Fax: 905-687-4977

www.niagararegion.ca

April 8, 2021

Mr. Bill Matson, City Clerk
City of Niagara Falls
City Hall, P.O. Box 1023
4310 Queen St.
Niagara Falls, ON
L2E 6X5

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Dear Mr. Matson:

Re: Request for Comments on Application for Tourism Exemption for Holiday Openings – Lowe's, 7959 McLeod Road, Niagara Falls.

Attached is an application received from the Lowe's store located at 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls, requesting a tourism exemption under the Retail Business Holidays Act to permit the store to open on all statutory holidays (with the exception of Christmas Day) from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

I kindly request that you arrange to provide me comments from the City of Niagara Falls regarding this application by Monday, April 26, 2021, for inclusion in the staff report for the Public Meeting to be held before the Region's Corporate Services Committee on Wednesday, May 12, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann-Marie".

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk
:kl

CLK-C 2021-057

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

APPLICATION FOR TOURISM EXEMPTION

RE HOLIDAY OPENINGS

The undersigned hereby applies to the Council of the Regional Municipality of Niagara for an exempting by-law under subsection 4(1) of the Retail Business Holidays Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter R. 30.

If more than one person carrying on retail business is represented in this application, please list information for each on a separate page and attach to form.

Pursuant to the Regulations under the Act, an application relating to a retail business establishment that on days other than holidays normally uses a total area of 2,400 square feet or more for serving the public or normally has four or more employees serving the public shall be made only by that business establishment.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE AND ADD EXTRA PAGES, IF NECESSARY)

PART 1 – APPLICANT INFORMATION

1. Type of applicant (please check one):

- ☒ one or more person carrying on retail business in the Regional Municipality of Niagara
- ☐ an association, whether or not incorporated, representing persons carrying on retail business in the Regional Municipality of Niagara
- ☐ a council of a local municipality

2. Name of Applicant: LOWE'S
COMPANIES CANADA, ULC

Mailing Address of Applicant: 220, Chemin du Tremblay, Boucherville, Québec, J4B 8H7
(Lowe's Canada Head Office)

Telephone No. of Applicant: (905) 374-5520 (Store Fax No.
Manager)

Email Address of Applicant: avisjuridiques-
legalnotices@lowes.ca

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

3. Applicant's Authorized Agent Mary Ellen Bench
 (to whom all correspondence Counsel
 will be sent)
- Mailing Address of Applicant: Dentons Canada LLP
 77 King Street West
 Suite 400, TD Centre
 Toronto, Ontario
 M5K 0A1
- Telephone No. of Applicant 416-863-4724 Fax No. 416-863-4592
- Email Address of Applicant maryellen.bench@dentons.com
4. Location of Retail Business Establishment
- Municipal Address Street Lowe's Niagara Falls
 Number, Municipality 7959 McLeod Road
 Niagara Falls, Ontario
 L2H 0G5
5. If you wish the exemption to apply to one or more classes of retail business establishments,
 please define and specify the classes:
- Total No. of Sq. Ft. normally used for serving the public: 103,995 square feet
- Total No. of Employees normally serving the public: 175 employees

PART II – TOURISM CRITERIA

Tourist attractions are limited to:

- a) Natural attractions or outdoor recreational attractions;
- b) Historical attractions; and
- c) Cultural, multi-cultural or educational attractions.

The two (2) kilometre restriction set out in the Regulations to the Act does not apply to a retail business establishment located in a local municipality within the Regional of Niagara, having a population of less than 50,000.

1. Is business located within two kilometres of a tourist attraction? Yes ☒ No ☐

If yes, describe the nature of tourist attraction:

Lundy's Lane historical district, and related shopping, hotel and recreational venues.

2. Describe nature of direct association with the tourist attraction or reliance on tourists visiting the attraction for business on a holiday

Tourism is the most important business in the City of Niagara Falls, and a major source of employment in the Region. Lowes sells many items that are in demand for those travelling to Niagara Falls by automobile. In addition, Lowes offers many products and services that assist the retail, recreation, accommodation, and arts establishments that serve tourism in Niagara Falls to meet the needs of the tourists who use their facilities. In addition, Lowes plays an important role in assisting local residents who work in the tourism industry and who must work on statutory holidays, to acquire the goods and services they need for their homes conveniently, given the proximity of the store to the tourism areas of Niagara Falls, most notable Lundy's Lane and Stanley Avenue. The location of Lowes makes it convenient to access the broader tourism areas of Niagara Falls as well.

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

3. Where the application involves a business that one days other than holidays normally uses a total area of 2,400 square feet or more for serving the public, or normally has four or more employees serving the public, please outline the goods or services provided primarily to tourists.

Goods and services provided directly to tourists include recreational products, electric cords and chargers, cleaning supplies, gift items, garden items, and almost everything in the store can be purchased for home delivery. Goods or services that primarily benefit tourists are also provided to restaurants, stores, inns, etc.

This section relates only to applications to grant exemptions on an area basis.

4. a) In what local municipality is it located?

- b) Describe subject area (in words):

(Please attach a map or sketch)

- c) How many businesses are included in this application?
- d) Are all the retail business establishments in the described area within two kilometres of the tourist attraction?
- e) Does the area exceed that necessary to encompass all of the retail business establishments for which an exemption is sought?

If not, explain how it does not:

- f) How many of the businesses are directly associated with the tourist attraction or rely on tourists visiting the tourist attraction for business on a holiday? (Regulations to the Act require at least 25% of the businesses)
- g) If application is submitted by an association, describe briefly the purpose of the association, the area and type of businesses it represents.

Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

PART III – GENERAL

1. Indicate which holidays, and which specific times or specific number of hours you wish to be open on those holidays:

7:00am to 9:00pm, on all holidays except Christmas

2. Is request seasonal in nature, e.g. summer months only?

If yes, what time period is sought?

N/A

3. What is the justification in relation to the seasonal nature, if any, of the tourist attraction, for the time period sought in the exemption?

4. Is request related to a special event?

NOTE: A retail business establishment may be exempted for up to five holidays a year during which a fair, festival or other special event (but not solely a parade) is being held in that municipality.

For what holidays is exemption being sought?

All holidays. The nature of the business means our goods and services are needed to support the tourism industry regardless of holidays. Our gardening supplies and nursery stock should also be available to the public regardless of holidays.

Describe special event, duration and time of year

5. Indicate how the exemption would, if granted, be for the maintenance or development of tourism and briefly identify other material submitted with this application that supports this conclusion:

Tourism is the most important economic generator for the City of Niagara Falls and the industry employs many from the whole of the Niagara Region, both directly and indirectly. Located close the Lundy's Land heritage district, the Lowes store provides goods that are in demand by tourists, but it also contributes significantly to providing for the goods and services needed to support and maintain the hotel, restaurant, recreational and restaurant industries. Their needs do not stop on statutory holidays, and having Lowes nearby allows the tourism businesses to meet their needs without delay. Also, the many who work in these businesses benefit from having the local Lowes store open to meet their needs on a day they are off work or by picking up an item on the way to or from work.

- 6 -

Approximately 20% of the store PRO sales can be attributed to maintenance items for restaurants, inns, stores that are part of the tourism industry, which is in excess of \$2 million annually in sales.

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Niagara Falls is unique as a world tourism site and has always been an exception to restrictions on store opening laws as a result. The needs of the tourism industry must be met regardless of whether a day is a statutory holiday.

On April 4, 2020 the Ontario government produced a list of essential service providers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lowes meets the criteria as an essential service in multiple ways: as a store that sells hardware products and safety supplies, and as a business that supplies other essential businesses and services such as the hotel/motel industry, related to tourism. The important role played by Lowes in supplying goods and services is significant, as recognized by the Province. In addition, Lowes is a retailer of Gardening equipment and nursery stock, items that are meant to be available to the public, regardless of holidays.

EXECUTION BY APPLICANT

I, Antonio Cioffi, of the board of directors of Lowe's Compagnies Canada, ULC do solemnly declare that all of the statements contained in this application are true and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously, believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.

Declared before me

Manon Labelle

In the Province of Québec,

this 22 day of March, 2021

(Signature)
(Applicant)

Manon Labelle.
Commissioner of oaths
A Commissioner, etc.



Bill 6715, *as amended by By-law No. 19-2010*

APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORIZED AGENT

I, Antonio Cioffi, hereby appoint Mary Ellen Bench of Dentons Canada LLP to act as Lowe's Companies Canada, ULC authorized agent in this Application.

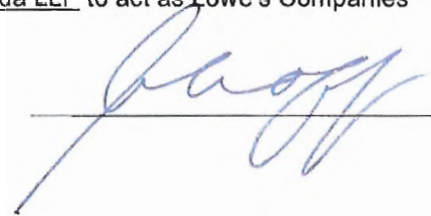
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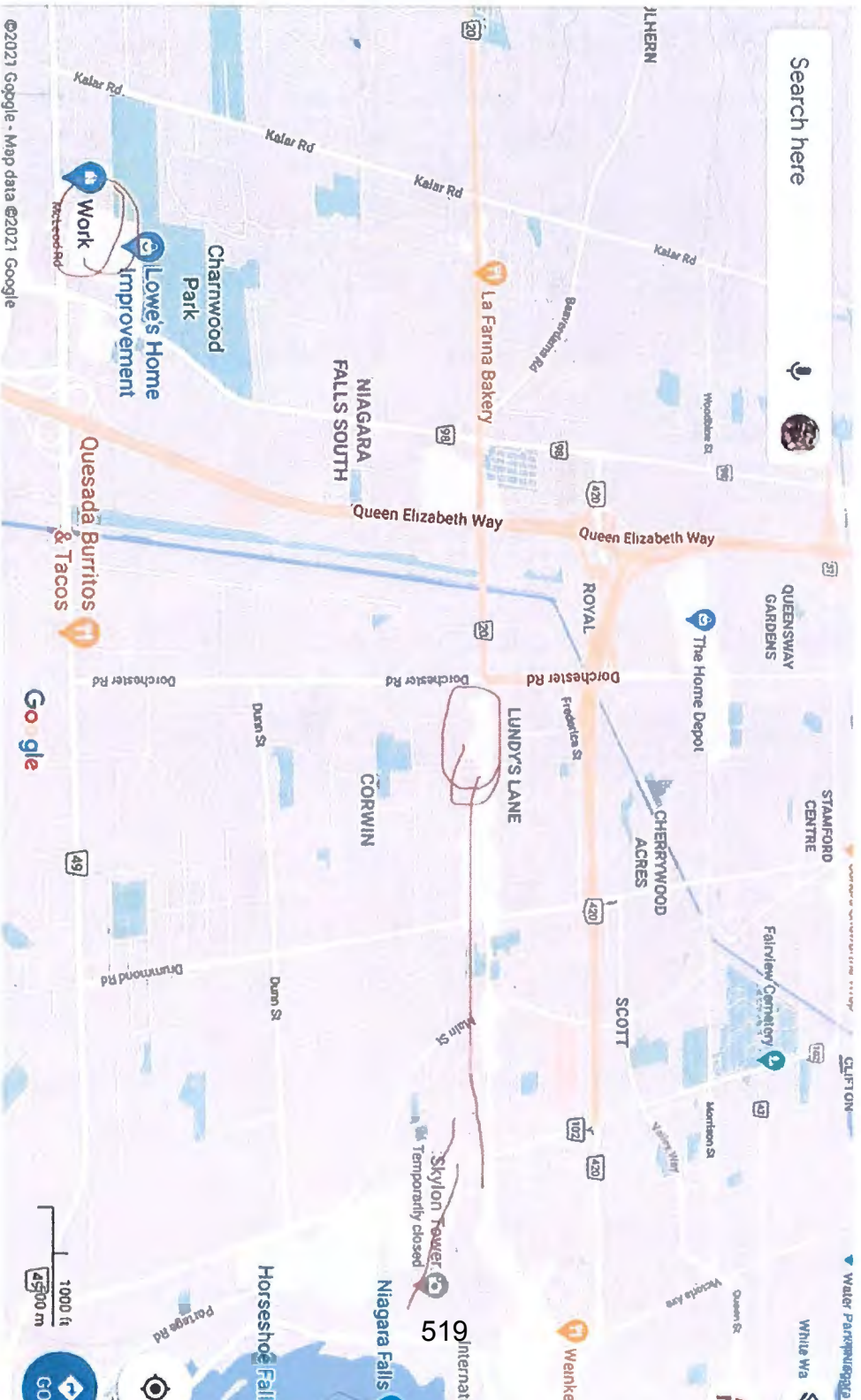
Sharon Wadde

Signed:

Date:

March 22, 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Cioffi', written over a horizontal line.



Subject: Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) 1 District – Amending Agreement with Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd.

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract of \$17,111,289 (including 13% HST) awarded to Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd. (“Merit”) **BE INCREASED** by \$53,221 (including 13% HST) for a total revised Contract of \$17,164,510 (including 13% HST) for the construction of the NRPS 1 District Facility in St. Catharines;
2. That the Gross Budget for Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) 1 District Facility in St. Catharines **BE INCREASED** by \$47,927 and that the increase **BE FUNDED** from the Capital Variance – Levy Project; and
3. That the Regional Chair and the Regional Clerk **BE AUTHORIZED** to execute an amendment to the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract between Niagara Region and Merit as proposed in Recommendation 1 above.

Key Facts

- On March 1, 2019 Niagara Region entered into a CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract with Merit, in the amount of \$16,761,290 (\$14,833,000 base contract plus 13% HST) for the construction of the new NRPS 1 District facility in St. Catharines.
- On December 9th, 2020 CSD 77- 2020 was approved to increase Merit’s contract by \$350,000 (including 13% HST), for a total revised Contract of \$17,111,290 (including 13% HST).
- On April 5th, 2021, Merit submitted a Change Notice entitled “Covid 19 Protocols Project Duration”, seeking compensation for additional costs incurred due to Covid-19.
- Last month, the NRPS 1 District facility achieved Substantial Completion and NRPS staff have moved in and are operating out of the new facility.
- The cumulative value of the CCDC-2 Stipulated Price Contract, inclusive of the proposed amendment, will exceed \$5,000,000 and therefore requires the authorization of Regional Council in accordance with Niagara Region’s procurement By-law 02-2016 as amended on February 28, 2019 pursuant to Section 18 (c) and Schedule B.

Financial Considerations

Pursuant to CSD 13-2019, Council approved the award of Contract 2018-T-23 for the construction of the NRPS 1 District facility in St. Catharines to Merit Contractors Niagara Ltd. for \$15,094,090 (inclusive of non-refundable HST). Below is a schedule showing the history of increases on this contract.

Contract	Inclusive of 1.76% Non-refundable HST	Inclusive of 13% HST
Contract Award (2018-T-23)	\$15,094,090	\$16,761,290
Council Approved Contract Increase (CSD 77-2020)	\$315,187	\$349,999
Revised Total Contract	\$15,409,277	\$17,111,289
Pending Contract Increase	\$47,927	\$53,221
Pending Revised Total Contract	\$15,457,204	\$17,164,510

Region Staff confirms there are not sufficient funds in the project budget (20000805) to address the latest proposed increase to Merit's contract. The increase of \$47,927 will be used to address costs that have arisen outside of normal construction that are related to delays caused by COVID-19. The increase will be tracked as a COVID-19 related cost.

The proposed increase of \$47,927 will be funded from the Capital Variance – Levy Project. Staff confirms the current balance of uncommitted funds in the Capital Variance – Levy Project is \$2,685,871 as of April 8. The total funds added to this project via the Capital Variance – Levy Project prior to the current request was \$3,346,254. Council approval is required per the Budget Control By-Law for the \$47,927 increase due to the prior Capital Variance – Levy Project funding for this project exceeding \$250,000.

Analysis

On April 3rd, 2020 the Province of Ontario announced a Province-wide shut down of all non-essential construction related projects, putting a stop to construction on the NRPS 1 District site from April 6th, 2020 to May 4th, 2020. Once the shutdown period ended,

the province mandated additional requirements for face coverings, hand washing, and physical distancing on construction sites in order to slow the spread of Covid-19.

As a result of the shut-down and mandated requirements, Merit submitted a request for extra for COVID related costs including: demobilizing / re-mobilizing and securing the site during the one month shut-down, additional cleaning facilities, extension of insurance and bonding requirements and equipment rentals. In addition, the pace of work was impacted due to additional cleaning requirements and social distance protocols restricting the number of trade staff allowed on the site at a given time.

Alternatives Reviewed

Throughout the NRPS 1 District project, Region staff have worked diligently to mitigate extra costs and with the exception of the COVID related costs, the project will be delivered within budget.

In consultation with the Prime Consultant, Region staff reviewed the extra costs submitted by Merit and have deemed them to be reasonable and fair. In order to ensure safe working conditions on the site and due to provincial orders, Merit incurred additional costs that could not be avoided nor could they have been anticipated at the time of tender. As such, staff is recommending increasing the contract amount for Merit as per the financial section.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Approving this recommendation by staff will align with Council's Strategic Priority to:

- Promote a Healthy and Vibrant Community; and
- Reasonable Growth and Infrastructure Planning.

Other Pertinent Reports

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • CSD 13 – 2019 | Corporate Service Committee | February 20 th , 2019 |
| • CSD 77 – 2020 | Corporate Service Committee | December 9 th , 2020 |

Prepared by:

Nicole Menard
Senior Project Manager
Construction, Energy & Facilities
Management

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Nicole Menard, Senior Project Manager; and reviewed by Bradley Ray, Associate Director, Facilities Projects, Assets & Energy Management; Adam Niece, Program Financial Specialist; and Nicole Wolfe, Director, Construction, Energy & Facilities Management.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – NRPS 1 District Total Estimated Project Cost

Appendix 2 – NRPS 1 District Total Approved Budget

Total Estimated Project Cost (20000805 & 10PR1420)*	Revised Council Approved Budget (as per CSD 77-2020)	Budget Decrease/ Reallocation	Revised Council Approved Budget	Expended & Committed as of 04/08/21	Contract Award/ Forecast	Budget Remaining
	(A)	(B)	(C) = (A) + (B)	(D)	(E)	(F) = (C) - (D) - (E)
Construction (including Construction Contingency and 1.76% non-refundable HST) (a)	15,409,277	47,927	15,457,204	15,409,278	47,926	(0)
Project Contingency (b)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Property Acquisition (c)	1,359,321	-	1,359,321	1,359,321	-	-
Consulting Services (d)	1,513,276	-	1,513,276	1,407,550	170,213	(64,488)
Permitting (e)	54,369	-	54,369	54,369	-	-
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (f)	395,476	-	395,476	386,433	-	9,043
Project Management (In-House) and Operations (g)	220,405	-	220,405	132,763	32,197	55,445
Property Remediation (h)	1,653,991	-	1,653,991	1,653,991	-	-
Total Estimated Project Cost	20,606,115	47,927	20,654,042	20,403,706	250,336	(0)
Project Funding Sources						
Regional reserves & debt	(17,069,312)		(17,069,312)	(16,818,976)	(250,336)	0
NRPS Capital Levy	(189,870)		(189,870)	(189,870)		-
Capital Interest Closeout	(679)		(679)	(679)		-
Capital Variance Project - Levy	(3,346,254)	(47,927)	(3,394,181)	(3,394,181)		-
	(20,606,115)	(47,927)	(20,654,042)	(20,403,706)	(250,336)	0

*All costs include 1.76% non-refundable HST
** Total Contract Award is equal to i) \$15,189,833 before tax; ii) \$15,457,204 including 1.76% non-refundable HST; iii) \$17,164,510 including 13% HST

Niagara Regional Police Service - 1 District
Total Approved Budget

CSD 27- 2021
May 12, 2021
Appendix 2

Column1	Total Budget
<u>Total Budget (20000805 & 10PR1420)</u>	
Approved Budget - 2009	14,736,000
CSD 2-2018 NRPS D1 Initiation	2,483,991
CSD 13-2019 Approved Capital Variance Request	3,346,254
Transfer from NRPS Capital Reserve	39,870
Revised Budget	20,606,115
CSD 27-2021 Capital Variance Request*	47,927
Final Revised Budget	20,654,043

*Council approval required due to total capital variance requests for project exceeding \$250,000

Subject: Community Member Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the recommended community member appointments for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, contained in Confidential Appendix 1 to Report CLK 6-2021, **BE APPROVED**.

Key Facts

- On December 17, 2020, Council endorsed the establishment of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee.
- Subsequently on February 25, 2021 (CLK 1-2021), Council endorsed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, which confirmed the composition of the committee to include up to 10 citizen members and one (1) Regional Councillor.
- Staff utilized a selection process that was consistent with the approved Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, which also included notifying the public in a manner consistent with other committees, including websites and social media channels, and collecting applications that included a series of relevant questions for interested community members.
- This report outlines the process followed to make the recommended selections from the pool of interested candidates for appointment to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

Financial Considerations

There are no new financial considerations at this time.

Analysis

According to the Terms of Reference, the goal of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (DEIAC) is to address bias and discrimination and its negative impacts on quality of life, safety, health, and inclusion for the diverse communities in Niagara providing a safe place for all people to voice their opinions in order to work together to promote and foster understanding and inclusion in Niagara.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Advise and provide recommendations on the development and review of policies and procedures to ensure they reflect Niagara Region's commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion within the organization, and within the community
- Engage and facilitate discussions with community groups to achieve a greater understanding of the strengths and needs of residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities to identify opportunities for collaboration and support between groups, recognizing that each diverse group will require unique approaches and solutions
- Collaborate with other civic agencies and local community groups and partners including the initiation and development of relevant programs, services, events, and projects identifying opportunities for education, collaboration, support, and engagement to promote equity, inclusion, and the elimination of discrimination

To conduct the selection process, an application form to solicit interested citizens was posted on the Niagara Region website and communicated through social and print media. There was a three (3) week application period which ended on April 9, 2021 at 4pm. Eighty-three (83) applications in total were received during that time from interested community members.

The applications were scored by a three person panel, made up of the Director and a Program Manager from Corporate Strategy and Innovation, and a member of the Niagara Region Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group. The panel used a predetermined scoring matrix that directly correlated with the objectives of the DEIAC. The matrix consisted of points being allotted with relevant weightings in the following categories.

- Expressed motivation to be on the Committee (20)
- Understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion (10)
- Experience making a space or place more welcoming or inclusive (15)
- Community collaboration experience (15)

- Leadership abilities (15)
- Previous board/committee experience (10)

Candidates were also requested to share demographic information including municipality, gender, and if they identify with the following groups to ensure membership recommendations modeled a breadth of diversity for the committee.

- Ethnocultural or linguistic diversity
- Racialized communities or People of Colour
- Francophone
- New Immigrants
- Indigenous
- 2SLGBTQQA+
- Individuals with physical or mental disabilities
- Seniors or Older Adults
- People experiencing low income or homelessness
- Post-Secondary or Youth
- Faith or Religious Affiliation

The panel individually scored each candidate. The top scoring candidates were reviewed collectively by the panel and through consensus, eight (8) qualified candidates were identified that represent the diverse geography and characteristics of the community and provide a diverse lens and skill set with which to deliver the Committee's objectives. The additional two (2) community members will be representatives from the Women's Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Based on the strong results of the scoring, staff are recommending the appointment of eight (8) community members to the Committee, the list of whom can be found in Confidential Appendix I of this report.

Alternatives Reviewed

Not applicable

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The creation of the DEIAC supports Regional Council's Strategic Priorities by **Supporting Business and Economic Growth**, as research indicates that culturally

diverse regions are more innovative and economically prosperous. The recommendations, advice, and information provided by this committee will strengthen the Region's ability to create a safe and inclusive community for the increasingly diverse populations living in Niagara, which promotes a **Healthy and Vibrant Community**. The DEIAC will help foster a more **Sustainable and Engaging Government** by enhancing Council's ability to provide innovative, and inclusive customer-focused services through reaching and maximizing the assets of Niagara's diverse community members.

Other Pertinent Reports

- [CAO 23-2020](#) – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee Recommendations
- [CAO 14-2019](#) - Actions & Resources to Join the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
- [COM 14-2019](#) - Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CCMARD)
- [CLK 1-2021](#) - Establishment of Diversity Related Advisory Committees

Prepared by:

Cassandra Ogunniyi
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program
Manager
Corporate Strategy and Innovation

Recommended by:

Natalie Early
Director
Corporate Strategy and Innovation

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Mike Ogunlaja, Project Manager, Water Waste Water Engineering, and reviewed by Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk.

Appendices

CLK 6-2021 Confidential Appendix 1: Recommended Community Member Appointments to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee

MEMORANDUM

CSC-C 17-2021

Subject: Referred Motion - Municipal Act Revisions for Code of Conduct Violations

Date: May 12, 2021

To: Corporate Services Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

At its Special meeting held on April 22, 2021, Regional Council referred the following motion to the Corporate Services Committee:

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa Integrity Commissioner found that a Member of Ottawa City Council engaged in “incomprehensible incidents of harassment” involving job candidates and staff;

WHEREAS the Municipal Act, 2001 does not provide a mechanism to have a Councillor vacated from their seat despite any acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa has sent correspondence to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001, to address such acts of serious misconduct;

WHEREAS the Women’s Advisory Committee is supportive of requesting revisions to the Municipal Act, 2001 to address these matters;

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has opened a formal consultation process to invite members of public and municipalities to provide comments on ways to strength codes of conduct; and

WHEREAS the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has released a position statement regarding this consultation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing requesting revisions be made to the Municipal Act, 2001, that would provide for the vacating of the seat of a member of council who has been found on clear and convincing evidence to have committed serious misconduct;
2. That Regional Council **ENDORSE** AMO's position in regards to this matter; and
3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to actively participate, on behalf of Regional Council, in the ongoing provincial consultation on this matter.

Members will recall that a similar motion was previously considered by Council at its meeting held on March 25, 2021, and was also referred to the Corporate Services Committee. At that time, the Province had yet to release information on the provincial consultation process. CWCD 2021-91(attached), was provided to Regional Council on April 16, 2021, via the Council Weekly Correspondence Distribution and includes information respecting the consultation process on municipal codes of conduct. As part of that consultation, AMO has provided their position on the matter (attached as Appendix 1).

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Sent via email to: minister.mah@ontario.ca

February 3, 2021

The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
College Park, 17th Floor,
777 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Clark,

Re: Options for Enforcing Compliance by Council Members with Municipal Codes of Conduct

I am writing to you in response to your inquiry at the December MOU meeting as to whether AMO might provide input into a potential council member recall mechanism. I appreciate being able to provide you with some input on behalf of the Association. To do so, I am taking the unusual step of attaching the motion approved recently by AMO's Board, expanded upon in the text of this letter to explain the rationale for our recommendations and the detailed legislative, regulatory, and municipal policy changes needed to put them in place.

As I know you are aware, the subject of enforcing Codes of Conduct for democratically elected members of a council or legislature is an important issue. It is also one in which striking the correct balance is both difficult and critical to preserving accountability and confidence in the electoral system. Since your inquiry, AMO has been working to examine options that improve accountability to the electorate with reasonable actions that can help to promote and ensure good behaviour amongst elected officials. Our staff have consulted with municipal legal experts and conferred with staff at your Ministry. Our Executive Committee and Board of Directors have also discussed the issue and potential recommendations. The input I am presenting you for consideration reflects development and refinement at each of those stages.

I can tell you that our Board had detailed discussions and informed opinions were voiced on all sides of this issue. With that said, our Board reached a general consensus that municipal Codes of Conduct and the system to enforce them are strong governance tools but that municipal governments needed a better ability to ensure compliance with these Codes that all elected officials agree to when they take office.

Ultimately, the Board strongly endorsed the need to create additional interim options to enforce council member behaviour as well as the ultimate ability to remove a council member in the most egregious breaches of a municipal Code of Conduct.

These options build on the current removal criteria for council members of criminal conviction or missing three consecutive council meetings.

Guiding Principles

The AMO Board endorsed several principles to guide our conversations and analysis. We think they are relevant to any actions the Ministry may consider regarding changes to compliance mechanisms for council members. As a result, I am presenting them to you in this letter so that you can understand how our recommendations were formed and for your consideration as you work on any policy development in this area. AMO will weigh any policy changes in accordance with the principles. The most significant ideas behind these principles are respect for municipal government as a democratic institution including municipal electors, evolution of current mechanisms, practicality and acknowledgement that enforcing criminal law is a separate task from the Code of Conduct compliance matters being considered here.

The principles AMO believes most relevant are:

- **Subsidiarity and accountability to electorate** – decisions taken at the closest level of their impact and local electors must be consulted/decisions respected.
- **Mature municipal governments** – councils should decide and implement sanctions, not other orders of government.
- **Clear link to municipal governance** – process and actions encourage compliance with governance policies and insulated from vexatious claims and political grievances/reprisals.
- **Practicality** – can the outcome be achieved affordably in a term of office.
- **Respects other legal processes** – does not replace criminal conviction which results in forfeit of a council seat.

Removal by Minister and Recall by Voters

As we applied these principles, AMO considered the two options that have been presented through recent public discussions in Ontario. They are: removal of a council member by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and voter recall. As the Board considered these options, it became evident that they did not meet the principles of respect for municipal government institutions and voters, subsidiarity, and practicality. As a result, the Board elected not to recommend these as actions for policy development.

Code of Conduct Enforcement and Integrity Commissioners

The Board preferred to recommend an alternative to the previous options that it felt enhanced the current mechanisms in place to incent compliance with behavioural

codes and also allow recommendation of suspension or removal in some circumstances, subject to process. AMO's Board felt that the introduction of municipal Integrity Commissioners, reporting as officers of council governance, offered the best option for enhanced compliance with Codes of Conduct, with new enhancements to powers and processes through regulation and municipal policy. The rationale for this is that the Board believes that these Codes are mutually agreed upon covenants that all members of council agree to uphold upon election and that it is fair to hold members accountable to each other and the public for their compliance with them.

In particular, the Board believes that the introduction of municipal Integrity Commissioners has been largely successful but that better education and standardization of the role, where appropriate, is needed to improve performance across the province. The Board also felt that the fact these officers are employed by councils and already empowered to investigate breaches in Codes of Conduct provided a useful foundation consistent with the need to respect local governments and our electors. Subsequent powers would render them even more useful to uphold principles agreed to by public office holders.

Administrative Monetary Penalties

Despite their current relevance, some particular changes to legislation and regulations are needed to enhance the Integrity Commissioner's role to enforce Codes of Conduct to give it more tools to do so. The Board recommends that the *Municipal Act* be amended to allow Administrative Monetary Penalties to be applied to council members where violations of Codes of Conduct have been found through an Integrity Commissioner's report. To allow these penalties and create a framework for their application, regulations under the *Municipal Act* should also be filed to create a range of penalties that can be applied throughout the province.

The Board was keen to ensure that the differences in municipal governments were reflected and recommends that such a regulation should also require each municipal council to establish an Administrative Monetary Penalty Policy with respect to Code of Conduct violations that can account for such variances as council remuneration, local economic circumstances and institutional culture. These penalties should only be applied after the conclusion of a public report of an Integrity Commissioner has documented violations of Codes of Conduct and recommends the application of these consequences to council.

Suspension

While Administrative Monetary Penalties were felt to have merit, AMO's Board also discussed the need to be able to suspend and, in some cases, remove a member of council in more specified and limited situations. The Board considered that suspensions of council members for a specified and limited time could be warranted in situations where that member's participation in certain council decisions could have deleterious consequences to public health or safety, such as during an emergency.

The current response to the pandemic is one such situation that such an action may be taken where public discourse and disagreement about the existence of COVID-19 and use of public health measures have been openly discussed. Once again, the members of AMO's Board believe that such an action should only be taken where a member's participation in a meeting or meetings is immediately or imminently likely to make response to an emergency situation or other health and safety threat very challenging or impossible.

Removal from Office

In the most significant situations, the Board believes that there should be the ability to remove members of council when the most significant breaches of Codes of Conduct are found. This would need to be separate from any criminal proceedings that may otherwise arise. In such cases, it would be appropriate for a council to seek intervention by a member of the judiciary to remove a council member where a report of a municipal Integrity Commissioner recommends such action for serious, willful and/or repeated significant violations of a Code of Conduct adopted by the municipality and agreed to by council members. Removal of a councillor by a member of the bench would of course require a legal appeal mechanism and should not necessarily disqualify a person from running in a subsequent election.

Education and Standardization

Finally, the Board recommended that better education and standardization, where appropriate, of the skillset of Integrity Commissioners should be pursued over time. To do so, the Board recommended that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing develop resources for current and prospective Integrity Commissioners to improve access for councils to quality and consistent resources across Ontario. To do so, the Ministry could begin to build a continuous improvement regime for qualifications/skill sets of a Commissioner that would be common to each office holder regardless of their location.

Additionally, the Board discussed the need to educate council members through on-boarding by municipal officials after an election. Municipal staff will need to update their materials for new and returning members to reflect any changes to the regime. Also, for prospective members of council AMO's educational offerings for candidates should be updated to ensure that they understand the roles of Integrity Commissioners, compliance with Codes of Conduct and other necessary knowledge before they submit their nominations. As well, we would ask that MMAH's Councillor Guide also be so updated.

Conclusion

AMO's Board had a thorough and detailed discussion based on the research conducted by our organization and the experiences of our members. The Board is aware that it is recommending significant changes to the role played by Integrity

Commissioners as well as the conventions that have bound democratically elected municipal officials in Ontario for decades or more. While it was felt that recall and removal of council members by the voter or Minister respectively did not meet the test of the principles we agreed to, we believe that more can and must be done to help ensure municipal government continues to enjoy the confidence of our electors.

The recommendations put forward in this letter and the rationales for them have the potential to do so in a measured manner. We trust you will consider our thoughts and advice in this complex matter. We are happy to discuss them as you move forward with any action to improve Code of Conduct compliance.

Sincerely,



Graydon Smith
AMO President
Mayor of the Town of Bracebridge

cc: Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Options for Enforcing Compliance with Municipal Codes of Conduct Amongst Council Members

Motion:

That the Board of Directors of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario endorse the provision of advice to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to consider the following options to enforce compliance with Municipal Codes of Conduct amongst members of municipal council.

That the Board direct the President to write to the Minister with the Board's advice for strengthening enforcement of municipal Codes of Conduct for council members, as follows:

That section 223.2 (3) of the *Municipal Act* be amended to allow Administrative Monetary Penalties to be levied in the event that breaches of a municipal Code of Conduct are found through an Integrity Commissioner's investigation and published in a report;

That the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing issue regulations under the *Municipal Act* authorizing municipal governments to adopt a policy for Administrative Monetary Penalties specifying a financial range of penalties for application by Integrity Commissioners in Code of Conduct breaches;

That the regulation specifies a range of financial thresholds for these penalties and a range of suspension timeframes that municipal governments can choose from to suit their local circumstances;

That an Integrity Commissioner's report into a council member's conduct be disseminated to the electors of that office through publication or other means;

That the powers of Municipal Integrity Commissioners be expanded to enforce compliance with a Municipal Code of Conduct to include:

- The levying of an Administrative Monetary Penalty for a violation of a Code of Conduct provision, subject to a municipal policy adopted by a Council specifying penalty ranges;
- Suspension of a council member for a specified time where the council member's attendance at council is affecting the ability of council to make necessary decisions in the interest of the public such as during an emergency;
- Referral to a member of the judiciary with a recommendation to consider removing a councillor from office where continued and serious violations of the Code of Conduct have been documented; and

That MMAH provide funding and resources to improve the education and performance of Integrity Commissioners to create norms and standards in the office holders to improve councillor and public acceptance and trust.

From: Ontario News <newsroom@ontario.ca>

Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 3:20 PM

To: Norio, Ann-Marie <Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca>

Subject: Ontario Now Accepting Public Feedback to Strengthen Municipal Codes of Conduct



News Release

Ontario Now Accepting Public Feedback to Strengthen Municipal Codes of

April 14, 2021

Province launches online survey as it undertakes the consultation process

TORONTO — The Ontario government has launched a [90-day consultation](#) to obtain feedback on how to strengthen municipal codes of conduct. With the support of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the province is working to better ensure that municipalities, councillors and heads of council maintain a safe and respectful workplace.

Jill Dunlop, the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues is holding roundtables with a variety of municipal stakeholders on how to strengthen accountability measures for members.

"Our government has been absolutely clear that we will not tolerate workplace harassment or discrimination of any kind," said Associate Minister Dunlop. "It's critical that everyone knows there are accountability measures in place for members who violate municipal codes of conduct. Our consultation will help determine what changes, if any, are required to ensure everyone can feel safe and respected in the workplace."

The government is also collecting feedback on AMO's recommendations for holding municipal councillors accountable, including increased financial penalties, suspension for certain violations, removal from office in certain circumstances, and better training and standards for integrity commissioners. This feedback is critical to ensuring effective accountability measures are put in place for members of council who violate their municipal code of conduct.

"Municipal councils are looking for new tools and new measures to address modern challenges in local government," said AMO President Graydon Smith. "Where there are serious code of conduct violations, municipal councils need the authority to take actions that are measured, appropriate and effective."

Comments for the consultation are welcome through the online survey by July 15, 2021. Anyone can participate in the online survey to provide feedback. Municipalities are also encouraged to provide official feedback through the online survey. This is another step the Ontario government is taking to hold members who violate codes of conduct accountable for creating unsafe work environments.

"I encourage every Ontarian to participate in this process and share their thoughts and comments on how to bring effective accountability to municipal governments," said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "We must ensure that the right tools are available and that above all people feel safe and supported."

QUICK FACTS

- Workers, supervisors and employers have rights and duties when dealing with workplace violence and harassment. Ontario has [a guide](#) that explains what every worker, supervisor, and employer needs to know about workplace violence and workplace harassment.
- Under the [Municipal Act, 2001](#), all municipalities are required to establish a code of conduct for councillors and certain local boards. They are also required to provide access to an integrity commissioner.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Consultation: Strengthening accountability for municipal council members.](#)
- [Municipal Councillor's Guide](#) for more information on codes of conduct.

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

<http://www.ontario.ca/municipalaffairsandhousing>

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Niagara Region Communications Overview

Report CAO 7-2021

Corporate Services Committee

May 12, 2021

Regional Council Motion – April 22, 2021

1. Provide a report to the Corporate Services Committee for its May 12, 2021, meeting on the potential reorganization of the core communication resources found in all departments of Niagara Region, including Public Health, with a view to creating a unified strategic communications entity; and
2. Determine what memorandums of understanding and/or service level agreements may be necessary to satisfy the needs of provincial funders in regard to any communications positions in Public Health paid for, wholly or partially, by the Ministry of Health.

Frame for Analysis and Report Outline

- Role of communications in the municipal sector and core functions
- Current state – resources across the organization
- Operational needs and obligations
- Proposed guiding principles
- Options for further consideration
- Conditions for success
- Recommendations

Municipal communications support business objectives related to...

- Build public trust
- Engage the community
- Provide information on programs and services
- Public safety during emergencies
- Change behaviours
- Attract business and investments
- Build employee engagement

Core communications functions in municipal government

Public Relations

Includes media relations, digital media, issues management, crisis communications, tracking, monitoring and reporting against KPIs.

Client Advisory

Specialized support dedicated and tailored to specific needs of internal clients/ operating departments. Includes internal communications planning, advice and support.

Creative Services

Includes visual identity and related standards, graphic design, web design, photography and videography. Accountable for effective, consistent and modern visual branding.

Public Engagement

Strategies, guidelines and platforms for coordinated public engagement campaigns. Ensures all feedback is available on a corporate-wide basis.

Current state:

Core communications resources

Strategic Communications and Public Affairs

- 8 permanent positions, 1 temporary position
- Funded through municipal levy

Public Health Communications and Public Engagement

- 8 permanent positions, 2 temporary full-time, 1 temporary part-time
- Majority funded through 70/30 funding contributions from the province

Other Operating Departments

- 2 positions in Public Works, funded through rate budgets for water/wastewater and waste management
- 1 position in Economic Development providing external marketing and promotion for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) strategy

Operating needs and obligations

Public Health

- Medical Officer of Health has duty to speak out on public health concerns (per *Campbell Commission Report* and *Health Protection and Promotion Act*)
- Support requirements within *Ontario Public Health Standards 2018*
- In order to continue to receive 70% provincial funding, positions would need to be 100% dedicated to public health outcomes
- Specialized knowledge of foundational health promotion approaches

Operating needs and obligations

other operating
departments

- Support legislative requirements associated with relevant Acts and Regulations
- Close collaboration with operating departments and specialized knowledge of business requirements
- Support for internal communications
- In order to continue to use rate budgets, Public Works positions would need to be 100% dedicated to water/wastewater and waste management
- Economic Development position dedicated to external investment attraction, close alignment with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) strategy
- Consideration of the development of the new communication master plan

Proposed Guiding Principles

- Strive to be recognized as best in class in public sector communications
- Value for money
- Consistency from the corporation
- Independent voice for Medical Officer of Health
- Timely and dependable information
- Clear, consistent and reliable communication channels with Members of Council
- Enhance collaborative communication with partner organizations
- Comply with funding source requirements

Potential Options

Further analysis
required prior to
selection

1. Central coordination with some decentralized resources
2. Reporting relationship change only
3. Integration of some core communications functions
4. Integration of all core communications resources

Conditions for Success

Under any model

- Further analysis and due diligence – opportunity to link this work with the development of the communication masterplan
- Documented service agreements with internal clients
- Continuity in leadership philosophy
- Minimal service disruption during pandemic third wave and attention to employee morale
- Balance between strategy and tactics

Questions?

Contact:

Natalie Early

Director, Corporate Strategy and Innovation

natalie.early@niagararegion.ca

Subject: Communications Overview

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the report from the Boulevard Strategy Group entitled “Communications Overview” attached as Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE RECEIVED**;
2. That the principles articulated in Section 5.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021 **BE ADOPTED** as a frame for considering options to reorganize the communication work of the Region;
3. That further analysis of the potential options proposed in Section of 6.0 **BE UNDERTAKEN** in the context of the development of a communication masterplan for the Region and against the principles articulated in Section 5.0 of Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021;
4. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to report back to Council before the end of the year on the status of the development of the communication masterplan and on the analysis of potential options for consolidation of the communications functions of the Region;
5. That Council **APPROVE** the retention of consulting services to assist with the development of the communications masterplan and organizational options for communication functions within the Region with funding to be found within the current budget of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer; and
6. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to continue to find opportunities in all communication portfolios to engage in new partnerships, improve communication strategic alignment as an enterprise, improve processes, procedures and services, and that progress be reported on as part of the report back noted in bullet 4 above.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to fulfill the direction of Regional Council’s April 24, 2021, Motion related to enhancing and supporting Niagara Region’s public facing communications.

- The information in this staff report, and the consultant report attached as Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021, provide information on the current service delivery model and considerations for potential changes with a view to consolidation.
- The information provided in the consultant's report is an overview only and is not a comprehensive review.
- One of the priority projects in the Strategic Plan is the development of a communications masterplan. An RFP is planned to be released in August 2021. It is recommended that any changes to the organization of communication resources in the Region be informed by this masterplan.

Financial Considerations

It is recommended that staff issue an RFP in support of the development of the communications masterplan and organizational options for communication resources. Funding for this initiative will be found from within the current budget allocation of the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer. No further funding is requested at this time.

Analysis

At the April 24, 2021 Regional Council meeting, Regional Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a report to the Corporate Services Committee on a potential reorganization of the core communications resources found in all departments of Niagara Region, including Public Health, with a view to creating a unified strategic communications entity. This report was to be delivered to Corporate Services Committee for discussion at their May 12, 2021 meeting. A full version of the Regional Council motion is included in the report attached as Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021.

Given the short timeframes associated with Regional Council's direction, staff engaged Boulevard Strategy Group to prepare a communications overview report that provides current context and considerations for potential changes to the Region's communications service delivery model. This report, attached under Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021, outlines the following information:

- Role of communications in the municipal sector
- Core communications functions in municipal government
- Current state of communications resources across Niagara Region (centralized division, Public Health, other departments)
- Operational needs and obligations

- Proposed guiding principles
- Potential options for further consideration
- Conditions for success under any model

The report is a point in time snapshot and summary of considerations collected and reported over a six-day timeframe during the week of May 3.

In addition to the work completed by Boulevard Strategy Group, staff contacted colleagues in the following municipalities regarding their communications models: the Regions of Durham, Peel, Halton, Waterloo, York and the City of Hamilton. This research found that the Regions of Peel, Halton, and the City of Hamilton deliver communications through a completely centralized model. The Regions of Durham, Waterloo and York have both a centralized division and some decentralized resources, including decentralized resources in Public Health. See Appendix 2 to Report CAO 7-2021 for further details.

Alternatives Reviewed

Staff have not conducted a comprehensive analysis of options. Potential options that would be considered as part of a thorough review, should Regional Council wish to proceed further, are included under Section 6.0 of the report attached as Appendix 1 to Report CAO 7-2021.

Conclusions

One of the priority projects in the Strategic Plan is the development of a communications masterplan. To ensure the best alignment for the Region to achieve its communication objectives, it is recommended that any changes to the organization of communication resources in the Region be informed by this masterplan.

To ensure that Council sees progress on this file, it is further recommended that staff report back to Council before the end of the year on the status of the development of the communication masterplan and on the analysis of potential options for consolidation of the communications functions of the Region.

In the spirit of continuous improvement and in respect for Council's Motion on enhancing the Region's public facing communications, staff will continue to find opportunities in all communication portfolios to engage in new partnerships, improve

communication strategic alignment as an enterprise, improve processes, procedures and services, and will report on progress as part of the report back on the development of the communications masterplan.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Research and analysis associated with the delivery of communications services relates to the fourth pillar of Regional Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities, Sustainable and Engaging Government.

The development of a communications master plan is a priority project in the Implementation Plan of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan

Other Pertinent Reports

N/A

Prepared by:

Natalie Early
Director Corporate Strategy and Innovation

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P. Eng
Acting, Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team and the Medical Officer of Health.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Boulevard Strategy Group Report, "Communications Overview"
Appendix 2	Environmental Scan of Communication Organizations In Other Municipal Jurisdictions



Niagara Region

Communications Overview

Information Report

May 9, 2021

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	4
2.0	The Role of Communications in the Municipal Sector.....	5
2.1.	Supporting Business Objectives.....	5
2.1.1.	<i>Build public trust</i>	5
2.1.2.	<i>Provide information on programs and services</i>	5
2.1.3.	<i>Public safety during emergencies</i>	5
2.1.4.	<i>Change behaviours</i>	6
2.1.5.	<i>Generate revenue and improve service utilization</i>	6
2.1.6.	<i>Attract business and investment</i>	6
2.1.7.	<i>Build employee engagement</i>	6
2.1.8.	<i>Engage the community</i>	7
2.2.	Core Communications Functions in Municipal Government	7
2.2.1.	<i>Public relations</i>	7
2.2.2.	<i>Communications advisory services</i>	7
2.2.3.	<i>Creative services</i>	8
2.2.4.	<i>Public engagement</i>	8
2.2.5.	<i>Leadership</i>	9
2.3.	Adjacent services.....	9
3.0	Niagara Region Communications Resources – Current State	10
3.1.	Centralized Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Division	10
3.1.1.	<i>Mandate and Services</i>	10
3.1.2.	<i>Core Communications Positions</i>	10
3.2.	Public Health Communications.....	11
3.2.1.	<i>Mandate and Services</i>	11
3.2.2.	<i>Core Communications Positions</i>	11
3.3.	Communications Resources in Other Departments	12
3.3.1.	<i>Decentralized positions related to communications</i>	12
3.4.	Non-salary Resources.....	12
4.0	Operational Needs and Obligations.....	13
4.1.	Public Health.....	13
4.2.	Other Operating Departments.....	14
5.0	Proposed Guiding Principles.....	15
5.1.	Niagara Region as a Leader	15
5.2.	Value for Money.....	15
5.3.	Consistency from the Corporation.....	15
5.4.	Independent Voice for Medical Officer of Health	15
5.5.	Timely and Dependable Information	16

5.6.	Notice to Regional Councillors.....	16
5.7.	External Partnership	16
5.8.	Honour Funding Sources.....	16
6.0	Potential Options.....	17
6.1.	Central Coordination with Some Decentralized Communications Resources.....	17
6.2.	Reporting Relationship Change Only	17
6.3.	Integration of Some Core Communications Roles into a Central Delivery Model.....	17
6.4.	Integration of all Core Communications Roles into a Central Delivery Model	17
7.0	Conditions for Success.....	18
8.0	Appendix 1 – Regional Council Motion	20

1.0 Introduction

On April 24, Regional Council directed the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a report to the Corporate Services Committee on a potential reorganization of the core communications resources found in all departments of Niagara Region, including Public Health, with a view to creating a unified strategic communications entity. This report is to be delivered to Corporate Services Committee for discussion at their May 12, 2021 meeting.

A full copy of the resolution is included under Appendix 1 of this report.

While comprehensive, in-depth analysis is not feasible within the short timelines between the resolution and report delivery, this report addresses Regional Council's direction by providing information and context including:

- Role of communications in the municipal sector.
- Core communications functions in municipal government.
- Current state of communications resources across Niagara Region (centralized division, Public Health, other departments).
- Operational needs and obligations.
- Proposed guiding principles.
- Potential options for further consideration.
- Conditions for success under any model.

This report shall not be interpreted as a comprehensive review, but a point-in-time snapshot and operational considerations, collected and reported over a six-day timeframe during the week of May 3, to assist Regional Council in determining whether they wish to proceed with further analysis.

2.0 The Role of Communications in the Municipal Sector

This section provides an overview of why communications are important in municipal government, and the functional responsibilities that are generally involved in executing communications at the municipal level.

2.1. Supporting Business Objectives

Communications resources exist to help the organization meet its business objectives. In the municipal sector, these business objectives generally related to the following:

2.1.1. Build public trust

As public trust in government and the media decline, particularly over the past year,¹ strategic approaches to communications in the municipal sector are more important than ever to dispel misinformation and build credibility.

From a communications perspective, building trust includes both proactive strategies with consistent, reliable and credible information to advance an organization's image, and the ability to quickly mobilize and respond when an organization's reputation is at risk.

2.1.2. Provide information on programs and services

Operating departments typically rely on communications teams to provide accurate, relevant, timely information to the public related to municipal services. Examples of public information requirements may include construction of major capital projects; road closures; service disruptions; service levels for winter maintenance; Council meetings and agendas; notice for public meetings; and budget information. It could also include communications related to community events or facility openings.

2.1.3. Public safety during emergencies

Emergency communications relate to public information that is of an urgent or critical nature and typically pertain to public safety. Given recent public health emergencies associated with COVID-19, there are significant lessons to be leveraged by municipal governments related to what is working well and where there is room for continuous improvement.

¹ Edelman Trust Barometer, 2021. Available at: <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2021-trust-barometer>

Beyond responding to single emergency events, emergency communications require significant preparation to ensure quick response when required, particularly for after hours or extended emergencies.

2.1.4. Change behaviours

Communications professionals support changes in public behaviour, consistent with positive policy outcomes. Examples might include smoking cessation, waste diversion strategies and behavioural changes that contribute to sustainable transportation choices.

2.1.5. Generate revenue and improve service utilization

Some operating functions, such as public transit operators, require support in the form of marketing to drive revenue generation or cost recovery for their operations and encourage service use.

These divisions require targeted and specific marketing support based on best practices within their industries to ensure programs and facilities are filled and revenue is maximized to the greatest extent possible to offset the operating costs associated with their services.

Depending on the specificity of their focus, operating departments that rely on revenue generation may draw either on centralized communications divisions or use their own departmental resources to drive marketing activities.

2.1.6. Attract business and investment

Economic development divisions rely on communications within and outside the business community to support their work in business retention, expansion and attraction.

The extent to which economic development communications requirements draw from centralized corporate communications divisions varies across municipalities. Many economic development divisions have their own in-house or external consulting resources. Others rely on shared services with corporate communications.

2.1.7. Build employee engagement

High employee engagement is a prerequisite for outstanding customer service, and internal communications is a major contributor to employee engagement. While employee engagement is sometimes viewed as a Human Resources or Chief Administrative Office function, to be truly effective employee engagement must be owned by every leader in the organization. As a result, departmental requests for internal communications support have the potential to draw significantly on communications resources.

2.1.8. Engage the community

Communications divisions are often involved when two-way communication is required with members of the public. Some common examples in the municipal sector include budget surveys, online engagement platforms, and innovative approaches to public engagement in the development of a range of policies including Official Plans, secondary plans, departmental master plans and overarching public engagement frameworks and online platforms.

Beyond supporting conversations on corporate issues, communications divisions are increasingly expected to stay engaged in community issues that celebrate civic pride.

2.2. Core Communications Functions in Municipal Government

To support the business objectives listed in section 2.1, municipal communications are often organized according to the following core communications functions.

2.2.1. Public relations

Public relations professionals are focused on building a strong, integrated, positive image for the corporation. Their role includes strategy, development and execution for tactics including:

- Media relations, including developing press releases, pitching stories, media monitoring, tracking and reporting on media coverage, and developing editorial forecasts and calendars based on internal and external opportunities.
- Digital media content, working closely with communications advisory services and creative services to ensure all content meets consistent standards for the organization.
- Digital media tracking and reporting, identifying trends and opportunities for the organization to strengthen its image.
- Issues management and crisis communication when risks involve enterprise-wide issues or span multiple departments.
- Leveraging corporate and community data to drive continuous improvement in public relations activities.

2.2.2. Communications advisory services

Communications advisory services professionals perform as internal consultants for operating departments. Their role is similar to those in the public relations function but tailored to the specific needs of the operating departments they support with less emphasis on overall corporate integration. The role of professionals in this function include:

- Providing advice and support that is tailored to the department or division they support, including issues management, promoting programs and services, and marketing and policy campaigns.
- Working with colleagues in other functions, proactively scan for emerging opportunities to improve departmental communication and develop recommendations for enhancement.
- Ensuring departmental or divisional content is current and up to date on all corporate communications channels including the municipal website.
- Ensuring compliance with internal client service standards and individual service level agreements.
- Ensuring overall high satisfaction for communications activities with internal clients.
- Internal communications – at a corporate level for advisors supporting the Corporate Leadership Team and Corporate Services, and at a departmental level for other advisors.

2.2.3. Creative services

Creative services professionals are accountable for effective visual identity for an organization. Their roles include:

- Ensuring consistent application for visual identity standards, including the corporate logo, across all collateral produced and distributed by the organization.
- Providing graphic design services that meet client needs, resonate with target audiences, are consistent with the corporate brand and consider modern industry best practices and trends.
- Providing or securing videography services.
- Providing or securing photography services.
- Overseeing digital design for web, social media and digital collateral (for example, digital newsletters).
- Developing service level expectations with internal and external printers, photographers and/or other vendors, to ensure design is effectively applied and translated in the production of promotional materials.

2.2.4. Public engagement

Public engagement professionals design strategies and provide tools, support and platforms for two-way communications with members of the public.

- Ensuring all public engagement campaigns and strategies are coordinated and executed according to consistent corporate standards and public participation best practices.
- Working collaboratively with communications advisors to advise internal clients on public engagement strategies to meet business needs and reach target audiences and stakeholders.

- Working collaboratively with creative services colleagues to elevate public engagement campaigns in a way that are appealing to targeted stakeholders.
- Working with business intelligence professionals to ensure all public feedback resulting from engagement campaigns are part of a centralized data source and available on a corporate-wide basis.
- It should be noted that tactical implementation of public engagement, including event management, speaking at public information centres, and attendance at community events, is normally considered an operational function in municipalities of comparable size to Niagara Region.

2.2.5. Leadership

In the municipal sector, the communications leader is accountable for the overall integration of the above functions, demonstrating positive progression on key performance indicators, engagement of a high performing communications team, keeping corporate leadership and Council apprised of issues and successes, and building trust and confidence with key stakeholders and partner organizations in the community.²

2.3. Adjacent services

While at times closely related to communications and engagement, the following adjacent services are not considered core communications and have been omitted from the analysis contained within this report:

- Customer service
- Intergovernmental relations and advocacy
- Political protocol
- Events management

² At Niagara Region these stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the twelve Local Area Municipalities, Brock University, Niagara College, Niagara Health, and private sector partners.

3.0 Niagara Region Communications Resources – Current State

The previous sections have provided information and context related to the general business objectives and communications functions in municipal governments. This section outlines the current organization of communications resources at Niagara Region.

3.1. Centralized Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Division

3.1.1. Mandate and Services

Strategic Communications and Public Affairs provides support and expertise in the areas of public relations, graphic design, web and social media.

The team plays a key role in how members of the public, staff and other levels of government perceive and interact with Niagara Region. Services to internal clients and the corporation include:

- Media relations; issues and reputation management.
- Website management, social media and digital communication tools.
- Advertising and digital analytics.
- Brand management and creative services, including graphic design.
- Strategic communications counsel and planning.
- Public relations research.
- Crisis communications.
- Internal communications.
- Marketing.
- Video production.

3.1.2. Core Communications Positions

There are nine positions devoted to core communications functions within the central Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Division. Eight of these positions are permanent and one position is temporary. All positions are funded through the municipal tax levy.

3.2. Public Health Communications

3.2.1. Mandate and Services

The Public Health Communications and Engagement Team's mandate is to provide innovative, strategic communications services to colleagues in Public Health.

Services include:

- Strategic communications planning
- Graphic design
- Health communications planning
- Media relations
- Social marketing support
- Social media management
- Crisis and issues management
- Public relations
- Internal communications

The Communications and Engagement Team provides these services to support the Public Health department in fulfilling requirements associated with foundational and programmatic standards within the *Ontario Public Health Standards* and *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

3.2.2. Core Communications Positions

The communications roles within Public Health were reviewed as part of this analysis. Each job description was reviewed against the core communications services described in section 2.2 of this report.

Based on this analysis, there are 11 positions (10 within the Public Health Communications and Engagement Team and 1 elsewhere in the department) where roles are more than 50 per cent related to core communications functions. Eight of these positions are permanent. Two of these positions are temporary full-time, and one is temporary part-time.

The majority of these positions are funded 70 per cent from the provincial government and 30 per cent from the municipal tax levy. This funding allocation requires these positions to be 100 per cent devoted to advancing public health outcomes. There are 1.75 temporary positions funded through 100 per cent provincial contributions.

It should be noted that, while core communications functions comprise at least 50 per cent of these roles, there should be consideration for other accountabilities and duties that are unrelated to core communications.

3.3. Communications Resources in Other Departments

The April 24, 2021 motion from Regional Council included consideration for communications resources across the corporation.

3.3.1. Decentralized positions related to communications

As part of the research process, a scan for communications and engagement roles was undertaken across the corporation. Job descriptions for each of the roles were reviewed to determine the percentage of the role devoted to core communications functions. The results of this preliminary scan identified a limited number of roles in the following departments that are more than 50 per cent devoted to core communications functions:

- Community Services – 0 positions
- Corporate Services – 0 positions
- Public Works – 2 positions, funded through the rate budget
- Economic Development – 1 position, funded through the municipal tax levy

Operating needs and obligations associated with these positions are described in section 4.2.

3.4. Non-salary Resources

While not feasible within the timelines associated with this report, it is recommended that a more comprehensive review assess corporate-wide budget allocations to determine whether there are significant line items related to core communications functions such as advertising, design, production, photography, marketing and promotions.

4.0 Operational Needs and Obligations

The majority of service demands for municipal communications relates to the needs and objectives of operating departments. As such, speaking with internal clients and service delivery partners within operating departments is an important part of researching potential integration of communications resources.

The preparation of this report included consultation with the Medical Officer of Health and support staff, as well as a consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team on May 6, 2021.

Based on discussions and information resulting from these consultations, the following considerations merit careful analysis should Regional Council wish to pursue a centralized model.

4.1. Public Health

Communication and engagement play an important role in Public Health's obligations to the Ministry of Health, including the requirements associated with both Foundational Standards and Program Standards stated in the *Ontario Public Health Standards, 2018*.³

It should be noted that the *Ontario Public Health Standards* do not specifically mandate the structure or placement of communications resources within an organization and does not preclude the consolidation of resources into a centralized model. However, should communications resources be located outside the department, the following considerations would need to be recognized and addressed:

- In order to continue to receive 70 per cent provincial funding, positions would need to remain 100 per cent dedicated to the achievement of public health outcomes as prescribed in the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, and requirements under the *Ontario Public Health Standards*.
- Public health would require communications support with specialized knowledge of foundational health promotion approaches.
- Communications support would continue to be required by Organizational and Foundational Standards Division, Health Promoters, Family Programs and leaders across the department, including support for internal communications.
- Models may need to be adapted pending completion of the current provincial *Public Health Modernization* initiative.

³ These Standards are available at:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/protocols_guidelines/Ontario_Public_Health_Standards_2018_en.pdf.

- Consistent with the recommendations of the *Campbell Commission Report* (post SARS) and the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, the Medical Officer of Health has a duty to speak out on public health concerns. Provisions for communications support and channels to support this duty would need to be considered as part of consolidation.

4.2. Other Operating Departments

In discussion with the Corporate Leadership Team, the following operational needs and considerations were raised with regard to potential consolidation of communications resources into a centralized division serving internal clients.

- Consistent with the considerations raised by Public Health, communications resources must work in close collaboration with operating departments, have strong, specialized knowledge of the business requirements of each functional area, and commitment to supporting employee engagement.
- Communications resources must support various legislative obligations including, but not limited to, communications and engagement requirements under the *Municipal Act*, *Planning Act*, *Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disability Act*, *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Personal Privacy Act*, *Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation*, *Highway Traffic Act*, *Environmental Protection Act*, *Long-term Care Homes Act* and other applicable legislation.
- Positions in Public Works would need to continue to be devoted to water and wastewater and waste management if the corporation intends to continue to leverage the rate budget as a funding source.
- Positions in Economic Development would need to be devoted to continued external investment attraction marketing, and closely aligned with the Region's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy to achieve mandates related to business attraction.

5.0 Proposed Guiding Principles

As stated in section 1.0, this report is not a comprehensive review and analysis of communications models. It is a point in time snapshot with operational considerations, collected and reported over a six-day time period. Should Regional Council wish to proceed with comprehensive review, guiding principles are recommended below as the basis for further analysis, recognizing that the preferred model, and its associated design, implementation processes and procedures, should be based on the following success factors:

5.1. Niagara Region as a Leader

The preferred model should be the model that provides the most opportunity to position Niagara Region as a recognized, best-in-class leader in public sector communications, contributing to the advancement of both corporate-wide and operational objectives.

5.2. Value for Money

The preferred model should maintain or enhance Niagara Region's ability to make efficient and effective use of communications resources across the corporation, demonstrating value for money consistent with each funding source. This principle also considers flexibility in allocating resources, particularly during emergencies.

5.3. Consistency from the Corporation

Communications collateral, products, campaigns and messaging issued by Niagara Region should be clearly identifiable as coming from the organization, aligned with and in support of the organization's strategic plan and visual identity. There may be exceptions in support of principle 5.4.

5.4. Independent Voice for Medical Officer of Health

Consistent with the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, and the findings within the *Campbell Commission Report* following the SARS epidemic, it is important to ensure an independent voice for Medical Officer of Health as it pertains to maintaining and enhancing public health for the residents of Niagara. Regardless of the preferred model selected, or the location of communications in the corporation, processes, procedures, channels and support must be in place to maintain the capacity for the Medical Officer of Health to exercise this duty.

5.5. Timely and Dependable Information

Time is of the essence when it comes to providing the public with information, particularly when emergency communications, crisis communications and issues management are involved. The preferred model must facilitate quick distribution of communications products while maintaining the degree of quality control required for accurate and reliable government communications.

5.6. Notice to Regional Councillors

Elected officials are partners in providing accurate, reliable information to local residents and businesses. Niagara Region's communications model should facilitate clear, reliable, and consistent information channels with elected officials, providing advance notice and key messages on matters of high community interest. It should be noted that this principle does not provide for the ability of individual political officials to alter messages coming from the corporation, particularly those from the Medical Officer of Health.

5.7. External Partnership

Messages are most effective when they are consistent and coordinated across information sources. When there are matters of mutual interest with partner organizations, Niagara Region's communications model should maintain and/or enhance close collaboration with communications leads in partner organizations. Examples of Niagara Region's community partners include, but are not limited to, those outlined in Regional Council's April 24, 2021 motion: the 12 Local Area Municipalities, Niagara Health, Niagara College, Brock University, school boards, and private sector partners.

5.8. Honour Funding Sources

Many of the communications resources outlined in section 3.0 of this report are funded from sources other than the municipal tax levy and must be applied to work funded for those purposes. For example, in order to continue to receive 70 per cent contributions from the provincial government, public health resources must continue to be 100 per cent dedicated to the foundational and programmatic requirements within the *Ontario Public Health Standards*. Similarly, positions in Public Works funded through the rate budget must continue to be dedicated to those areas, namely, water and wastewater and waste management.

6.0 Potential Options

Should Regional Council wish to proceed with a detailed review the following potential options are suggested as a starting point for further analysis with a view to creating a unified strategic communications entity. A comprehensive review would research and assess each of the potential models below, and other options that may arise, against the guiding principles proposed in section 5.0 of this report.

6.1. Central Coordination with Some Decentralized Communications Resources

Under this model, there would be a centralized communications division with some decentralized roles across the corporation to assist with coordination, technical expertise and tactical implementation. A comprehensive analysis would assess this model against the guiding principles outlined in section 5.0, and investigate opportunities to support this model through processes, procedures and service levels.

6.2. Reporting Relationship Change Only

One option for structural consolidation of resources is to implement a change in reporting relationship for core communications resources, otherwise leaving roles, work locations, and teams (where communications teams exist), intact. A comprehensive review would assess the advantages and disadvantages of this model against the guiding principles.

6.3. Integration of Some Core Communications Roles into a Central Delivery Model

Niagara Region may wish to explore a model where some core communications roles are integrated while others are not included or considered at a later state. Examples of positions that could remain with the program areas they serve or be considered for integration in a future phase might include positions that are involved in programmatic community engagement for targeted audiences.

6.4. Integration of all Core Communications Roles into a Central Delivery Model

The final potential structural option is full integration of all roles involved in core communications functions into a centralized service delivery model.

7.0 Conditions for Success

Regardless of the model Niagara Region ultimately decides to pursue, success is contingent on the following assumptions and conditions:

1. **Further analysis and due diligence:** As stated in section 1.0, this report is not a comprehensive review. Further analysis is required to make evidence-based recommendations based on Niagara Region's specific context.
2. **Clear line of sight to funding obligations:** Communications leaders and client advisors must have an in-depth understanding of the funding obligations of operating departments, the role of communications and engagement in supporting these requirements, close and continuous contact with departmental staff involved in fulfilling these obligations, and specialized knowledge in the area to effectively support their success.
3. **Documented service agreements with internal clients:** Increased coordination and awareness of corporate initiatives, and greater integration of messages across the corporation is an important objective. However, coordination and integration cannot come at the expense of support for the programs and operational services that Niagara residents rely on every day. Written, agreed upon service agreements, clear access points and expectations are required to maintain operational support.
4. **Continuity in leadership philosophy:** Administrative leadership at Niagara Region is in transition. Should Niagara Region wish to pursue changes to the communications structure, the processes, procedures and commitments to support the guiding principles should remain in place regardless of any leadership changes that may occur.
5. **Minimize service disruption during third wave:** Structural changes often result in service reductions. With careful implementation strategies and change management practices, these service reductions can be temporary. Niagara Region will need to consider the potential for service level reductions, particular during the third wave and potential subsequent waves of the global COVID-19 pandemic.
6. **Careful attention to employee morale:** The effectiveness of a preferred model ultimately relies on communication staff who are engaged, empowered and feel valued in the workplace. Employee morale should be a priority throughout these discussions and any changes should involve intentional and considered change management processes to support employees through transition.

7. **Balance between strategy and implementation:** The preferred model should provide balance between strategic value-add and tactical resources required for implementation.

8.0 Appendix 1 – Regional Council Motion

Motion to Enhance and Support Niagara Region's Public Facing Communications

WHEREAS timely, accurate and effective two-way communications with elected officials and the public are of vital importance at all times;

WHEREAS the importance of these communications had been heightened since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic;

WHEREAS the provision of high-quality, exceptional communications between the Niagara Region and elected officials and members of public is dependent on internal coordination, information sharing and adherence to established strategies guiding all regional departments;

WHEREAS successful public communications are also dependent on strong relationships with external partners such as the Niagara Health, Brock University, Niagara College, the school boards, the provincial and federal government, the private sector and, most importantly, the 12 local area municipalities;

WHEREAS the Region's Strategic Communications and Public Affairs division provides a full suite of services to all Regional Departments (with the exception of Public Health) with a total staff compliment of 9 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs);

WHEREAS the Public Health Communications Team, whose services are limited to their department, has a current total staff compliment of 13 FTEs (with some of these positions being on contract for the duration of the pandemic);

WHEREAS a number of the communication positions in Public Health are funded all or in-part by provincial dollars;

WHEREAS Regional Council accepts the proposition that it is an important priority to ensure that communications with the public and other elected officials occur in the most efficient, effective and timely way possible;

WHEREAS Regional Council respects the need at times for all departments to be able to communicate in a confidential manner potentially sensitive information in the interest of the public's health, safety and general wellbeing;

WHEREAS it is critical during a time of pandemic that the messaging and communications emanating from all departments be aligned and respond to the need for the public and elected officials to receive timely, consistent, concise and comprehensible information;

WHEREAS the reporting structure of communications at Niagara Region can be rationalized without detrimentally affecting the ability of the Acting Medical Officer of Health to exercise his legislative authority under the Health Promotions and Protections Act; and

WHEREAS a reorganization of the Region's FTEs with a core public relations and communications responsibility into a consolidated department would enhance the objective of a strong communications team by allowing for a better sharing of resources, a reduction in silos within the organization thereby expediting the decision making process, a more streamlined interface for key stakeholders and partners, increased cooperation in regards to strategic planning and a strong potential for increased operational efficiency.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council/Board of Health DIRECTS the Acting Chief Administrative Officer and Acting Medical Officer of Health to ensure the immediate alignment of messaging and communications emanating from the Niagara Region Public Health Department and the Niagara Region on all matters related to the current COVID-19 pandemic and provide a progress report at the May 2021, Committee meetings; and
2. That Regional Council DIRECTS the Acting Chief Administrative Officer to:
 - a) Provide a report to the Corporate Services Committee for its May 12, 2021, meeting on the potential reorganization of the core communication resources found in all departments of Niagara Region, including Public Health, with a view to creating a unified strategic communications entity; and
 - b) Determine what memorandums of understanding and/or service level agreements may be necessary to satisfy the needs of provincial funders in regard to any communications positions in public Health paid for, wholly or partially, by the Ministry of Health.

*Boulevard Strategy Group was pleased to work with
Niagara Region
to prepare this Communications Overview Report*

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Municipality	How many staff are there on your corporate communications team? (FTEs temporary and permanent) What is the model? i.e. centralized, decentralized or hybrid with departmentally embedded staff.	Does your Public Health Department have its own dedicated communication staff?	Other Notes
Durham	<p>22 full time staff on the Corporate Communications Office (CCO) team.</p> <p>A centralized model with each Communications Advisor assigned to a department as their "client".</p>	<p>The Public Health Unit has their own communications staff, separate from CCO. They have 3 communications specialists and 3 graphics designers as part of their team. They report directly to the MOH.</p>	<p>There was a major reorg of the entire CCO in 2020. The reorg focused on streamlining management and aligning communications advisors to clients and departments within the organization. The Transit communications team (a team of 3 that were working separate from the CCO) was also amalgamated with the CCO office.</p> <p>Amalgamation of Public Health communications will be considered as part of a further phase.</p>
Halton	<p>Halton Region has a centralized communications division. The division is part of the Strategic Transformation Department. The group is responsible for communications planning, media outreach, issues management, social and digital media, internal communications and branding. The Communications Division works with all departments to support strategic communications and support operational needs. The division also includes Access Halton the centralized call centre/311 call centre. Staff total:18 (Communications FTEs) and 25.5 (Call Centre FTEs)</p>	<p>Public Health does not have its own dedicated Communications staff. However during COVID there is an enhanced model of supports for Communication. Both Public Health and Medical Officer of Health are supported through our Corporate model. Each area of our organization is supported with Comms planning, implementation media supports etc.</p>	<p>Halton has had a centralized model for close to 20 years. Eight years ago the Communication Division went through a significant remodel to ensure that not only were comms services delivered across the organization but also in a coordinated way. The key focus of the change was to coordinate communications delivery to meet overall corporate standards and processes.</p>

Hamilton	<p>The City of Hamilton's corporate communications team operates on a distributed communications model (central planning and direction with 1/3 of staff embedded within departments, including Public Health). The City's corporate communications team has 22FTEs, with three contract positions (two that are COVID specific and one that is in Transit where the relationship is guided by a Service Level Agreement). The make up of the division includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 45% Communications (traditional communications that involves media relations, corporate communications, web materials, community engagement materials, proactive story telling, issues management) - 20% in Digital Communications (Management of the Corporate Communications Website and all content updates on the City's website and digital engagement platform) - 35% in Marketing, Social Media and Creative Services (all corporate social media channels, corporate marketing and all recreational marketing, advertising strategy and purchasing. 	Central Communications operates on a distributed communications model where communications officers are embedded within Public Health. Currently there are three full time communications staff in the Communications Division assigned to Public Health, with support from the rest of the division. For Public Health and Pandemic Communications, the MOH is the approving authority on content (with advice from corporate communications) and communications oversees communications delivery	The organization has moved from a completely decentralized model to distributed, centralized model that has some communications officers embedded within departments. The practical application of this model is that departments have access to communications subject matter expertise and support. The process of centralization has taken a number of years and was aided through a variety of tools, including changes in reporting lines, service level agreements, and technology-assisted processes designed to encourage collaboration
Peel	The team is fully integrated. There are dedicated resources in Public Health however they report to the Director of Corporate Communications who is part of the Corporate Services department.		

Waterloo	<p>Until last summer, most divisions had their own communications teams without linkages to Corporate Communications. All communication groups now have a dotted line reporting relationship to Corporate Communications including Public Health</p> <p>The model is a hybrid model with centralized strategy and leadership, and operations within the divisions.</p>	The Public Health communications team has dual reporting to corporate communications and their Public Health Director.	
York	<p>Prior to the pandemic, York Region's Corporate Communications team was a contingent of approximately 16 FTE/permanent staff. Prior to the pandemic, Corporate Communications was primarily responsible for the development and over-site of corporate-led governance initiatives and policies to help promote and raise awareness of the Region's programs and services. In addition, working in a predominately decentralized model, the Corporate Communications team worked alongside respective communications teams in the Region's six departments to ensure adherence to corporate policies in delivering communications to residents and Council.</p> <p>To support the pandemic efforts, the Region initiated a Crisis Communication Plan and redeployed staff from across the departmental communication units to help with the corporate response. This centralized approach helped to be responsive to the ever-changing situation.</p>	Public Health responsibilities are integrated within the Community & Health Services Department (CHS) that also includes housing, LTC, paramedic, childrens' and social services. There are approximately 11 FTE (15 including other CHS communicators) and permanent staff supporting public health. This approach has remained consistent before and during the COVID-19 response. Prior to the pandemic, communications strictly related to public health activities were managed by communications staff in public health and the Community and Health Services department, with guidance from Corporate Communications on broader, Region-wide and Regional Council initiatives (eg. social media issues, web development, branding). During the pandemic, communications has been heavily driven and executed through Corporate Communications, with subject matter expertise being provided through public health.	In 2013, Corporate Communications was restructured from the Office of the CAO to the Corporate Services department, reporting to the a Commissioner. This did not involve changes to the public health communications.

Subject: Considerations for a Mandatory Lobbyist Registry

Report to: Corporate Services Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide information respecting a mandatory lobbyist registry.
- At its meeting held on February 17, 2021, Corporate Services Committee deferred a motion respecting the implementation of a mandatory lobbyist registry to allow consultation with stakeholders.
- A lobbyist registry is considered a publicly accessible accountability and transparency tool.
- Section 223.9(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, provides authority for establishing and maintaining a lobbyist registry.
- Section 223.11(1) of the Act also permits a municipality to appoint a “registrar who is responsible for performing in an independent manner the functions assigned by the municipality with respect to the registry and the system of registration.”
- Niagara Region has other transparency and accountability measures in place that can address concerns regarding lobbying.

Financial Considerations

As was noted in Report CLK 2-2021, should Council wish to proceed with establishing any model of Lobbyist Registry, there are initial start-up and annual operating costs that would be required for an online registry system. This would include information technology required, annual expenses required to maintain the registry and additional costs associated with appointing the Lobbyist Registrar and the hiring of additional administrative/policy support staff.

The costs would vary depending on the number of complaints and inquiries received as well as the enforcement model. The City of Vaughan, implemented a mandatory registry

with enforcement and budgeted approximately \$250,000 which included the appointment of a Lobbyist Registrar and administrative staff to maintain the Lobbyist Registry.

Analysis

At its meeting held on February 17, 2021, Corporate Services Committee considered Report CLK 2-2021 and subsequently considered the following motion:

1. *That staff **BE DIRECTED** to provide options, and a recommendation, for the retention of a Lobbyist Registrar and that considerations for the retention of a Lobbyist Registrar form part of the budget proposals for 2022;*
2. *That specific mechanisms for the establishment of a mandatory Lobbyist Registry with enforcement **BE DEVELOPED** for implementation in 2022;*
3. *That feedback about the establishment of a mandatory Lobbyist Registry with enforcement for Niagara Region **BE SOUGHT** from Public Affairs Association of Canada; Niagara's chambers of commerce; and other pertinent associations or organizations; and*
4. *That the report(s) indicated in the first three parts of this motion **BE PROVIDED** at the May 2021 Corporate Services Committee meeting.*

The motion was deferred to allow staff to undertake consultation. Staff was further requested to provide information respecting a mandatory registry. Feedback was sought from the local chambers of commerce and the Public Affairs Association of Canada. Only the Niagara Chamber Partnership responded and that feedback is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The Chamber requested that should Council implement a lobbyist registry, it consider the following:

- That a clear definition of lobbying be established, aligning with definitions used in other jurisdictions
- That thresholds, participation requirements, and administrative requirements be established, facilitating transparency without stifling healthy civic engagement from local businesses
- That a phased implementation approach be taken, starting with a simple and straightforward process (an annual, one-time, online registration, for example) that can be expanded in successive years

The goal of any municipal lobbying registry is to ensure that lobbying is carried out transparently and in a manner that ensures accountability as outlined in Section 223.9 to Section 223.12 of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c 25 (the “Act”).

There are certain activities that, while they may seek to influence municipal behaviour, are not generally considered lobbying. These may include but are not limited to:

- Municipal staff, in their official capacity, discussing official business with Council members or other public officials;
- Individuals acting in their personal capacity to make representations before Council, Committees of Council or Local Boards;
- Providing information to a public official in response to a request;
- Members of other levels of government communicating with public officials while acting in their official capacity; and,
- Casual conversations with public officials that do not specifically pertain to municipal business.

Section 223.9 (1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c 25 (the “Act”) authorizes a municipality to establish and maintain a registry in which shall be kept such returns as may be required by the municipality that are filed by persons who lobby public officer holders.

Although there is variation in the definition of “public office holder” between established Lobbyist Registry by-laws, generally, a public office holder is a member of Council; an officer or employee of the municipality; a member of a local board or a Committee established by Council and any person on his or her staff; an accountability officer appointed under the Municipal Act, 2001, such as Integrity Commissioner, Lobbyist Registrar, Ombudsman, etc.

Section 223.9(2) of the Act also authorizes the municipality to provide for a system of registration of persons who lobby public office holders and to do the following things:

- Define lobby.
- Require persons who lobby public officer holders to file returns and give information to the municipalities.
- Specify the returns to be filed and the information to be given to the municipality by persons who lobby public officer holders and specify the time within which the returns must be filed and the information provided.
- Exempt persons from the requirement to file returns and provide information.

- Specify activities with respect to which the requirement to file returns and provide information that does not apply.
- Establish a code of conduct for persons who lobby public officer holders.
- Prohibit former public office holders from lobbying current public office holders for the period of time specified in the by-law.
- Prohibit a person from lobbying public office holders without being registered.
- Impose conditions for registration, continued registration or a renewal of registration.
- Refuse to register a person, and suspend or revoke a registration.
- Prohibit persons who lobby public office holders from receiving payment that is in whole or in part contingent on the successful outcome of any lobbying activities.

A review of the definition of “lobby” and “lobbying” from various lobbyist registries suggests a common view that lobbying is any communication with a public office holder about the following things:

- a by-law, bill or resolution that requires a decision by Council, a committee or other decision maker acting under municipal authority;
- the development, approval or termination of policies or programs;
- the purchase of goods and services, construction procurement, and the awarding of contracts;
- applications for planning approval, permits, service, grants and other licences or permissions;
- the award of financial contributions, grants or other financial benefits; and
- the transfer from the Region of any interest in or asset of an institution, enterprise or business.

Most Lobbyist Registry By-laws identify the following three types of lobbyists:

1. Consultant lobbyist: an individual who lobbies for payment on behalf of a client (another individual, company, partnership or organization). If the consultant arranges for a meeting between a public office holder and a third party, this is considered lobbying.
2. In-house lobbyist: an individual who is an employee, partner or sole proprietor who lobbies on behalf of their own employer, business or organization.
3. Voluntary unpaid lobbyist: an individual who lobbies without payment on behalf of an individual, business or organization for the benefit of the interests of the individual, business or other organization.

A Lobbyist Registry is an accountability and transparency tool that involves the registration and regulation of lobbying activities. The Lobbyist Registry would apply to anyone who wishes to lobby a public office holder outside of a public forum and the Region's normal procedures and processes. Section 223.9 (3) of the Act states that the registry shall be available for public inspection in the manner and during the time that the municipality may determine.

There are two options for consideration should Council wish to implement a mandatory lobbyist registry.

Mandatory Registry – Self Enforcement (Self-Monitored)

- Develop a mandatory registry with no formal enforcement wherein anyone who wishes to undertake lobbying activities must register with the Clerk who then posts the registrations online
- Council members are responsible for enforcement i.e. the onus is on the member of Council not to meet with someone they consider to be a lobbyist, unless the individual has registered as a lobbyist
- Amend the Code of Conduct for Members of Council so that any interactions with un-registered lobbyists or acceptance of gifts from lobbyists can be breaches of the Code
- Any complaints regarding lobbying activity are reported to the Integrity Commissioner

Mandatory Registry – With Enforcement Measures

- Develop a mandatory registry with formal enforcement
- Develop a Code of Conduct for Lobbyists
- Amend the Code of Conduct for Members of Council to codify appropriate interactions with lobbyists
- A complaint regime is developed wherein individuals may file a complaint with the Registrar (could be the Integrity Commissioner) if they believe that a lobbyist is not following the Lobbyist Code of Conduct
- A by-law is enacted and offences and penalties for by-law contraventions are established

Should a mandatory registry with enforcement be established, a Lobbyist Registrar would need to be retained and processes would need to be formalized including the process for registering; reporting on lobbying activities after registering; creating and maintaining a web page with a searchable online registry; and, developing a Code of Conduct for lobbyists and a Registry by-law.

Lobbyist Registrar

Section 223.11 of the Act authorizes a municipality to appoint a registrar who is responsible for performing in an independent manner the functions assigned by the municipality with respect to the registry as described in Section 223.9 (1) and the system of registration and other matters described in Section 223.9 (2). Brampton, Ottawa, Vaughan and Peel have appointed their Integrity Commissioners as their Lobbyist Registrar.

The Lobbyist Registrar is an independent person or body that performs duties as assigned by Council such as regulating lobbying activity by overseeing public disclosure of lobbying activity and ensuring adherence to a Lobbyist Code of Conduct. The Registrar may also enforce the by-law; review, verify and approve registrations; and, deliver information and training materials. Generally, the following are duties of a Lobbyist Registrar:

- Establish and maintain a registry of Lobbyists with a record of all returns and documents filed;
- Verify information contained in any documents filed;
- Refuse to accept a filing or document that does not comply with the Lobbyist Registry;
- Remove a filing if the person who filed does not comply with their duty to provide clarifying information;
- Issue interpretation bulletins and advisory opinions with respect to enforcement, interpretation or application of the by-law to Council;
- Investigate and report to Council on investigations and make recommendations to Council on punitive measures related to Code of Conduct violations or other applicable policies; and,
- Other duties and parameters to the position as assigned by Council.

There are many considerations regarding administering a Lobbyist Registry such as responsibility for maintaining the Registry, the registration process, the process for reporting lobbyist activities, and creation and maintenance of a searchable online registry for public access. Typically, the Lobbyist Registry would include information on individuals who lobby such as:

- name and business address;
- employer, organization or association;
- who the individual is lobbying on behalf of;
- the public office holders they are lobbying;
- the general nature of the subject matter of their lobbying; and,
- the dates on which their lobbying will start and finish.

One common component of online Lobbyist Registries is a 'Frequently Asked Questions' webpage to help determine if an activity is defined as lobbying. In addition to this feature, significant public education would need to take place to ensure the public is aware of what a Lobbyist Registry is and how it may affect them.

A mandatory registry would also include provisions for inquiries and significant sanctions and penalties for Lobbyists not in compliance. The Lobbyist Registrar may be given a range of enforcement powers including the ability to suspend or revoke a registration, impose conditions on the registration, and implement sanctions or penalties on a sliding scale dependent on the number of violations.

The Lobbyist Registrar may conduct an inquiry when requested to do so by Council as a whole, by a single member of Council or by a member of the public, and may provide a public report back to Council regarding any inquiry conducted. Provisions set out in the City of Toronto model provide that the Lobbyist Registrar may prosecute breaches of the by-law under the Provincial Offences Act with fines ranging from \$25,000 up to \$100,000. Any report from a Lobbyist Registrar must be made public.

There may also be a requirement for an administrative system to allow for management of registrations as well as staff to oversee the registry. It is helpful to note that in the City of Toronto, seven full-time staff make up the Office of the Lobbyist Registrar, not including the Lobbyist Registrar; however, the City of Toronto has a dynamic Lobbyist Registry office that has been in place over a decade.

There are a number of factors to consider when reviewing the options to establish a Lobbyist Registry, in particular, balancing the costs and benefits of such an approach. There are financial and staffing implications with respect to implementing and maintaining a Lobbyist Registry as the registry would require ongoing staff and financial resources including initial and annual operating costs, appointment of a Lobbyist

Registrar, creation and maintenance of an online registration system, and potential hiring of staff to administer the registry.

Alternatives Reviewed

This report has been provided for information purposes only, as Council has the option to consider if it would like to implement a mandatory lobbyist registry. Council could:

a) consider not establishing a Lobbyist Registry and instead rely on existing policies and legislation which address concerns regarding contracting and relations with third parties such as the Procurement By-law, Accountability and Transparency Policy, Code of Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy, Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and the Code of Conduct for Members of Council to ensure accountability and transparency.

b) if it wishes to implement a mandatory lobbyist registry (mandatory – self enforcement or mandatory with enforcement) and direct staff to provide a report on the costs of the proposed model, including staffing, technology requirements, processes, necessary by-law and code of conduct and options for a Lobbyist Registrar.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report aligns to Council's strategic priority of sustainable and engaging government including promoting an organizational culture that values continuous improvement, collaboration, and innovation and enhancing communication.

Other Pertinent Reports

CLK 2-2021 Considerations for a Lobbyist Registry

Prepared by and Recommended by:

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1 Correspondence from Niagara Chamber Partnership

NIAGARA CHAMBER PARTNERSHIP

Unlocking the power of a Niagara-wide network



April 29, 2021

Regional Clerk Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
Thorold ON L2V 4T7

RE: CONSIDERATIONS FOR A LOBBYIST REGISTRY
Recommendations from the Niagara Chamber Partnership

Dear Ms. Norio,

On behalf of the Niagara Chamber Partnership (representing chambers/boards of trade in the municipalities of Fort Erie, Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, Thorold, Wainfleet, Welland, and West Lincoln), we are submitting the following recommendations for Regional Council's consideration:

- That a clear definition of lobbying be established, aligning with definitions used in other jurisdictions
- That thresholds, participation requirements, and administrative requirements be established, facilitating transparency without stifling healthy civic engagement from local businesses
- That a phased implementation approach be taken, starting with a simple and straight-forward process (an annual, one-time, online registration, for example) that can be expanded in successive years

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations as Regional Council builds on initiatives that increase public accountability and transparency.

Sincerely,

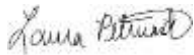




Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce



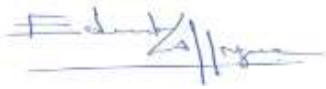
Grimsby Chamber of Commerce



Lincoln Chamber of Commerce



Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce



Niagara-on-The-Lake Chamber of Commerce



Port Colborne-Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce



Niagara Board of Trade and Commerce



Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce



West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce



MEMORANDUM

CSC-C 15-2021

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Corporate Services
Date: May 12, 2021
To: Corporate Services Committee
From: Todd Harrison, Commissioner, Corporate Services/Treasurer

Corporate Services delivers efficient and innovative service excellence to external and internal customers in an integrated and timely manner.

During this pandemic, our staff have continued this support function for core businesses within our group and for operating departments. In addition, Corporate Services has provided critical support to the Emergency Operations Committee (EOC).

The following provides an overview of activity that has taken place and a projection of expected service delivery moving forward:

CONSTRUCTION, ENERGY AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT (CE&FM)

The CE&FM group is divided into two main groups, Construction and Facilities Management. This team continues to be an essential component of the Region's EOC.

Some of the functions performed in this capacity are:

- Continued redeployment of CE&FM staff to support REOC and facilities operations;
- Sourcing, procuring, receiving and distributing emergency supplies, PPE and other supplies critical to business continuity for essential services and other departments;
- Upgraded electrical and security equipment for dedicated and secure storage areas for LTC and PH pandemic and mass immunization program supply requirements;

- Established website on Region intranet for inventory control of critical PPE supplies;
- Developed lease agreement with Brock University to provide temporary quarantine housing as needed for essential staff;
- Procured additional cleaning and janitorial supplies/services including renegotiation of enhanced cleaning contract based on right sizing operations to meet PH guidelines and other department/division needs;
- Since the start of the pandemic have provided enhanced cleaning protocols at Region facilities to ensure safe working environment for staff not working from home;
- Modified building systems and room layouts for regional Dental Clinics in accordance with the College of Dentistry requirements for operations during COVID;
- Modified building systems and room layouts and added social distancing measures and protective screens to Court operations to meet Provincial Judiciary requirements;
- Reviewed and modified all region buildings for safe operations during COVID including signage, social distancing barriers, protective screens and changes to furniture layouts for social distancing;
- Upgrades to electrical, security and HVAC equipment to accommodate COVID vaccine storage, and;
- Supported the Public Health mass immunization plan and successfully outfitted 11 vaccine clinics across the Region. Provided logistics and operational support including clinic setup, supply chain management, facility planning, coordination of service contracts and security and distribution of COVID vaccines and immunization supplies for mass immunization clinics.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

Construction:

- All capital projects at the Niagara Region are considered essential construction and were not affected by the Province's lockdown order. The Construction team continues to provide project management services and work with consultants and contractors to expedite capital projects deemed to be essential and critical for business continuity and in order to maintain services to the public;

- Continuing to upgrade facilities with social distancing barriers, protective screens and social distancing signage; and
- Responding to internal client needs for changes in normal operations, special moves and health & safety concerns.

Facilities Management:

- Continuing operations of facilities / leased space managed by CE&FM (including EMS, GO/VIA, PW Patrol Yards, surplus properties, Courts, Community Services, Public Health, NRPS stations and Communications sites, Child Care, Regional HQ, PW Environmental Centre, and Business Licensing). Providing custodial, enhanced cleaning, security, contract management, preventative maintenance, repairs, utilities management and fire / life safety.
- Continuing enhanced cleaning protocols to ensure a safe working environment for Region staff;
- Continuing emergency workplace disinfection requests following positive COVID findings in the workplace;
- Continuing sourcing and procuring additional cleaning and janitorial supplies/services to meet divisional and client needs;
- Providing support for department and divisional requests for emergency procurement of PPE, hygiene and cleaning supplies and vaccination supplies;
- Maintaining inventory of critical PPE supplies for pandemic response;
- Continuing to monitor security and facility access control systems to meet program delivery needs;
- Continuing to screen all staff attending HQ for COVID safety;
- Implementing increased security for storing and distribution of vaccine supplies;
- Continuing with critical maintenance repair work and services and any other work required for efficient building operations, and;
- Continuing support of mass immunization clinics with set-up and logistics.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING (FMP)

Current Status of Operations

As indicated, all of the Corporate Services Departments continue to deliver core services while at the same time perform a significant number of duties to support the Regional EOC.

FMP staff have continued to support core business functions during the pandemic. Some highlights of these actions include:

- Completion of the 2019 year end audit, submission to the Province of the Financial Information Return and publication of the Annual Report.
- Completion of the 2020 year end and reporting of the financial results to Corporate Services Committee and year end audit.
- Develop 2020 and 2021 tax bylaws and provide required necessary report and bylaws.
- Work with Public Works to update financial implications of SNF water treatment plant for inclusion in the 2021 budget.
- Publication of the 2020 Budget Summary.
- 2021 operating and capital budget planning, preparation and approval.
- Successful sale of \$34 million in serial debentures (\$15.5 million Regional) on July 31 at all time historical low interest rate of 1.43% for 10 years.
- Completion of Service Sustainability Review project and reporting to Council.
- Update of Standard and Poor's credit rating, reaffirming the Region's AA stable credit rating.
- Creation of new Development Charge Policy regarding payment instalment options and related interest.
- Completion of a Financial Condition review and report as requested by Budget Review Committee.
- Completion of a HST commodity tax review.
- Execution of a banking agreement renewal.

Additionally, FMP has a main role in the Region's EOC as part of the Finance and Administration Unit. Highlights include:

- Development and implementation of procedures for cost reporting and tracking.
- Coordination and collaboration with municipal treasurers of assumptions and information for consolidated financial impact information for advocacy to provincial and federal governments.
- Review of Regional capital projects in light of provincial legislative essential construction business and Regional capacity to complete.
- Complying with the multiple and iterative reporting requirements to different Ministries for more than 24 new revenue streams for various Regional programs.

- Implementation of on-line/credit card payments for services such as business licenses, garbage bag tags including direct sales to residents, planning and transportation permits, long term accommodations, etc.
- Support HR in development of cost tracking system to facilitate staff redeployment to essential services in pandemic including ongoing update of EOC costing assumptions.
- Support HR in establishing process to administer 2020 pandemic pay.
- Extensive 2020 cash flow and collections analysis and planning in conjunction with local municipalities.
- Analysis and reporting related to Council motion to consider deferral of 2020 water/wastewater budget increases.
- Preparation of COVID-19 recovery planning documentation and consolidation of corporate plan.
- Successful in application to Provincial Safe Restart Phase 2 for \$9.2 million in COVID-19 funding for 2020 and 2021 and on-going applications for other funding programs.
- Development of the mass immunization program budget approved at PHSSC on April 13th and submitted to the Province for approval in the Annual Service Plan.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

- Ongoing financial reporting submissions for COVID-19 extraordinary cost claims
- Supporting GO implementation, Niagara Regional Transit Governance, Canada Summer Games, Incentive Review, Airport Master Plan RFP, sponsorship revenue, Asset Management Planning, Niagara Regional Housing ASD, Vision Zero, Hospice Funding request, affordable housing project with City of Niagara Falls
- Beginning work on Development Charge Bylaw update with consultant and other teams involved in master plan updates.
- Evaluation of the HRIS RFP.
- Coordinating debenture issuances with infrastructure Ontario for Region and Area Municipalities.
- Supporting Procurement in actioning the recommendations from the non-competitive procurement audit.
- Completing 2020 financial information return and annual report.
- Planning and strategy for the 2022 Budget.

- Updates to Reserve and Reserve Fund Policy.
- Financial system upgrades and improvements.
- 2021 quarterly financial reporting including COVID-19 related revenue and expense updates.

PROCUREMENT AND STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS (PSA)

Current Status of Operations

Similar to other departments within Corporate Services, PSA staff have delivered by supporting core business functions while taking on additional projects to support the Region's EOC.

Highlights of activity during the operational period includes:

- Facilitating new and ongoing procurements culminating in award;
- Realty related works for inflight projects, leases and licenses;
- PeopleSoft Change PO's, Supplier and PCard administration; and
- Sourcing critical PPE and supplies needed for the EOC response to the pandemic.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Region's review of essential projects both capital and operational has resulted in a prioritization of formal procurements moving forward. This will continue throughout the pandemic and afterwards.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES (ITS)

Similar to other departments within Corporate Services, ITS staff have delivered by supporting core business functions while taking on additional established projects to support the Region's EOC.

Highlights of initiatives completed during the pandemic include the following:

- Significant enhanced reporting for COVID mass immunization clinics related to scheduling and administration.
- Developed the COVID Waitlist and modified the list accordingly based upon Provincial changes.
- Developed and implemented a fully data driven dashboard for COVID mass immunization clinics that allows Public Health resources to manage clinics, waitlists, dose administration and inventory in near real-time. This has been a game changer for Public Health allowing them to have foresight on inventory status before the end of the clinic day. This in turn allows staff to call wait listers sooner in the day, manage and accept walk-ins and more efficient/earlier clinic wrap ups. The reporting also allows for prediction of “no show” number based on cross referencing with bookings at other clinics and already administered vaccines.
- Published new version of web mapping application Niagara Navigator, built in our new Enterprise GIS Portal environment (late January).
- Made Enterprise GIS Portal environment available for self-serve use in the organization. This has empowered Planning and Economic Development resources to produce a mapping-centric Niagara Business Directory application for the public, scheduled to be released on www.niagararegion.ca by early April.
- Devised a data solution for CoVax data collected during congregate living vaccination to Seniors and the impending mass immunization clinics and produced the corresponding PowerBI report changes for www.niagararegion.ca.
- PH Mass Immunization clinic planning and prep – Working with the PH Pandemic planning team to evaluate IT requirements of Mass Immunization sites and help coordinate Internet access at sites with the LAM's.
- Call Centre As A Service – collaborative effort with Customer Service team to pilot and procure a CaaS solution through Avaya to help with our Customer Service call centres.
- Implemented Spear Phishing and Ransomware eLearning modules for all staff, and non-staff – i.e. contractors, vendors, volunteers, students, etc.
- The conversion of 180+ SAEO staff over from Thin Client hardware to laptops to further enable Work from home on Niagara Region devices.
- Updated external COVID reporting on website to simplify information and added vaccination data.
- Provide support for Community Services in the onboarding of an online financial assistance application (OLAF).

- Produced and/or iterated a variety of Power BI reports for Public Health as it relates to COVID, including:
 - PH and REOC dashboards;
 - The public COVID metrics on niagararegion.ca;
 - LAM specific report for public health to deliver weekly to each Mayor and CAO and other requested senior staff;
 - A repatriation report for HR and public health visualizing the COVID redeployment effort;
 - Outbreak COVID reporting;
 - Public COVID Info-Line and Online Chat Wait Times; and
 - Public Health COVID Response Tracking.
- Additional Power BI reports were produced for:
 - SAEO Intake – to assist in assessing the impact of CERB etc. to their call volume and intake load;
 - Customer Service Call Volume – to assess the impact on dispatch with forwarding all HQ call attendant calls to dispatch; and
 - CAMRA Reporting for capital project budget decision making.
- Produced a data solution for school outbreak COVID reporting in the EOC (both EOC's).
- Devised and are continuing to implement a long term data solution for public health COVID information and contact tracing, including integrating with the Provincial CCM application.
- Automation of the public daily COVID report publication which was manually completed 7 days a week for ~ 5 months.
- Provided the Homelessness Reporter suite of applications to Community Services for outreach workers to use with the homeless during COVID.
- Support for onboarding the 2 new WM collection contractors - modifications and enhancements to various applications were required to support this initiative.
- Implemented a public facing website with automation of the application process for qualification of Specialized Transit services offered by Niagara Region.
- Assisted the City of Thorold by producing economic development maps to be used with prospective clients/developers for the City. Five different maps were produced in total.
- Worked collaboratively with NH on rebuilding the application 'Transfer of Care' which will improve efficiencies and tracking in the life cycle of a patient beginning care with EMS up to the hand off (transfer) of care to NH.
- Support for HR on the Talent Map Survey regarding work conditions in the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

- Development and publication of a Community Dashboard tying to Council's strategic priorities.
- Initiate and facilitate the 2021 MBN Canada reporting for the organization.
- Work with transportation to develop a better process and workflow for dealing with name changes on Regional Roads.
- Building an EMS data warehouse to help support their evidence based, clinical response model.
- Building the mapping component of a situational awareness application for emergency management.
- Develop a visualized PowerBI report for WWW's Niagara Weather Information System.
- Continue support for COVID-19 initiatives while supporting and enabling staff to work from home. Prior to COVID-19 daily average for the number of remote connections was approximately 90 users, current daily average is 1270 users.
- Ongoing updates to the screening questions used by EMS in their tool 'EMS Tools'.
- Ongoing COVID-19 data analytics including internal operations supports and external data visualizations - Launched enhanced stats on external website including municipal breakdown.
- Implement and review technology and processes to accommodate electronic public participation in Council and Committee meetings.
- Automate Public Health EOC status report for daily briefing and Ministry submission as well as call center processes.
- Supporting Niagara Regional Transit and Canada Summer Games with technology planning and review.
- Provide support to Community Services in transitioning the services of 'Pro Kids' to the YMCA.
- Creating the ability for taxpayers to upload immunization records, which will increase efficiencies and accuracy of this PH data.
- Increased performance abilities in the application used to Permits, enabling efficiencies for Transportation staff.

LEGAL SERVICES

Current Status of Operations

As indicated for all of the Corporate Services divisions Legal Services continues to deliver core services, while at the same time providing a significant level of support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to the Region's EOC and all operating departments.

The Legal team performs a key role in the Region's EOC providing risk management and legal advice. The team provides ongoing legal support to the Region's EOC and operating departments in particular related to the interpretation and implementation of new provincial legislation and Emergency Orders that have been issued and updated throughout the pandemic. Highlights of advice and legal support provided include:

- Advice and legal support for COVID-19- related time sensitive projects involving multiple divisions as well as Niagara Regional Housing that resulted in the addition of two buildings to Niagara Regional Housing's portfolio designated for use by Homelessness Services. For one of the projects staff had less than a two weeks to develop necessary documentation, coordinate and close a three plus million dollar purchase while meeting provincial guidelines necessary to acquire funding including drafting a Contribution Agreement, lease, and loan security as between Niagara Region and Niagara Regional Housing (as title holder to the properties);
- Advice and legal support related to the implementation of the Region's mass immunization plan (including the development of agreements required for the 11 sites across the Region being used as COVID-19 immunization clinics);
- Advice regarding the preparation, communication and enforcement of the Region's face covering by-law;
- Advice related to impact of emergency orders on procurement and construction to ensure the continuation of essential Regional capital projects and to help minimize pandemic-related project costs and disruptions;
- Legal support to facilitate access to provincial funding related to COVID-19; including agreement review and related advice for example to support increasing capacity for EMS to provide mobile integrated health services;
- Advice to Public Health to support the issuance of Orders under the Health Protection and Promotion Act;
- Legal support related to enforcement of and compliance with a broad range of regulatory requirements imposed in response to the pandemic;

- Risk management advice on building screening and security issues; and
- Advice related to recovery planning/reopening of Regional facilities.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Legal team continues to provide advice and support to operational departments on core business activities, including risk management and insurance advice and litigation support. The team also continues to provide additional support for REOC and COVID-19 related matters as required, with the majority of the team working remotely.

COURT SERVICES

Current Status of Operations

- Court Administration & Collections staff are working onsite to provide customer service in person, via telephone and email, as well as conduct remote court matters as scheduled. Prosecution Staff are largely able to work remotely, except where attendance at the Courthouse is necessary (e.g. to support remote court proceedings).
- Court Services is well equipped to deliver services remotely, based on extensive preparation for remote and virtual matters in addition to the modern technology available onsite at the courthouse facility.
- In-person Provincial Offences matters have begun to gradually resume across the province as of January 25, 2021, subject to compliance with standards established by the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG). There has been ongoing collaboration with Facilities and Corporate Health & Safety to prepare for resumption of in-person court matters, utilizing the initial Recovery Secretariat Guidelines provided by the MAG. A successful site assessment by the Public Services Health & Safety Association (PSHSA) was completed on January 26, 2021, supporting the resumption of in-person court matters. Court Services is presently awaiting official communication from MAG regarding next steps in order for in-person matters to resume in Niagara.
- Continuously striving to be leaders in court services, Niagara is among the first municipalities in Ontario to receive approval to commence virtual Provincial Offences Court matters via Zoom video conferencing.

- Effective April 12, 2021, Court Services launched virtual Part I Trials via Zoom video (the video platform preferred by MAG). Part I trial matters are scheduled to the end of June 2021. Training and reference documents have been completed for Court Services staff, judiciary, enforcement agencies and paralegal agent groups to assist with preparation for Zoom trials, along with updated guidance on the Region's website for members of the public to support their participation in Zoom trials (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/provincial-offences/zoom-instructions.aspx>).
- Since July 6, 2020 judicial pre-trial matters and early resolution guilty pleas have been conducted remotely where eligible, before a Justice of the Peace via audio conference.
- Since October 19, 2020 non-trial remote matters have been conducted remotely where eligible, before a Justice of the Peace via audio conference.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

- Continued facilitation of hybrid service delivery - court matters via audio, video and in-person (to the extent possible).
- Continue to conduct matters where eligible via audio and video conference while awaiting resumption of in-person court proceedings and/or Part III trials via video.
- Ongoing recovery planning in collaboration with MAG and the Recovery Secretariat for resumption of in-person matters.
- Ongoing site preparation for virtual matters via video – equipping the remaining courtroom to enable virtual proceedings in all 3 courtrooms.

ASSET MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Current Status of Operations

AMO staff continue to support core business functions during the pandemic. The immediate focus and resources commit to key activities as highlighted:

- Planning and leading the development and submission to the Province of the Asset Management Plan in accordance with Reg 588. The Province extended the submittal deadline to 2022. Modification to scope provides an interim report

to Council or Committee in June 2021. In plan preparation, gaps identified in data and practices inform improvement needs. Scheduling improvement projects is subject to the Asset Management System roadmap (see below).

- Planning for the 2022 prioritization process for the 2022 capital budget, which also includes integrating Health Equity impact screening with Public Health.
- Input to Development Charges update.
- Input to Master Plans for Water & Wastewater and Transportation.

Projects to improve the Region's Asset Management System (AMS) require participation and collaboration from staff across the organization. Given the impact of COVID-19 on divisional plans and resources, the ability of Region staff to focus time on the AMS projects is limited. This caused delay of projects in 2020. It is continuing to affect work in 2021.

The overall 5-year plan for asset management system (AMS) improvements is now out of date because of the delays caused by Covid-19. A new strategic planning process will finish in Q3 of 2021 with launch in Q4 of 2021.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

The Asset Management System development projects that are underway are Priority 1. These projects directly relate to the requirements of the 2021 Asset Management Plan.

Those planned but delayed pending requirements of other projects are Priority 2. This only applies to Region AM delivery structure ID 112, which is meant to support the ITS Electronic Content Management System project.

Those planned, delayed and placed On Hold are Priority 3.

Table 1: Asset Management System development projects

Priority	Service availability by Phase	Current status	Project
2		Pending ECM project status	Region AM delivery structure ID 112
3	C	On hold	AM program foundations ID 430
0		Pilot completed	CAMRA - Risk Management Framework ID 248
1	PNM	Underway	CAMRA 2021 update for 2022 capital budget
2	C	On hold	Develop data analytics capabilities- Microsoft BI ID 530
2	C	On hold	Develop AM performance management KPIs ID 410
1	PNM	Inaugural meeting held	Niagara Region AM working group ID 512
1	PNM	Underway	Capital planning process ID 262
1	PNM	Scope revised for 2021 AMP	Enterprise Risk Management Framework ID 249
1	PNM	Scope revised for 2021 AMP	Develop Asset Registry - hierarchy and relationships ID 242
2	C	On hold	Project Resource Estimating - cost model ID 310
1	PNM	Initiated and on track	2021 AMP ID 630
1	PNM	Underway	Asset Management System Strategic Plan (preliminary planning phase)

Notes: PNM: No changes but delivered differently - e.g. working remotely

C: Cancelled pending redeployed/ staff vacancies and resource evaluation

Other previously planned 2020 and 2021 projects not tabled above, and that have only an indirect bearing on the 2021 Asset Management Plan, or related to supporting

Niagara's local municipalities are also on hold until resourcing and Covid-19 related issues are resolved.

BUSINESS LICENSING

Current Status of Operations

Similar to the other departments in Corporate Services, the Business Licensing department continues to operate with core service delivery as well as playing a role in the Region's EOC and response to Provincial O.Reg enforcement. These activities are identified separately.

Business Licensing

- Continue processing, and issuance of business licenses including fee payments and response to enforcement and inspection requirements.
- Developing office protocols for streamlined business licensing processes under COVID-19 restrictions including the issuance of licenses at set times in the lobby of the facility.
- Implement an "on-line" licensing application process beginning with various driver licenses.
- Investigating permanent eCommerce licensing sales and software database updates. Currently using Region website ecommerce credit card payment options for license fee payments.
- Establishing industry specific contacts with various law enforcement agencies including NRPS, OPP, MTO, MOE and AGCO as well as local by-law enforcement agencies.
- Preparing for the procurement of a modernized licensing/incident/inspection/enforcement database with a projected Q3 2021 delivery.

Provincial Order Enforcement

The provincial government requires continued enforcement of provincial orders by municipalities. Business Licensing staff maintain availability for active enforcement and inspection measures for the orders and provide support to local municipalities and

Niagara Regional Police. They provide both random inspections and complaint driven inspections 7 days a week.

- Staff from Business Licensing have been re-assigned to enforce the Provincial Orders and are providing 7 day a week coverage. Staff remain assigned to this until further notice or when the orders and state of emergency are lifted. Hours of operation and days of service are assessed weekly and are adjusted to meet demands and pressures.
- On March 18 Tobacco Enforcement and Environmental Enforcement staff have been deployed to assist Licensing Enforcement staff at the Mass Immunization to provide clinic security. 6 temporary Licensing Enforcement Officers are being recruited and are expected to be in place the weeks of May 03 and May 10. These staff will augment COVID-19 regulatory enforcement and Mass Immunization clinic security.
- Staff respond to Provincial Order and Regional Face Covering By-law complaints to assist the local response and also conduct random compliance inspections. Staff also continue to ensure Region licensed businesses are following order requirements and adherence to the Regional Licensing Bylaw.
- Provincial Order enforcement, including education, warnings, charges and summons for the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and the Re-opening Ontario Act.
- Regional Face Covering By-law enforcement including education, warnings and summons.
- Provide Provincial O.Reg enforcement data to the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the local area municipalities weekly.
- Publically post general weekly inspection and enforcement statistics for O.Reg enforcement.
- Provide background justification for business closure orders that consistently fail to comply with Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and the Re-opening Ontario Act O.Reg.
- Provide support for changing O.Reg stages of Lock-Down and Stay at Home Orders.
- Work with Niagara Regional Police collecting evidence and issuing charges and summons for non-compliance.

Mass Immunization Clinics and Vaccine Storage Security

- Beginning March 18th, staff from Business Licensing, Tobacco Enforcement and Environmental Enforcement were redeployed to provide vaccine escort to the clinics as well as security and customer service for the clinics.
- Recruitment for 6 Temporary Licensing Enforcement Officers began on March 15. Testing and interviews have taken place on April 13, 14 with further interviews on April 23. These staff will be deployed to assist with COVID-19 regulatory enforcement throughout the Region and augment vaccine escorts to the clinics and providing security and customer service at the clinics.
- Security measures were implemented on March 10th at Region HQ to provide 24/7 security protection of COVID-19 vaccines. This security includes contracted security, CCTV monitoring, and access control to the area.
- The Temporary Security Specialist candidate will be starting with the Region on April 26 and will provide assistance to the Manager of Business Licensing in providing security oversight and administration of staffing resources for security of vaccines and clinics.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

- The Business Licensing Manager will continue to work with local municipalities, NRPS and other Regional departments and external agencies in a coordinated approach to enforcement of Provincial Orders and the Regional Face Covering Bylaw until the pandemic eases.
- The Business Licensing Manager is overseeing security measures surrounding COVID-19 vaccination clinics, delivery of vaccine to clinics and deployment of staff resources. The manager is working with an assigned NRPS liaison officer.
- The business license bylaw review is ongoing and will come before Council in June of 2021.
- The Business Licensing Manager is reviewing COVID-19 pandemic impacts on licence holders licensed by the Region.
- The Business Licensing Manager will be developing a “return to normal operations” plan for implementation when the pandemic measures ease.

INTERNAL AUDIT

Current Status of Operations

- Responding to questions regarding posted RFP for 2021 audits in IT – cyber security and penetration testing. Preparing all material related to these two audits including evaluation criteria, timing and client briefings.
- Working with IT staff to prepare for consultant evaluations and eventually audit commencement/fieldwork.
- Researching additional audit areas that will be issued later in 2021 including contract/consultant management audit and BioSolids Audit.
- Developing testing criteria for follow up audit on the Corporate PCard program.
- Drafted scope for fall commencement of Consultant/Contracting Audit.
- Preparing material to be presented at upcoming May Audit Committee meeting including Management Action Plan Update and reviewing and updating Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

Operational Outlook

1/3/6 months

- Proponent selection for audit on penetration testing and cyber security. Support fieldwork and act as liaison during audit completion of cyber audit.
- Working with client groups to prepare response back to Management Action Plan, report expected at May Audit Committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner, Corporate Services/Treasurer

MEMORANDUM

CSC-C 16-2021

Subject: Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board Response to Councillor Information Request Respecting Report CSD 17-2021 - 2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report

Date: May 12, 2021

To: Corporate Services Committee

From: Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

The attached correspondence has been received from the Regional Municipality of Niagara Police Services Board in response to the following Councillor Information Request respecting Report CSD 17-2021 – 2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report:

Provide information respecting the correlation between the Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) Casino Unit loss of revenue and NRPS staff funding and the status of NRPS project hiring from 2020/2021 and the budget impact. Councillor Redekop.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
POLICE SERVICES BOARD

5700 VALLEY WAY, NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO L2E 1X8

Tel: (905) 688-4111 Fax: (289) 248-1011

E-mail: psb@niagarapolice.ca

Website: www.niagarapolice.ca

April 26, 2021

Ms. Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk
Regional Municipality of Niagara
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
P.O. Box 1042
Thorold, ON
L2V 4T7

SENT BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms. Norio:

**RE: Corporate Services Committee (CSC) - Councillor Information Request Respecting
Report CSD 17-2021 - Item 8.1 - 04.22.21**

At its Public Meeting held April 22, 2021, the Niagara Police Services Board considered Service report dated April 12, 2021 providing information requested at the Region's March 10, 2021 Corporate Services Committee meeting with respect to the PSB/NRPS Financial Variance Overview for the Year Ending December 31, 2020, that was included as Appendix 8 to Report CSD 17-2021, specifically the correlation between the NRPS Casino Unit loss of revenue and NRPS staff funding, and the status of NRPS project hiring from 2020/2021 and the budget impact.

The following motion was passed:

'That the Board receives this report and forwards the report to the Region's Corporate Services Committee.

Carried.'

Further to Board direction, I would ask that you take the necessary action. A copy of the report is enclosed for your reference.

Yours truly,

Deb Reid
Executive Director

:dc

Encl.

c: Mr. T. Harrison, Commissioner/Treasurer, RMON
Chief of Police B. MacCulloch, Niagara Regional Police Service



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE
Police Services Board Report

CSC-C 16-2021
RECEIVED
AOS MR
APR 14 2021

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Corporate Services Committee - Councillor Information Request
Respecting Report CSD 17-2021

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board

Report Date: 2021-04-12

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Services Board receives this report and forwards the report to the Region's Corporate Services Committee.

Key Facts

- At the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on March 10, 2021, along with the Region consolidated December 31, 2020 year end financial results that included the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) and Board Financial Variance Overview.
- Councillor Redekop requested information regarding whether there was a correlation between the staff savings from normal operations and the loss of the Casino revenue reported in the NRPS year end variance overview report. There is no correlation between the two offsetting variances.
- Further, the Councillor requested a status on the hiring of the 40 Officers approved within the 2020/21 budgets and its budget impact. In 2020, the NRPS had planned to hire 60 police constables; 40 to fill new positions and 20 to fill vacancies from normal attrition. By the end of December 2020, the NRPS had hired a total of 59 officers, 11 currently serving and 48 new recruits of which 14 attended the Ontario Police College training program in January 2021.
- The uniform savings net of overtime savings for the year 2020 was \$1.8M this includes the lag in the hiring of the 40 new officers and other uniform vacancies resulting from attrition.
- No financial information for the 2021 budget year is available. The NRPS reports its financial results quarterly beginning with the first quarter period ending March 31, 2021 anticipated reporting to Police Service Board at the May 2021 Board meeting.

Financial Considerations

No financial implications resulting from the recommendation.

Analysis

At the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on March 10, 2021, the following information request was made with respect to the Niagara Regional Service and Board Financial Variance Overview for the Year Ending December 31, 2020, that was included as Appendix 8 to Report CSD 17-2021.

*"Provide information respecting **the correlation** between the Niagara Regional Police Services (NRPS) Casino Unit loss of revenue and NRPS staff funding and the status of NRPS project hiring from 2020/2021 and the budget impact"*

For the year ending December 31, 2021, the NRPS reported a net deficit of \$0.5M exclusive of the Board surplus. This is the result of net incremental costs related to COVID-19, totalling \$3.5M offset by a reported surplus from normal operations, totalling \$(3.0)M.

The majority of the net costs associated to COVID-19 was from loss of Casino revenue in the amount of \$3.15M due from the City of Niagara Fall. The NRPS was able to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 mainly from the savings in the compensation category. The main contributors to the favourable variance savings include a reduction to claims processed for health and dental benefits, the 2020 NRPA wage increase that was implemented incrementally over three periods within the year and savings to uniform salaries related to front-line uniform vacancies and lags experienced during the hiring process.

In response to the CSC question, there is no direct correlation between the loss of City of Niagara Falls Casino revenue and salary savings reported from normal operations.

In May 2020, the NRPS was notified by Region Corporate Services staff that it would not receive any further transfer payments from the City of Niagara Falls while Casinos remained closed due to COVID. During the pandemic, the NRPS did not reduce its deployment model for frontline response Region wide, including the areas around the casinos. As predicted, the NRPS did experience a minimal and temporary reduction of 'normal type' calls for service at the early phase of the pandemic. However, this experience was short-term and by the fall of 2020 the calls for service returned to pre-pandemic levels which included Officers responding to different types of calls related to Quarantine and Reopening Ontario Act matters that added a new complexity.

Included in the \$3.0M surplus from normal operations, is \$1.8M in uniform salary savings mainly the result of uniform vacancies and lags experienced in the hiring process from normal attrition and the hiring of 40 new officers effective July 1, 2020, approved in the 2020 Budget.

For the 2020 year, the NRPS planned to hire 60 uniform officers; 20 to replace vacant positions from retirements and other terminations and 40 for the new budget positions. By December 2020, the NRPS had hired 59 officers, 11 currently serving and 48 new

recruits with 14 planned to attend the January 2021 Ontario Police College training program. While there are lags in hiring uniform staff due to the lengthy recruiting process it is important to note that these savings to uniform regular wages are offset by overtime dollars incurred to meet staffing minimums.

In response to the second part of the question "*the status of NRPS project hiring from 2020/2021 and the budget impact*" as noted above the Service has hired the 40 new officers approved in the 2020 budget effective July 1, 2020 and the remaining half year compensation in the 2021 budget. Although, it is difficult to separate the net uniform savings realized between the lag in the hiring of the 40 new officers budgeted for July 1 effective date, from other vacancies nevertheless, the net savings to uniform salary for the 2020 year is estimated to be \$1.8M.

At the time of this report, no financial information for the 2021 budget year is available. The NRPS reports its financial results quarterly beginning with the first quarter period ending March 31, 2021, anticipated reporting to Police Service Board at the May 2021 Board meeting.

Alternatives Reviewed

None

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

The Police Service Board is accountable to Regional Council for the Niagara Regional Police Budget and to provide quarterly financial reporting on any significant variances between actual and planned expenditures.

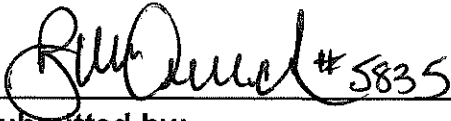
Relevant Policy Considerations

None

Other Pertinent Reports

- Corporate Service Committee Meeting March 10, 2021 –CSD 17-2021 2020 Year-End Results and Transfer Report.
- Police Service Board Finance Committee February 11, 2021 – Niagara Regional Service and Board Financial Variance Overview for the Year Ending December 31, 2020

This report was prepared by Laura Rullo, Manager, Finance, reviewed by Richard Frayne, Superintendent, Corporate Services and recommended by Bill Fordy, Deputy Chief of Police, Support Services.



Submitted by:

Bryan MacCulloch, M.O.M. #5835
Chief of Police

Appendices

None

Minute Item No. 5.1
PDS 17-2021
Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report

That Report PDS 17-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Council **ENDORSE** Natural Environment System Option 3B, as described in Appendix 6 to Report PDS 17-2021;
2. That consultation **BE INITIATED** as set out in Report PDS 17-2021, with a request that all feedback be received by July 2, 2021, to allow sufficient time for Staff to review those comments and make recommendations based on that feedback; and
3. That Report PDS 17-2021 and all Appendices **BE CIRCULATED** to the Province, the local are municipalities, agencies, stakeholder groups, and all parties who have indicated an interest.

Minute Item No. 6
Consent Items for Information

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

PDS-C 32-2021
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Planning and Development Services
ED 11-2021
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Economic Development
ED 12-2021
Economic Recovery Plan Update 4

**THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**PEDC 5-2021
Wednesday, May 12, 2021
Council Chamber / Video Conference
Regional Headquarters, Campbell West
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, Thorold, ON**

Committee Members Present in the Council Chamber: Huson (Committee Chair), Witteveen (Committee Vice Chair)

Committee Members Present via Video Conference: Bradley (Regional Chair), Butters, Bylsma, Campion, Darté (Committee Vice-Chair), Easton, Fertich, Foster, Greenwood, Junkin, Redekop, Rigby, Sendzik, Ugulini, Zalepa

Other Councillors Present via Video Conference: Steele

Absent/Regrets: Bellows, Heit

Staff Present in the Council Chamber: D. Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning & Development Services, S. Guglielmi, Technology Support Analyst, A.-M. Norio, Regional Clerk, G. Spezza, Director, Economic Development, R. Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Staff Present via Video Conference: E. Acs, Manager, Community Planning, E. Amirault, Associate Director, Financial Operations & Systems, I. Banach, Acting Director, Community & Long Range Planning, G. Bowie, Planner, P. Busnello, Manager, Development Planning, D. Heyworth, Official Plan Policy Consultant, V. Kuhns, Associate Director, Economic Development, P. Lambert, Director, Infrastructure Planning & Development Engineering, C. Lampman, Manager, Environmental Planning, K. McCauley, Acting Manager, Long Range Planning, C. Millar, Senior Planner, D. Morreale, Director, Development Approvals, S. Norman, Senior Planner, A. Tikky, Planner, M. Trennum, Deputy Regional Clerk, D. Woiceshyn, Chief Executive Officer, Niagara Regional Housing, B. Zvaniga, Interim Commissioner, Public Works

Others Present: N. McDonald, President, Meridian Planning, S. Spitale, Principle - Senior Ecologist, North-South Environmental

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Committee Chair Huson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

3. **PRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Joint-Report on the Niagara Region Official Plan**

Isaiah Banach, Acting Director, Community & Long-Range Planning, and Doug Giles, Acting Commissioner, Planning and Development Services, provided information respecting the Niagara Region Official Plan. Topics of the presentation included:

- Background and Natural Environment Systems Options
- Consultation and Official Plan timelines
- Addressing Housing Affordability
- Strategic Growth Areas
- Land Needs Assessment & Land Need
- Creating Complete Communities
 - Identify and Provide Stability to Employment Areas
 - Coordinating Growth and Infrastructure
- Comprehensive Review
- Addressing Climate Change
- Natural Environment System (NES) Consultation Breakdown
 - Recommended NES Option 3B
- Report Overview

4. **DELEGATIONS**

Moved by Councillor Redekop
Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That David Samis, Rachel DeDon, and Jackie Oblak, **BE PERMITTED** to appear before Committee as individual delegates respecting Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report.

Carried

4.1 **Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report (Report PDS 17-2021 (Agenda Item 5.1))**

4.1.1 Miriam Richards, Resident, City of Welland

Miriam Richards, Resident, City of Welland, appeared before Committee to provide information respecting ecosystem services and the need to maintain and enhance Niagara's natural heritage areas. She requested Committee endorse Natural Environment System Option 3C and Water Resource System 2B.

- 4.1.3 Tom Richardson, Sullivan Mahoney LLP, on behalf of 800460 Ontario Ltd o/a Fruitbelt Developments, and Gorge Holdings Inc.
The delegation request from Tom Richardson was withdrawn.
- 4.1.4 Marcie L. Jacklin, Resident, Town of Fort Erie
Marcie L. Jacklin, resident, Town of Fort Erie, appeared before Committee to share her concerns respecting Niagara Region's process for conducting environmental impact studies and spoke in support of stronger protections for Niagara's Natural Environment System.
- 4.1.2 Linda Manson, Resident, City of Niagara Falls
Linda Manson, Resident, City of Niagara Falls, spoke in opposition to the recommendation to endorse Natural Environment System (NES) option 3B and spoke in support of stronger protections for Niagara's Natural Environment System.
- 4.1.5 David Samis, Niagara Home Builders Association
David Samis, Niagara Home Builders Association, appeared before Committee to provide information respecting the need of an adequate housing supply to support growth and the development of affordable housing and home ownership in Niagara, and spoke in support the Report PDS 17-2021 recommendations.
- 4.1.6 Rachel DeBon, Resident, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Rachel DeBon, Resident, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, shared her personal experience with finding affordable housing in Niagara and shared a video highlighting concerns over the lack of affordable housing for young people. She spoke of a need for consideration of sustainable community living in the new Official Plan.
- 4.1.7 Jackie Oblak, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Public Advisory Committee
Jackie Oblak, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Public Advisory Committee, spoke in support of stronger protections for Niagara's Natural Environment System.
- 4.1.8 Liz Benneian, Resident, Town of Lincoln
Liz Benneian, Resident, Town of Lincoln, appeared before Committee in support of an endorsement of Natural Environment System (NES) Option 3C, and requested committee consider recommending additional actions to further strengthen the protection of Niagara's NES.

5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 PDS 17-2021

Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report

Moved by Councillor Darte

Seconded by Councillor Ugulini

That Report PDS 17-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Council **ENDORSE** Natural Environment System Option 3B, as described in Appendix 6 to Report PDS 17-2021;
2. That consultation **BE INITIATED** as set out in Report PDS 17-2021, with a request that all feedback be received by July 2, 2021, to allow sufficient time for Staff to review those comments and make recommendations based on that feedback; and
3. That Report PDS 17-2021 and all Appendices **BE CIRCULATED** to the Province, the local are municipalities, agencies, stakeholder groups, and all parties who have indicated an interest.

Moved by Councillor Butters

Seconded by Councillor Greenwood

That clause 1 of the motion **BE AMENDED** as follows:

1. That Council **ENDORSE** Natural Environment System Option ~~3B~~ **3C**, as described in Appendix 6 to Report PDS 17-2021.

Recorded Vote:

Yes (7): Bradley, Butters, Darte, Fertich, Greenwood, Huson, Sendzik.

No (8): Easton, Foster, Junkin, Redekop, Rigby, Ugulini, Witteveen, Zalepa.

Defeated

The Committee Chair called the vote on the motion as follows:

That Report PDS 17-2021, dated May 12, 2021, respecting Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That Council **ENDORSE** Natural Environment System Option 3B, as described in Appendix 6 to Report PDS 17-2021;
2. That consultation **BE INITIATED** as set out in Report PDS 17-2021, with a request that all feedback be received by July 2, 2021, to allow sufficient time for Staff to review those comments and make recommendations based on that feedback; and
3. That Report PDS 17-2021 and all Appendices **BE CIRCULATED** to the Province, the local are municipalities, agencies, stakeholder groups, and all parties who have indicated an interest.

Carried

6. CONSENT ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Moved by Councillor Foster
Seconded by Councillor Junkin

That the following items **BE RECEIVED** for information:

PDS-C 32-2021
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Planning and Development Services

ED 11-2021
COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Economic Development

ED 12-2021
Economic Recovery Plan Update 4

Carried

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Councillor Huson
Committee Chair

Matthew Trennum
Deputy Regional Clerk

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

Joint-Report Presentation

Planning and Economic Development Committee
PDS 17-2021

May 12, 2021

Doug Giles, Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Joint-Report on the Niagara Official Plan

Wednesday, May 12, 2021
Planning and Economic Development Committee
Report No. PDS 17-2021

Isaiah Banach

Acting Director, CLRP
Planning and Development Services
Isaiah.Banach@niagararegion.ca

Doug Giles

Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services
Doug.Giles@niagararegion.ca

The Official Plan has not been comprehensively updated in **nearly 50 years**. A new Niagara Official Plan is needed to improve:



OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SYSTEM

Improved mapping of the Region's natural heritage features and water resources



OUR RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Prioritize climate change throughout the plan to achieve sustainable and resilient communities.



OUR HOUSING MIX

Support a diverse range of dwelling types to addresses affordability and market demand.



OUR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Identified areas that are protected for long-term investment in employment uses.



OUR PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Clearer policies for local implementation and coordination with Regional planning.



The Province is the final approval authority for the new Niagara Official Plan. The Provincial deadline for the Official Plan is **July 1, 2022**.

To move the Official Plan forward, a decision is needed on the Natural Environment System Option.



natural environment systems options

01

OPTIONS MAPPING IS A VISUAL AID

Mapping of the options
assists in decision-making.

02

DETAILED MAPPING WILL BE CREATED

Detailed mapping will be
prepared after the option
is selected in consultation
with local municipalities
and the NPCA.

03

WE WILL CONSULT ON THE NES

There will be significant
opportunities for public and
stakeholders comments.





12

public information
centres

1,220

survey responses
received

105

meetings with local
planners and councils

250+

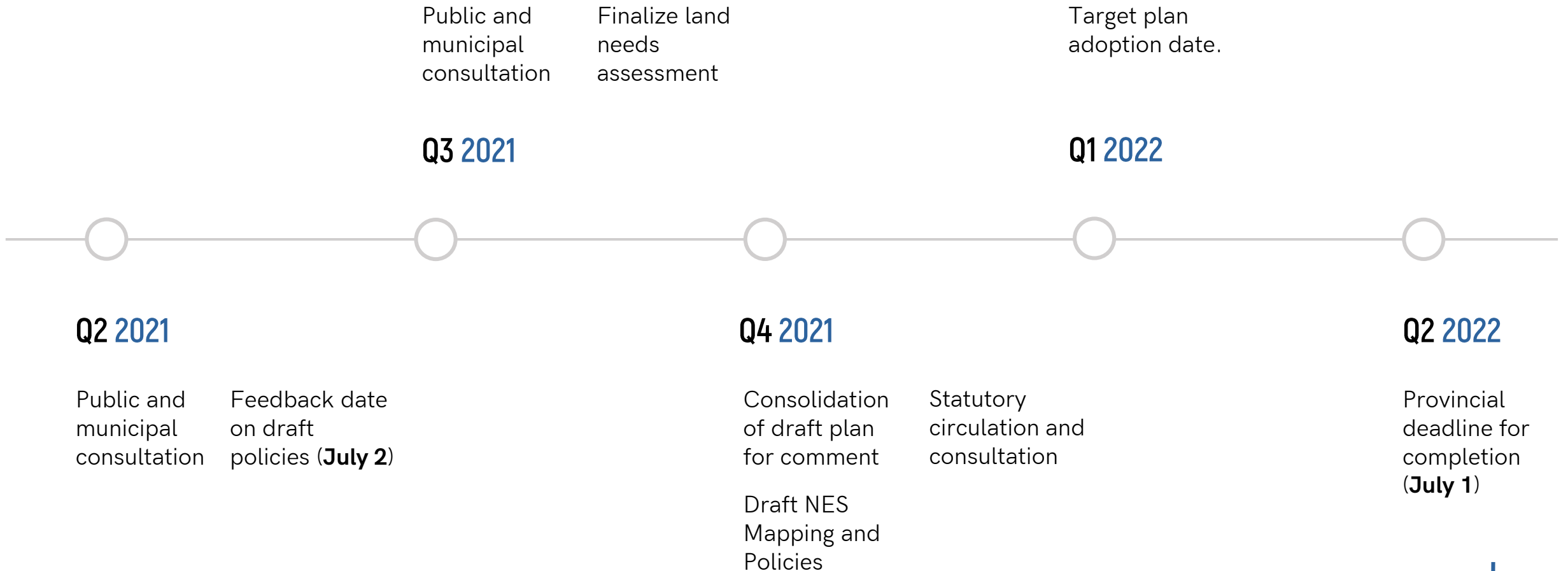
meetings with various
stakeholders

34

reports brought forward
to council

Additional consultation
is scheduled for
Summer and Fall 2021.

official plan timeline

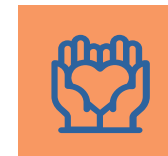
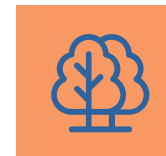




The new Official Plan **will balance the interests of current and future residents.**

Challenges such as housing affordability, the natural environment, climate change, economic development may not have consensus from all parties.

There are many ways to address these challenges. As long as Council's decision conforms with Provincial Policy, we can have a **made in Niagara solution.**



we can address housing affordability.

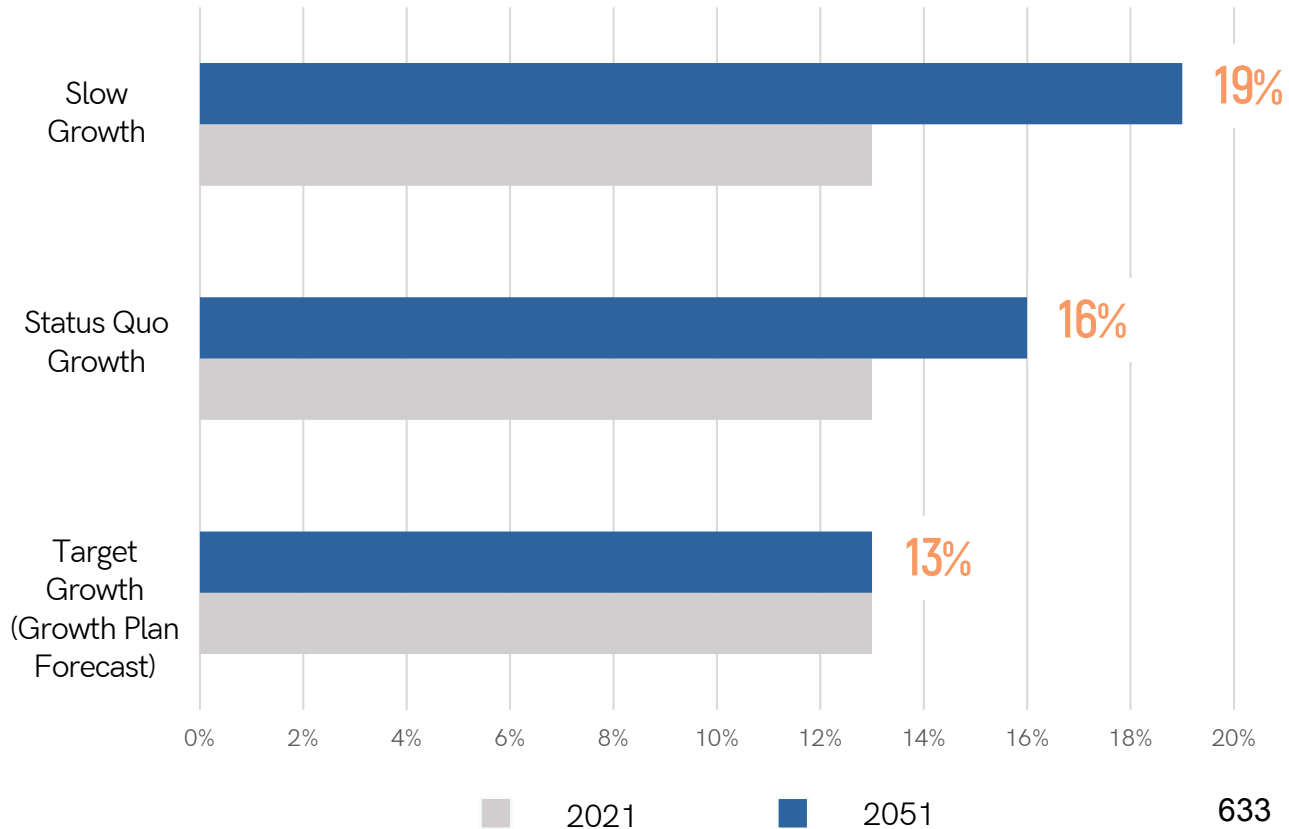


Draft policies:

- Support the diversification of our housing stock, especially higher-density dwelling units.
- Establish a Regional affordable housing target that corresponds to core housing need.
- Direct growth in ways that support intensification and the development of affordable housing.
- Promote transit and active transportation options for affordable and convenient travel across Niagara.

housing affordability

Rates of Core Housing Need Under
Different Growth Scenarios, CANCEA



We need to build more housing or core housing need will get worse.

Achieving the Growth Plan's minimum forecasts will help to maintain the Region's rates of core housing need.



we can **direct growth strategically.**



Draft policies:

- Direct a majority of new development to existing Built-Up Areas.
- Require local municipalities to develop intensification strategies.
- Identify Strategic Growth Areas and corresponding density targets for each.
- Direct significant growth to Strategic Growth Areas, including high-density, mixed use development.
- Locate public service facilities and public transit infrastructure within Strategic Growth Areas.



The majority of the Region's forecasted growth will be directed to the Urban Area, **with 56% directed to existing Built-Up Areas.**

This exceeds the current target of 40%. It also exceed the minimum of 50% required by the Growth Plan.

More intensification means less land is needed in the Designated Greenfield Area and for settlement area boundary expansions.



strategic growth areas

There are four kinds of Strategic Growth Areas (SGA) identified. Combined, these areas are anticipated to accommodate **approximately 30% of the Region's growth**.

MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS

minimum density target
125 people and jobs/ha



REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRES

minimum density target
125 people and jobs/ha



DISTRICT PLAN AREAS

minimum density target
100 people and jobs/ha



URBAN GROWTH CENTRE

minimum density target
150 people and jobs/ha



land needs assessment



We must follow a Land Needs Methodology released by the Province, including focus on market demand.



The Land Needs Assessment is informed by data from specific background studies.



It determines how much land is needed to house and employ our future population.

The outputs of the Land Needs Assessment are based on the recommendations of various strategies.

- ✓ Population Forecasts
- ✓ Housing Forecasts
- ✓ Employment Forecasts
- ✓ Intensification Rates
- ✓ Density Targets
- ✓ Employment Area Boundaries
- ✓ Employment Area Supply
- ✓ Non-Development Natural Heritage Areas
- ✓ Vacant Employment Area (ha)
- ✓ Vacant Community Area (ha)



draft results land need

An addition of **460 hectares** of Community Area and a surplus of **20 hectares** of Employment Land.

	Existing Area (ha)	Existing % of Total*	Potential Addition (ha)	Change in Total Area (%)
Settlement Area	35,962	19%	+460	1%
Growth Plan Prime Agricultural Area	95,481	52%	+3,300	4%
Greenbelt Protected Countryside	43,542	24%	+1,393 (set)	3%

Also an addition of 38,000+ ha of Provincial Natural Heritage System

*other designations represent approximately 5% of total



we can create complete communities.



Draft policies:

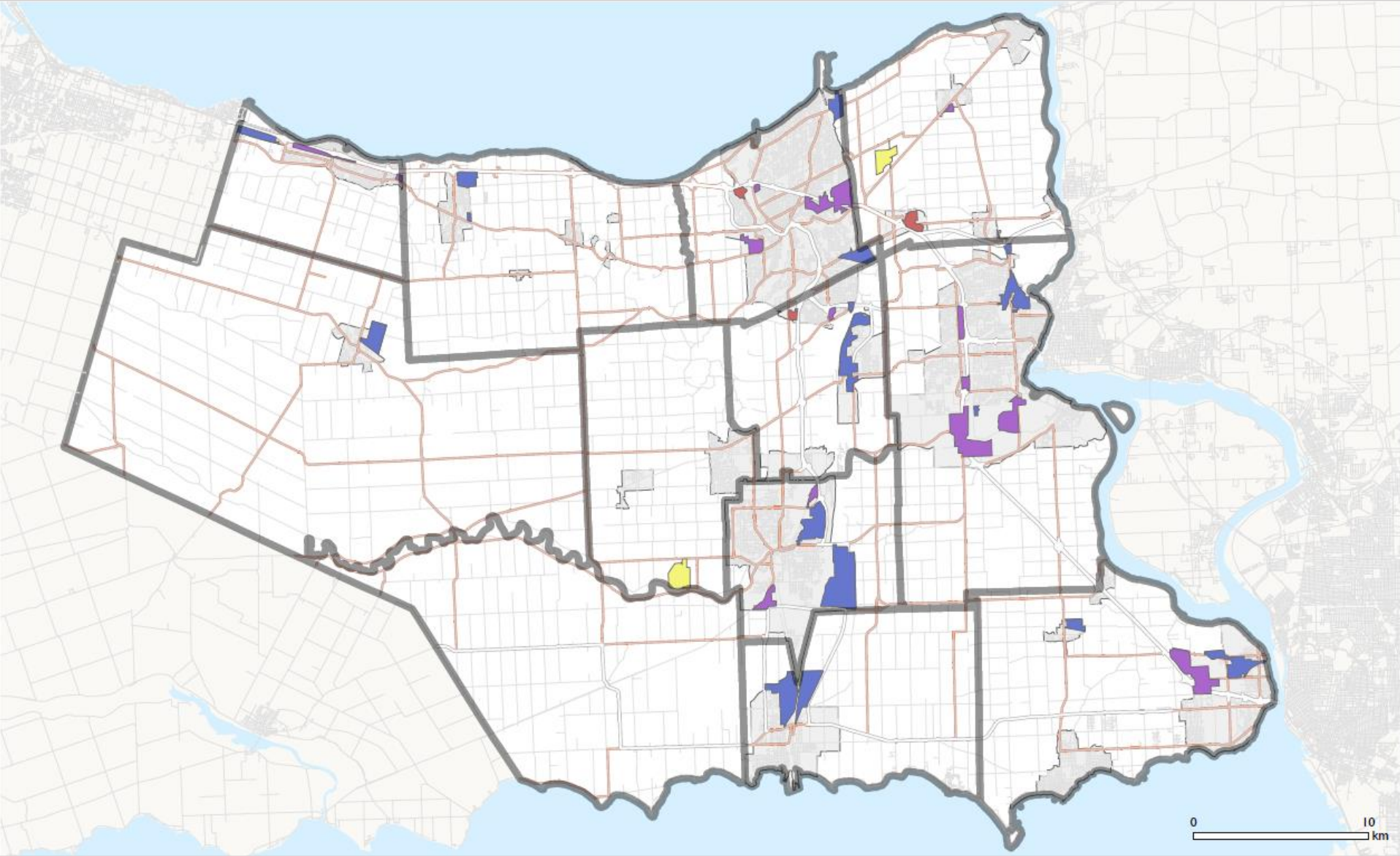
- Require Designated Greenfield Areas across the Region to achieve a minimum density of 50 people and jobs per hectare.
- Require local municipalities to undertake secondary planning to guide development, including within Strategic Growth Areas
- Apply Urban Design policies and principles to new development and the creation of the public realm.
- Use a complete streets approach for Regional Road improvement projects.

we can **identify and provide stability to employment areas.**



Draft policies:

- Map the boundaries of employment areas.
- Define employment area sub-groupings, including core, dynamic, and knowledge and innovation.
- Establish density targets for vacant lands within employment areas.
- Regulate how and when employment areas can convert into more sensitive land uses, such as residential or institutional.



LEGEND

- Core Employment Areas
- Dynamic Employment Areas
- Knowledge & Innovation Employment Areas
- Airport Lands

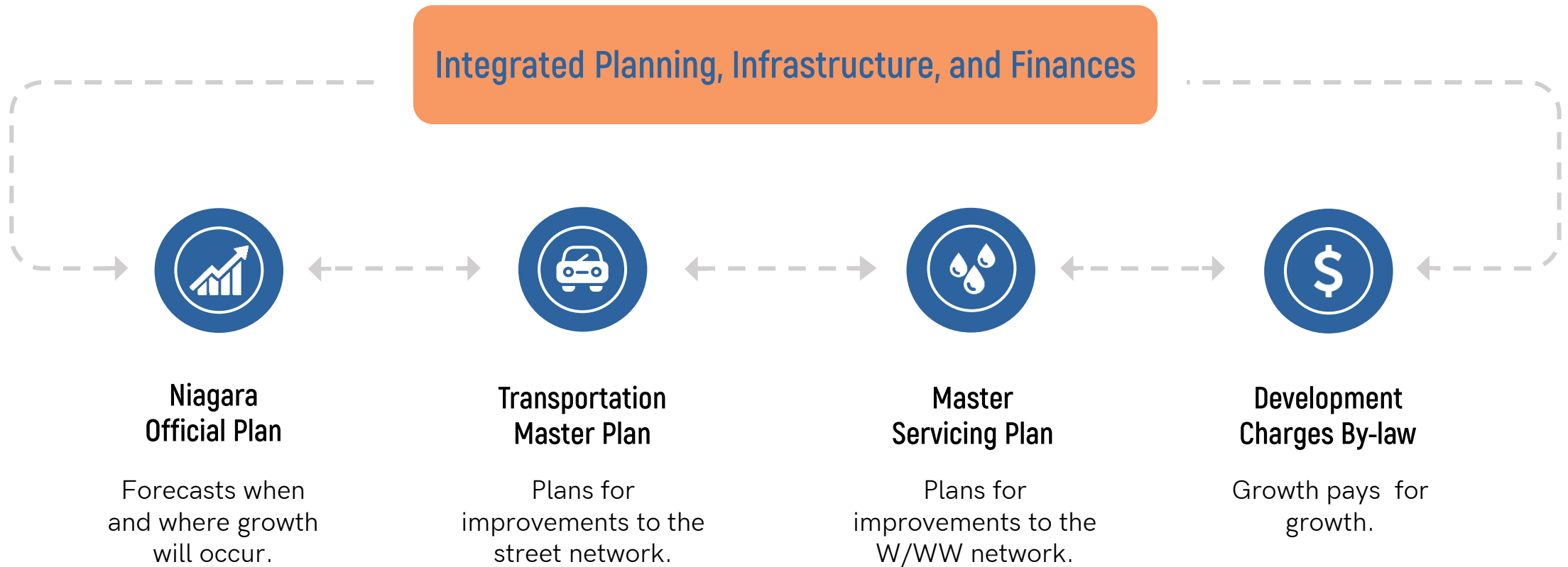
we can **continue to coordinate growth and infrastructure.**



Draft policies:

- Identify population and employment forecasts for the Region that align with Growth Plan targets.
- Ensure there is sufficient infrastructure in places where growth is planned to occur.
- Use forecasts to address the current and future needs for infrastructure, including drinking water, wastewater, waste, and transportation.

comprehensive review



we can **address climate change.**



Draft policies:

- Prioritize investments in public transit and active transportation infrastructure.
- Promote the design of compact, mixed-use communities that use land wisely.
- Encourage development in existing urban areas and strategic growth areas.
- Integrate low impact development and green infrastructure into new development.
- Enhance natural features that help to store greenhouse gas emissions.



climate change program

1

policy conformity review

Prepare draft policies and review for conformity with Provincial policy and legislation.

2

climate change modeling & projections

The Region is working with the Ontario Climate Consortium to prepare regionally specific climate data and forecasting.

3

greening initiative

Research, consult, and prepare options for a greening initiative with the overall goal of increasing tree planting across the Region.





the natural environment

The Niagara Official Plan will establish an integrated natural environment system (NES) that includes both the natural heritage system and water resource system.

The new NES will represent an improvement over the existing system and address many known gaps.



coordination with growth management.

The sooner the Natural Environment System is established, the sooner natural features and areas can be better managed and protected. That will help determine where growth can be accommodated outside of those areas.

NES consultation breakdown

130

individual points of
engagement

8 public
information
centres

7 stakeholder
meetings
held

6 reports to
regional
council

plus several meetings and presentations to:

Local Councils and Local Staff

Indigenous Groups

Region's Planning Advisory
Committee (PAC)

Agricultural Policy and Action
Committee (APAC)

Niagara Parks Commission

Provincial Ministries

Niagara Escarpment Commission

NPCA Board, Staff and PAC



recommended NES Option 3B

1

Exceeds the
required provincial
standards.

2

Allows local
municipalities to
plan based on
local context.

3

Balances feedback
received through
engagement.





There will be changes to environmental planning in the Region based on Provincial policy, including:

- ✓ The need for a systems based approach to natural environment planning.
- ✓ The need for a comprehensive water resource system.
- ✓ The identification of the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System.



Regardless of the options selected the following improvements should also be anticipated:

- ✓ Significantly improved mapping of the natural environment system.
- ✓ Modernized definitions, criteria, and methodology for the identification of environmental features
- ✓ Better alignment with the regulations and land use policies of the NPCA.
- ✓ Improved and more understandable policy.

report overview

PDS 17-2021 is a comprehensive report on all Official Plan topics. It includes 18 Appendix Categories.



Executive Overviews that provide a summary of topic areas.



Background Reports that provide background information and technical details.



Draft Policies and Schedules that are included for most topic areas. Comments requested by **July 2, 2021**.





The Official Plan is outdated.

Updates are needed to secure future prosperity and address modern challenges.



Increase housing supply.

The Region has a significant affordability problem. More housing is needed, particularly higher-density housing.



A balanced approach.

The Official Plan balances feedback received with best practices and Provincial policy.



A decision on the NES is needed.

Staff require direction on the NES to proceed with detailed policy & mapping development.



Everything is still draft.

Draft policies on various parts of the Official Plan are available for review and comment.



Consultation is a key component.

To date, staff have undertaken significant consultation. More consultation is planned for Summer and Fall 2021.



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 05, 2021 11:09:41 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 05 May 2021 11:09:30 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Miriam Richards

Address

[REDACTED]

City

WELLAND

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Planning and Economic Development Committee

Presentation Topic

Regional Plan / Natural Heritage and Water Resource Systems

Presentation includes slides

Yes

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

My presentation outlines the scientific case for protecting and enhancing ecosystem services in Niagara. Ecosystem services are ecological functions that underlie healthy living and a healthy economy. Ecosystem services include flood protection, air purification, carbon storage, pollination, and climate change resilience. Ecosystem services are free, but worth billions of dollars, and they are far more expensive to replace than to protect. I will urge Niagara Region to adopt strong measures to protect and restore ecosystem services by supporting strong Natural Heritage and Water Resource systems in the Official Plan.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 05, 2021 10:45:55 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 05 May 2021 22:45:45 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

Marcie L. Jacklin

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Fort Erie

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

standing committee

Regional Council

Presentation Topic

Concerns about Official Plan - Environmental Impact Studies

Presentation includes slides

Yes

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

I would like to speak on May 12/21 to the Planning and Economic Development Committee about the Niagara Region Official Plan. Specifically I would like to address Policy 7.B.2.1 in the current official plan. This policy deals with the Environmental Impact Study. I have studied this particular policy and believe that the process is biased toward the developers interest and contrary to the public interest. I will be outlining the biases in my presentation. I am also wondering how many times this policy has altered development significantly in favour of retaining environmental sensitive areas within the past 10 years.

Video Consent

Yes





Unbalanced Planning

Policy 7.B.2.1 in the current official plan

- “An Environmental Impact Study (EIS) required under this Plan shall be submitted with the development application and **shall be prepared and signed by a qualified biologist or environmental planner** in accordance with the Environmental Impact Study Guidelines (EIS Guidelines) adopted by Regional Council. An EIS shall be prepared to the **satisfaction of the appropriate Planning Authority, in consultation with the NPCA and the other commenting body.** Within Settlement Areas as delineated in this Plan, an EIS shall be prepared to the satisfaction of the appropriate local municipality **in consultation with the Region and the NPCA.** Outside of Settlement Areas, an EIS shall be prepared to the satisfaction of the Region, in consultation with the appropriate local municipality and the NPCA. The Planning Authority, the other commenting body and the NPCA shall work collaboratively throughout the EIS process.”

Biased contrary to the public interest

The EIS shall be prepared and signed by a qualified biologist or environmental planner.

- * What are appropriate qualifications?
- * Why isn't this process regulated in any manner, i.e certification?
- * What is the penalty for an incomplete or inaccurate EIS?

More bias

The EIS is carried out at the owner's expense.

- * Why would the owner hire someone to write produce an EIS that agrees with the Region's conservation or environmental overlays?
- * Are there any examples of an EIS that actually stated the property or parts of the property should not be developed?

More bias

- Although the municipality, region, MNRF and NPCA have some authority in the decision making, they have few staff members with expertise i.e. scientific backgrounds in ecology, biology etc..
- * Those with expertise in MNRF are not allowed to do site visits, leave the office or attend meetings.
- * Many experts were fired from NPCA several years ago. See the Auditor General's Report on NPCA.
- * In some cases site visits are minimal, and in some cases done by Planners not biologist.

Rapidly decline in natural areas that the public now wants due to COVID

- Although developers can have zoning designations on environmentally sensitive areas changed the opposite is not true e.g. increasing floodplains
- I am also wondering how many times this policy has been effective in retaining environmental sensitive areas within the past 10 years?

Buffers

- Most regions that have responsible planning for flooding mitigation and healthy environments have adopted 120 metre buffers around sensitive areas. Encroachment of environmentally sensitive is increasing.

Neighbourhoods

Cutting trees down or destroying Provincially Significant Wetlands can have negative impacts on neighbouring properties in terms of flooding issues etc. (See Point Abino Road and the Palmwood development in Fort Erie)

Developing for communities

- Why is the region developing for developers and not developing for the communities.
- Remember we voted for you to change this!!

From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 05, 2021 12:00:32 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Wednesday, 05 May 2021 12:00:27 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name
Linda Manson

Address
[Redacted]

City
Niagara Falls

Postal
[Redacted]

Phone
[Redacted]

Email
[Redacted]

Organization

standing committee
Planning and Economic Development Committee

Presentation Topic
Agenda Item 5.1: PDS 17-2021 Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy

Report — specifically the portion concerning the Natural Environment System [NES]

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

My spoken presentation will address ways in which the proposed Natural Heritage System [NHS] component of the NES (albeit an amazing amount of work, reflective of public feedback and moving in the right direction) is simply not enough: Missing intended marks of the mandated Provincial Policy Statement; and missing opportunities to aim for higher targets (overcoming planning loopholes) in environmental protection. MY REQUEST OF COMMITTEE: Set a clear course to the BEST for Niagara — the most forward-directed protection of our remaining natural heritage — at the Regional Official Plan level. Send a clear message that our natural environment must be Niagara's KEY priority: The solid foundation on which to grow — in SMARTER ways.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 06, 2021 9:24:11 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 06 May 2021 09:24:04 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

David Samis

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[REDACTED]

City

niagara on the lake

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

dsamis@phelpshomes.com

Organization

niagara home builders association

standing committee

Planning and Economic Development Committee

Presentation Topic

official plan

Presentation includes slides
No

Previously presented topic
No

Presentation Details
would like to speak regarding the official plan

Video Consent
Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Thursday, May 06, 2021 9:43:16 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Thursday, 06 May 2021 09:43:12 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name
Rachel DeBon

Address
[Redacted]

City
Virgil

Postal
[Redacted]

Phone
[Redacted]

Email
[Redacted]

Organization

standing committee
Planning and Economic Development Committee

Presentation Topic
Housing Affordability - Official Plan

Presentation includes slides
No

Previously presented topic
No

Presentation Details
Discussing the Official Plan and how it affects housing affordability.

Video Consent
Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Friday, May 07, 2021 7:26:47 AM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Friday, 07 May 2021 07:26:41 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name

jackie oblak

Address

[REDACTED]

City

Fonthill

Postal

[REDACTED]

Phone

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

Organization

NPCA Public Advisory Committee

standing committee

Planning and Economic Development Committee

Presentation Topic

Developing a strong NHS

Presentation includes slides

No

Previously presented topic

No

Presentation Details

Benefits for current and future residents of developing an adequate Natural Heritage System in the Niagara Region. Encourage Council to direct staff to follow 3c option.

Video Consent

Yes



From: [PF-Mailbox-01](#)
To: [Norio, Ann-Marie](#); [Trennum, Matthew](#)
Subject: FW: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee
Date: Friday, May 7, 2021 3:34:56 PM

From: Niagara Region Website
Sent: Friday, 07 May 2021 15:34:51 (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Clerks
Subject: Online Form - Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

Request to Speak at a Standing Committee

To reply, copy the email address from below and put into 'To'. (if resident entered their email address)

Name
Liz Benneian

Address
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City
Jordan Station

Postal
[Redacted]

Phone
[Redacted]

Email
[Redacted]

Organization

standing committee
Planning and Economic Development Committee

Presentation Topic
PDS 17-2021 Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report -

specifically, the Natural Environment System

Presentation includes slides

Yes

Previously presented topic

Yes

Presentation only new info

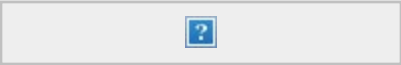
Yes

Presentation Details

I will address how choosing the best NES option will fit in with the Region's Climate Change plans and reduce GHGs and how it will maintain the Region's agricultural, tourism and viticultural base. I will ask the Councillors to choose the most environmentally protective option for the NES.

Video Consent

Yes



Delegation to the PEDC meeting May 12 2021

Re. Report PDS 17-2021 - Regional Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report, specifically the Natural Environment System

By Liz Benneian

Good afternoon Chair and Councillors. Thank you for allowing me to speak about the Natural Environment System.

I would like to start by thanking Regional staff for the work they have put into this comprehensive report and also for the extensive public consultation they have conducted. Their thoroughness in this work for establishing Niagara's first Natural Heritage and Water Resource System is much appreciated. It will help the Region plan better for growth, for the protection of our local ecology and for the challenges that climate change will bring.

Staff have provided you with three Natural Environment System Options today. I am here to argue that the best option is the one that is most protective of the environment, Option 3C, with some enhancements, as I call it, 3C+.

By defining where future growth shouldn't go, a NES directs growth to where it should go. What this means for our communities is less flooded basements and less commuting times. It means less greenhouse gas emissions and more green infrastructure. It means less contentious and costly battles over development applications. And it means protecting what's precious for future generations while preserving our important green infrastructure and natural areas for today's citizens.

A strong NES will be necessary to meet the challenges of Climate Change. This April, our Prime Minister announced a 40 to 45 % GHG emission reduction target by 2030, from 2005 levels. He also announced Canada will become a Net Zero emitter by 2050. Canada will not be able to meet these goals without the help of municipalities.

As the Region's own report on Climate Change states: "Municipalities have been identified by the Government of Canada as being key partners in the fight against climate change, as they influence 50% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Land use planning is one of the most effective processes for local adaptation to climate change." So, just to emphasize that again: The most effective tool municipalities have for controlling climate change is good urban planning. As it says in the St. Catharines Climate Change report: "Municipalities are at the front lines of climate change and as a result are also the ideal, and potentially best-positioned governments, to implement policies to protect communities and property from climate related risks."

Protecting the natural areas that provide our cities with the green infrastructure services that mitigate floods, prevent erosion and help cool our communities, not only will help to meet our country's GHG reduction goals, they will also save taxpayers millions of dollars that would otherwise have to be spent to build the grey infrastructure of culverts and other stormwater management systems that don't provide all the benefits of green infrastructure.

The Region's climate change report lists protecting natural heritage and water resources as one of the 6 top ways "to build resilient communities that are able to withstand longer-term weather impacts".

To get the maximum benefits as listed above, you will need to select the best NES Option, 3C+.

The value of the ecosystem services our natural areas provide cannot be dismissed. Again, a study cited in your own Climate Change Discussion paper shows Peel's wetlands, forests and meadows, within just two subwatersheds, mitigate 100-year floods and provide the equivalent of \$704 million worth of engineered stormwater services.

Over the past few weeks, I have read the Region's Climate Change Discussion Paper and The Town Lincoln and the City of St. Catharines Climate Change Adaptation Plans. The data in them is alarming. For instance, the St. Catharines report states there will be an increase in the number of days of over 30 C° from 13 days per year historically, to 50 days by 2050. The hottest days will rise from 33 C to 37 C° in 2050. Precipitation will also significantly increase through all seasons but summer, causing an increasing flooding risk and the overloading of stormwater management systems, with all the additional sewage problems that entails. I could go on, but the bottom line is this: **we have to stop regarding natural systems as something nice to have, and instead recognize this critical green infrastructure for what it is, literally a life-saving and cost-saving form of insurance against the worst financial and human costs of climate change.**

Again, you have the opportunity to choose the best option for the Natural Heritage System, please choose 3C+.

The key difference between the 3B option and the 3C option is that 3C also includes small linkages outside of, and inside of, settlement areas. These linkages, even small ones, are vitally important. If the significant features aren't linked, it's not a system and they won't survive over time. Unfortunately, 3C only includes them in urban areas, if they are in a "natural state". We say even if they are not in a natural state, they should be included because they can be naturalized.

Small linkages can be no more than a sidewalk with a little vegetation on each side and still serve as important linear passages for everything from birds and pollinators to larger creatures who will use them at night when people aren't around.

It's also important that potential linkages of all sizes within urban areas be mapped because cities are dynamic, and they change over time. What might now be a parking lot between a wetland and a woodland in a city might, at some point, when that land is redeveloped, provide the opportunity to establish a link, but if it's not mapped, that opportunity is lost forever. This idea is contained in the idea of 3C+.

The second critical difference between 3B and 3C is that 3C includes supporting features, including enhancement areas, in settlement areas. By including enhancement areas and

supporting features in 3C, you would be helping our urban areas mitigate and adapt to climate change. You would also be providing citizens with a little bit more greenspace where they live.

It was surprising to read in the Glendale project report that Niagara has the second lowest amount of parkland per capita than any Region in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. By selecting 3C, you would at least be ensuring that there is an opportunity to increase greenspaces for people where they live.

The third critical difference between 3B and 3C is that 3C provides mandatory non-specified buffers to natural heritage features inside of settlement areas. That's better than, 3B but we would rather have minimum prescribed buffers. As we know, developer-funded studies whittle buffers down to nothing and if there's a significant feature in an urban area, it deserves the protection that a mandatory minimum buffer provides.

It's important to note that throughout the staff report, staff are clear that there is not much difference in the land required for implementation of 3B and 3C. For instance, when it comes to adding supporting features and areas including enhancement areas in 3C, the report says: "the amount of land included within these areas is expected to be limited in settlement areas due to the extent of developed area and limited opportunities to incorporate other natural areas into the NES."

In terms of adding small linkages as 3C suggests, the staff report says **linkages would only amount to .1% of a percent of the total land in the urban areas.**

While the land requirements are almost negligible between the two options, the inclusion of linkages, enhancement areas and other features in urban areas could make a significant difference in keeping our remaining natural areas, in our urban communities, viable into the future.

And finally, given the opportunity to do everything you can to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to provide a healthier environment for your citizens, why wouldn't you choose 3C or our 3C+ over 3B?

We know that Environment Canada says a minimum requirement for a healthy ecosystem requires the retainment of 30% of land in a natural state. According to the staff report, Niagara has 18.9% of its land in tree cover. We also know from Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Watershed reports that our forests are fragmented and in poor shape, consistently receiving a "D" rating as does our surface water.

With development pressure increasing in Niagara, there will be no second chances to save what's left of our natural heritage.

This is your opportunity to leave a natural legacy for Niagara's children and grandchildren. I ask you to please choose option 3C+.

Thank you.

The key differences between 3C and 3C+ is that 3C+ calls for:

- * minimum prescribed buffers for natural heritage features inside of settlement areas (vs mandatory, non-prescribed buffers in 3C)
- * mapping of all potential linkages of all sizes in urban areas, whether they are in a "natural state" or not to protect the possibility of their future implementation (vs only mapping small linkages in urban areas if they are in a natural state)

MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 32-2021

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

Date: May 12, 2021

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

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

Community and Long Range Planning

Current Status of Operations

Staff in the Community and Long Range Planning group continue to proceed predominantly in a work-from-home setting. Occasional visits are made to Regional Headquarters based on specific needs.

Managers have daily electronic check-ins with staff, regular project meetings, and weekly team-wide meetings to ensure projects are staying on track. This arrangement will continue through the summer, at minimum.

Significant work was undertaken for the Official Plan Joint Report, included in the May PEDC agenda as PDS 17-2021. Work on the Official Plan continues over the coming months, with numerous public information centres and formal and informal consultation planned through the spring and summer. The next reporting milestone will be in late summer 2021.

Development Planning & Approval Services

Current Status of Operations

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.

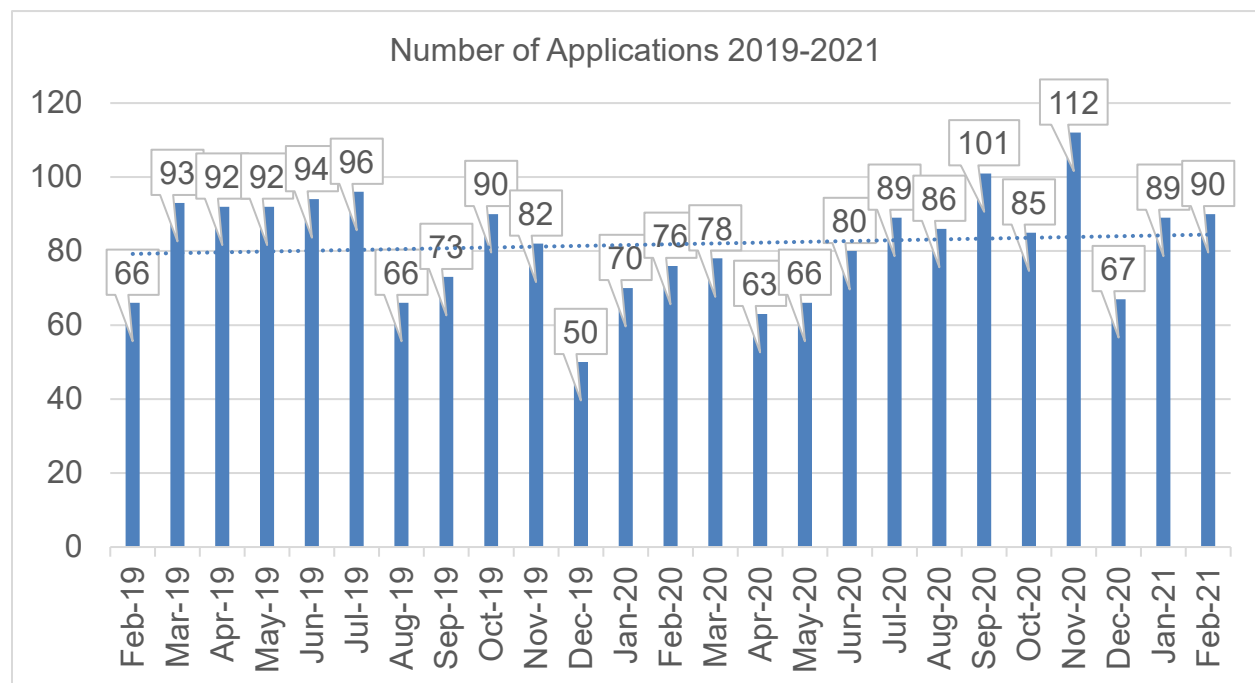
The following development volumes were received by the department during February and March 2021 (2020 data shown in brackets; April data was not complete at the time of writing this memo and will be reported on in June):

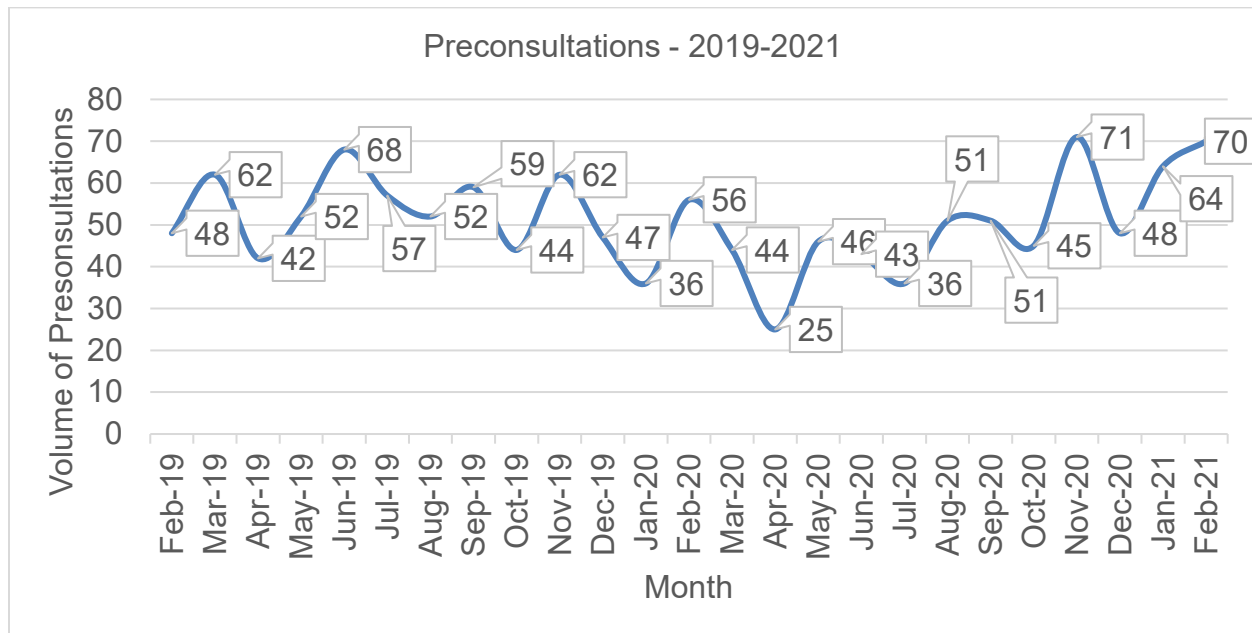
February

- Planning Applications (includes zonings, subdivisions, site plans, etc.) – **40** (30)
- Engineering Applications (includes servicing reviews, site plans, etc.) – **16** (16)
- Private Septic Applications – **34** (30)
- Pre-consultations – **70** (56)

The total volume of applications in February (90 excluding pre-consultations) represents an 18.4% increase from the February 2020 (76 applications). Pre-consultations experienced a 25% increase from the February 2020 volume (56 development proposals). The two graphs below illustrate the development applications for the last 24 months, as well as the pre-consultation proposals.

February Graphs for Number of Applications and Pre-consultations:





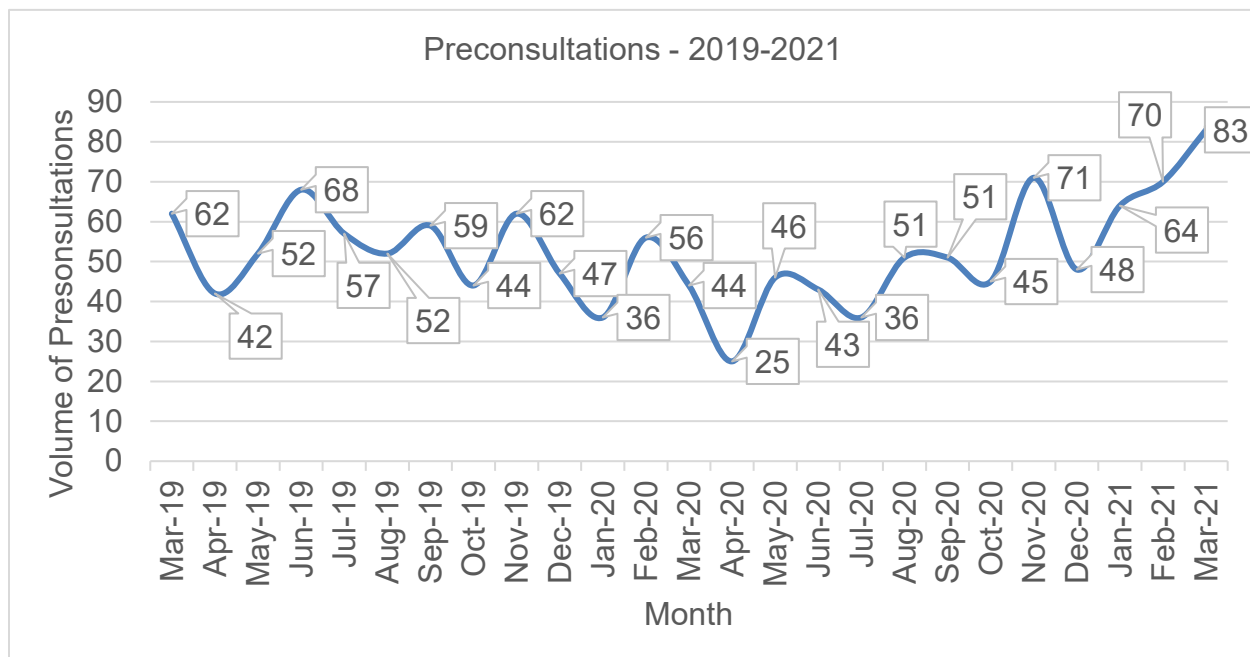
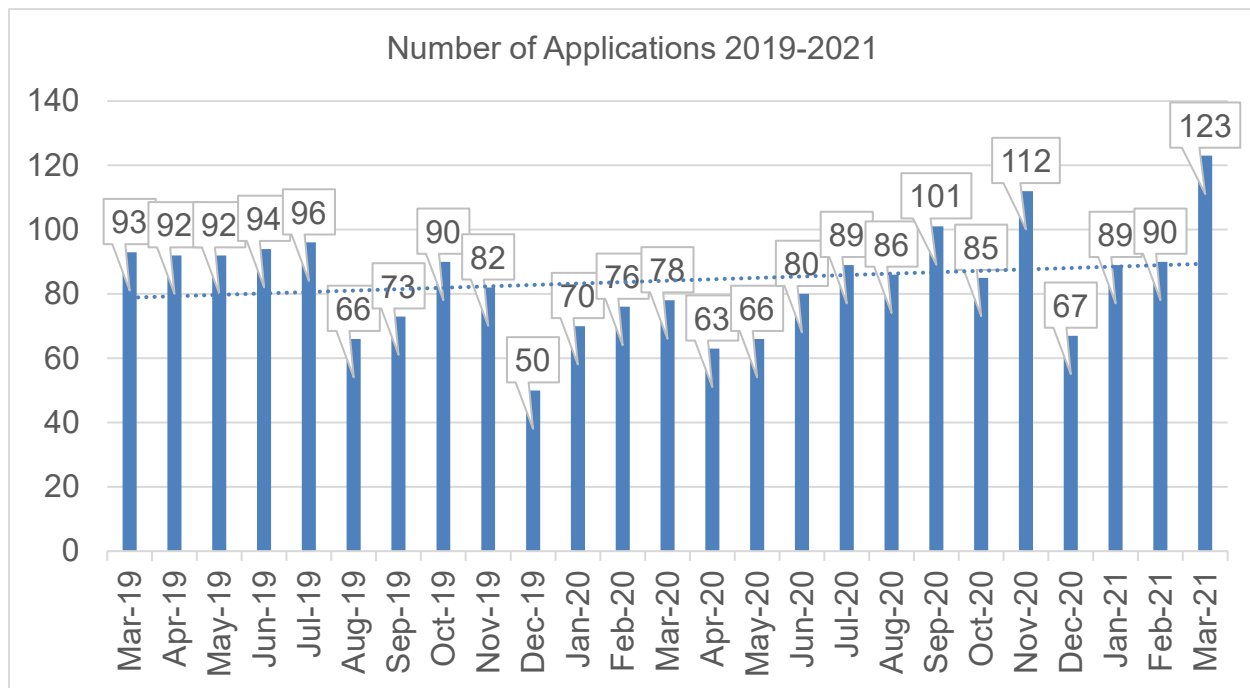
Notes:

- a) March 2020 – Lockdown imposed mid-March resulted in beginning of volume decline due to pause in pre-consultation meetings
- b) April 2020 – First full month in lockdown resulted in lowest volume of 25 over past two years
- c) May 2020 – Volumes began return to normal levels as local area municipalities moved to virtual pre-consultation meetings

March

- Planning Applications (includes zonings, subdivisions, site plans, etc.) – **56** (31)
- Engineering Applications (includes servicing reviews, site plans, etc.) – **25** (20)
- Private Septic Applications – **42** (27)
- Pre-consultations – **83** (44)

The total volume of applications in March (123 excluding pre-consultations) represents a 57.7% increase from the March 2020 (78 applications). Pre-consultations experienced an 88% increase from the March 2020 volume (44 development proposals). The two graphs below illustrate the development applications for the last 24 months, as well as the pre-consultation proposals.

March Graphs for Number of Applications and Pre-consultations:**Notes:**

- a) March 2020 – Lockdown imposed mid-March resulted in beginning of volume decline due to pause in pre-consultation meetings
- b) April 2020 – First full month in lockdown resulted in lowest volume of 25 over past two years
- c) May 2020 – Volumes began return to normal levels as local area municipalities moved to virtual pre-consultation meetings

Infrastructure Planning & Development Engineering

Current Status of Operations

Development Engineering

Staff 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, staff 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. Staff are working on the SWM Guidelines Project with Wood Consulting Engineers and are meeting regularly with the Technical Steering Committee that consists of local municipal and NPCA representatives. Participation in the MECP sessions and next steps for the proposed changes to the Consolidated Linear Infrastructure ECA Process for the entire sanitary or stormwater management system has been an ongoing focus. 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

For the 2021 W&WW Master Servicing Plan (MSP) Update project, Public Information Centre #1 went live virtually on the project website with a commenting period until May 5: <https://niagararegion.ca/projects/www-master-servicing-plan/default.aspx>. The first major coordination and consultation meeting with W&WW team and Local Municipalities was held on April 8. Subsequently, there will be individual one-on-one meetings with each local municipality or servicing area. 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/early 2022. The resulting growth capital water and wastewater projects are an essential input for the Development Charges Background Study and By-law update.

We continue to lead the Pollution Prevention Control Plan project for West Niagara in partnership with Grimsby, Lincoln, and West Lincoln analyzing the collective sanitary sewer collection system while identifying priority areas on wet weather mitigation.

Niagara 2051 represents the 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, to accommodate the anticipated growth out to 2051.

Development Industry Liaison

Staff 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. Staff are participating in the development application process for the Linhaven and Gilmore Long Term Care (LTC) Redevelopment Projects and coordinating with St. Catharines and Fort Erie, respectively, as well as the MTO, and other review agencies to ensure that site plan approval and timelines associated with this project remain on track (Government funding is tied to this as well). Additionally Staff are participating with development industry meetings (NHBA) to continue to foster our relationship with the residential development industry and to keep them apprised of the various corporate wide projects and initiatives the Region is working on.

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

Subject: Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Council **RECEIVE** Report PDS 17-2021, which provides significant information and draft policies for the Niagara Official Plan;
2. That Council **ENDORSE** Natural Environment System Option 3B or an alternative Natural Environment System Option, as described in this Report and Appendix 6;
2. That consultation **BE INITIATED** as set out in this Report, with a request for feedback by July 2, 2021, to allow sufficient time for Staff to review those comments and make recommendations based on that feedback; and
3. That this Report and all Appendices **BE CIRCULATED** to the Province, local municipalities, agencies, and stakeholder groups, and all parties who have indicated an interest.

Key Facts

- This Report provides a comprehensive outline of the Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”). It includes the following components:
 - Executive Overviews of many Official Plan policy sections;
 - Background Reports for sections, where available; and
 - Draft policies for many sections.
- With the exception of the Natural Environment System Options, staff are not requesting any decisions from Council. The information provided is for information and further consultation.
- This Report sets out a recommendation for the Natural Environment System (“NES”) Option 3B. This option was selected with careful consideration of all technical work completed on the project to date, feedback gathered at nearly 130 individual points urban areas of the region. The Option selected provides enhanced protection while still balancing other important considerations.

- All NES Options are an improvement over the existing Official Plan systems. For this and other reasons, Regional staff do not oppose any of the Options, should they be preferred, and all Options could be designed and implemented.
- Critically, a decision on the NES Options should be made now, so that the next phase of work on the natural environment work program can begin; being the development of the mapping and policies for the NES, based on the selected Option. The NES Option decision influences outcomes for other policies.
- For many topics, draft policies and background reports are included for review and discussion. Staff will receive input and report further in the summer and fall 2021.
- The *Growth Plan* requires the NOP to contain policies allocating local population and employment forecasts to 2051. Through the Land Needs Assessment, the Region determines if additional lands are needed for community area (generally, residential lands and mixed use) or employment area (generally, traditional industrial lands).
- This Report sets out the NOP steps through to completion in early 2022. The next major reporting will be after the consultation noted above, in late summer 2021, at which time the Region will report on that consultation and provide a recommendation on land needs.
- The Province is the approval authority for the NOP. This means that the NOP can only come in to effect if the Province agrees with its content, including that it conforms, is consistent with, or does not conflict with, applicable Provincial Policies. The Region will continue to engage the Province on draft policy and process. The required date for the Region to adopt the NOP remains July 1, 2022.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations directly related to this report.

Council approved the resources to complete the new Niagara Official Plan (NOP) over a 5 year period as part of the 2017 Budget Process. The NOP is predominantly funded through Development Charges.

Analysis

The NOP is the first comprehensive review since the original Policy Plan was approved in the early 1970s.

The NOP process – in its current form – started in 2017. Before that, other Official Plan initiatives like Imagine Niagara were completed, which provided certain direction that carried forward to the NOP process. Other projects started prior to the NOP have been merged with the NOP work program.

The NOP is a long range planning document that implements a planning horizon to 2051, which conforms with the timeframe in *A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2019, amended 2020) (“*Growth Plan*”).

The requirements for an Official Plan is set out in the *Planning Act, 1990*. Additionally, the NOP must be consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020), conform with the *Growth Plan*, the *Greenbelt Plan* and not conflict with the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*. Decisions of Council and advice from staff must also meet these requirements.

Until now, background reports have been reported by subject matter. We are now reporting subject matters and policies together since they are interconnected. For this reason, we have shared NOP policies on most subjects, so they can be reviewed comprehensively.

This Report includes the following six parts:

1. Why a new Official Plan
2. Official Plan Pillar Statements
3. Consultation
4. Decision on the Natural Environment System Option
5. What is Included in this Report
6. What is Happening Next

1. Why a New Official Plan

For many reasons, Niagara needs a whole new Official Plan. Some of the key reasons are as follows:

- **Improve our natural environment system** over the existing Plan's system. Regardless of the Option chosen by Council, it will be an improvement to what currently exists.
- **Address Climate Change.** The new Official Plan will prioritize climate change throughout, with the goal of mitigation and adaptation to achieve resiliency. Our existing Plan is deficient in this area.
- **Consider Affordability and Market Demand.** Housing prices have gone up 42% in Niagara over the last 5 years. Housing affordability is a problem – we need to address that by adding new housing, and in particular, higher density forms of housing. We need a plan that promotes the range and forms of housing to help address this issue.
- **Intensification and Density policies to help create complete communities.** Our new Official Plan will have policies for more compact, efficient forms of development, including clear, strategic intensification policies. The Province requires a 50% intensification rate; the NOP draft policies exceed that at 56%. The current Plan only requires a 40% intensification rate.
- **Related to the above, we will have focused Strategic Growth Areas.** This includes GO Station Areas and other locations where more intense forms of growth are anticipated. This is needed to help meet affordability and climate change goals, and to provide clearer direction to municipalities on how and where to focus denser forms of development.
- **Clearly defined employment areas and policies to provide stability and predictability.** Currently, the Region's employment area policies and mapping are unclear, unlike most other regions. Niagara needs to better direct employment area investment and limit risk of undesired conversion to non-employment uses.

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- **Easier to implement by local municipalities.** Niagara Region's existing plan has inefficiencies that can be improved. Likewise, local municipalities are waiting for the NOP to be approved for them to make corresponding changes to their Plans.
 - **Efficiently coordinate with key engineering and finance programs.** Specifically, the NOP's timeline aligns with the Development Charges update, Water and Wastewater Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan update. The Region needs a plan that is infrastructure-coordinated and will work to help capture growth-related costs set out in the Development Charges Background Study, so growth can pay for growth.

As previously noted, the NOP covers a horizon to the year 2051; Niagara in 2051 will look different than it does today. The Region needs a plan that preserves what's important, while permitting growth for a future generation of businesses and residents.

Not everyone will agree on the best way to achieve this plan; in fact, there can be more than one good planning approach on a given topic. Consultation to date has identified a variety of competing interests. The NOP must strike a balance between these interests to ensure the social and economic health of our communities. A balanced policy approach can mean fewer people or groups being highly satisfied.

Once the NOP is approved, local municipalities must undergo a local exercise to conform to the NOP. As a first step, this involves an update to its local Official Plan. This process is to be guided by Provincial and Regional policy and will involve further study so that it can address local, context-specific outcomes.

After approval, the NOP will be carefully monitored for what is and isn't working. The Region seeks to be flexible and adapt to changes when necessary. Policies will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure Regional and Local interests are aligned and that growth planning is monitored to determine if changes should be advanced.

2. Official Plan Pillar Statements

The NOP is based on Pillar Statements; these form the basis for policy development. Like the NOP policies themselves, Pillar Statements are interconnected and must be considered holistically.

These Pillar Statements were originally drafted by staff and subsequently presented to Regional Councillors for reflection and comment. The feedback received generally confirmed the Pillar Statements as the basis for preparing the NOP. Council's recognition of competing interests associated with the Pillar Statements highlights the need for a balanced approach built on creativity and collaboration.

The following are those Pillar Statements:

EXCEPTIONAL development and communities - Well planned, high quality development in appropriate locations that improves our communities, while protecting what is valuable;

- Niagara must proactively manage growth by strategically locating it. We must utilize tools such as District Plans, Secondary Plans, and intensification strategies to allow places to evolve, while being sensitive to established areas.
- Urban design plays an important role in ensuring our communities are aesthetically pleasing and functional as they evolve.
- Growth must take place in a manner that creates resilient communities and does not negatively impact the Natural Environment System.

DIVERSE housing types, jobs and population - A wide mix of housing types and employment opportunities that attract diverse populations to Niagara across all ages, incomes and backgrounds;

- Niagara must diversify its housing stock to address affordability and meet market needs. To manage growth and remain competitive, Niagara must address the diversity of its housing.
- A competitive employment sector that offers a wide range or variety of employment options will attract people to live in the Region.

- Residential and employment areas should be connected by active transportation linkages and serviced by sustainable green infrastructure, to help address our changing climate.

THRIVING agriculture and tourism - A prosperous agricultural industry and world-class tourism opportunities that grow our economy and elevate the Niagara experience.

- The Agricultural System objectives and policies support agricultural uses, normal farm practices, and diversification of activities to ensure the industry continues to prosper in Niagara.
- A world class tourism industry built on diverse and accessible attractions, including, amongst many, Niagara Falls, Niagara on the Lake, and the grape & wine industry.

RESILIENT urban and natural areas - Areas rich in biodiversity that mitigate and adapt to climate change while strengthening Niagara's ability to recover from extreme weather events.

- Niagara is the most biodiverse region in Ontario and includes the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve. The physical and biotic features of the Region provide the character that defines it. The NOP is guided by policies and objectives that prioritize the protection and enhancement of the natural environment system.
- In addition to biodiversity, natural areas need to be protected for air purification and assisting with water quality and retention.
- Niagara's urban and natural areas must be resilient to address our changing climate.
- Growth needs to be supported by public transit, active transportation, sustainable and green infrastructure and energy efficient development.

3. Consultation

Consultation is key to establishing a good Plan.

A significant amount of consultation has occurred to date, and more is planned before the NOP is advanced for final consideration.

A detailed list of past consultation is set out in Appendix 1.

As detailed in that Appendix, hundreds of consultation events have happened since 2017. Approximately 130 points of consultation have occurred on the Natural Environment Work Program alone.

PEDC has been informed by 35 Reports relating to the NOP between 2018 and 2021. These reports and presentations provided updates on the work program, individual sections of the Plan, and consultation.

The background work for the Official Plan has been informed by this consultation, including comments from the general public; stakeholder groups; local Councils; Indigenous groups; local municipal planners; local planning workshops, and meetings with the Planning Advisory Committee.

Additional consultation is planned for the spring and summer 2021. Further consultation will occur after a complete draft NOP is prepared in the fall: see section “6. What is Happening Next.”

4. Decision on Natural Environment System Option

The Natural Environment Work Program (“NEWP”) is a critical part of the NOP. The NEWP sets out the regional-scale natural heritage system (“NHS”) and water resource system (“WRS”), including policies and mapping.

Previously, the NHS and WRS were described separately. These are now described together as the integrated **Natural Environment System (“NES”)**. This was done since the NHS and WRS are ecologically linked, rely on and support each other, and have many overlapping components. A further description of the merged NHS and WRS is provided below (and more fully set out in the Status Update and Recommendation Report at Appendix 6.2.)

The NEWP was endorsed by Regional Council in 2018 (see PDS 18-2018). Staff were directed to take an incremental approach to developing the policies and mapping. This included a number of decision points for Council; we are now at one of those decision points.

It is critically important that Council choose a NES Option, so staff can proceed to the next step of NES mapping and policy development. Staff need significant time to complete the balance of the NEWP to integrate with the rest of the NOP prior to finalizing the NOP in 2022.

On July 15, 2020, Council was provided 3 NHS Options and 2 WRS Options. As noted above, these have now been combined into the NES. This merger arose after further review of the WRS by the Region's consulting team, who concluded that there are no 'optional' components of the WRS. Rather, only one option for the WRS exists, which includes all of the required water resource features, areas, and systems as informed from provincial direction and the Niagara Watershed Plan ("NWP") project. Thus, a single WRS will proceed, regardless of the NES Option.

A significant amount of analysis was undertaken in developing and refining the Options. Two major reports from our consultant team have been dedicated to the NES Options: Technical Report #2 – June 2020 & Technical Memorandum #1 – March 2021, included as Appendix 6.3.

All of the NES Options are an improvement over the existing, deficient system. All Options conform with, are consistent with, or do not conflict with, Provincial policy. For these reasons, all Options are acceptable systems that can be balanced with other NOP policies to achieve provincial and local goals.

The NES Options are reviewed in detail in Appendix 6.

As previously noted, all Options are supported by Staff. Staff are of the opinion that Option 3B is most preferred, and therefore is Staff's recommended Option. This opinion is summarized below.

- Option 3B **exceeds the required provincial standards** for the identification of features and systems which in the long-term will support a more resilient and biodiverse NES.
- Option 3B **ensures that there is not a reduction in the area of treed vegetation communities** included within the Region's NES.
- Option 3B **helps support other objectives, such as helping mitigate the impacts of climate change.**

- Option 3B provides a balanced approach for the protection of the natural environment by **increasing the number of components and features outside of settlement areas** and limiting additional constraints to development in settlement areas. This option works from both an ecological and land-use planning perspective.
- Option 3B provides **flexibility for local municipalities to plan for local needs** and priorities in their communities. Local municipalities would not be prevented from going beyond the Regional system, either through their Local Official Plans or Secondary Plans. Regional Planning Staff are available to provide support for those exercises should they be desired by local municipalities.
- Option 3B **considers the significant public input received** through the first and second Points of Engagement. A comprehensive outline of the Engagement is set out in Appendix 1. Through the second Point of Engagement, it was clear that there was no consensus on which NES Option was most desirable. This speaks to the **need for a balance between the Options**.

Mapping of the Options and associated data contained in this Report was shared with stakeholders in March 2021, electronically, and at focused meetings and local Council workshops. These meetings helped inform the positions set out in this Report.

The Option 3B recommendation is made with consideration of local municipalities' implementation of such system. As previously noted, **Options 3B has the advantage of allowing flexibility for local municipalities to plan for local needs and priorities in their communities**.

After the Option decision is made, planning staff can immediately proceed with detailed mapping review and refinement and policy development. Staff will report further on that progress in the summer and fall 2021.

Timeline details are provided below, in section 6 "What is Happening Next".

5. What else is Included in this Report

This Report includes substantive materials on many subjects. A detailed list of what is included is provided in the NOP Draft Framework (Appendix 2).

The inclusion of detailed material is intentional to help readers understand the interconnectedness of the NOP. Sections should be read together to gain an

understanding of the comprehensive nature of the Plan. Adjustments to one section often effect others.

Each NOP topic is covered in a separate Appendix. Within the topic-specific appendices, one or more of the following is included:

- An Executive Overview; a short summary of what's covered in that policy section or subject and a chart depicting connections to other Sections;
- One or more memos or reports relating to the topic;
- Draft policies on certain topics;
- Draft schedules to accompany policies on certain topics.

Please refer to the NOP Framework (Appendix 2) for what is included within each topic-specific Appendix, and how to locate that information.

Within the draft policies, the subheadings state the objective of the following policy group. Comment boxes are not part of the policies; they are provided for context. Schedules and maps are draft for future inclusion in the NOP.

Where a document is described as a guidance document, discussion paper, study, criteria or supporting map, it is provided for information purposes only and will not form part of the NOP.

Some NOP sections are not drafted due to ongoing work programs, direction from other policies or need for ongoing coordination. An update on these sections, including status of draft policy and any supplemental information, will be provided for circulation at the next NOP report in summer 2021.

The NOP is divided in to the following 7 Chapters:

- Chapter 1 - Introduction
- Chapter 2 - Growing Region
- Chapter 3 - Sustainable Region
- Chapter 4 - Competitive Region
- Chapter 5 - Connected Region

- Chapter 6 - Vibrant Region
- Chapter 7- Implementation

Below is a short description of the Chapters.

As previously noted, the executive overviews (and other materials, where included) provide further details on these subjects (see NOP Framework, Appendix 2).

Chapter 1 – Introduction – Making Our Mark

The introduction will include Niagara’s planning context, Pillar Statements and Directives, the legislative basis of the Plan and outline the plan’s structure and organization.

This is not included as an Appendix; an update will be provided during the next reporting in summer 2021.

Chapter 2 - Growing Region

The *Growth Plan* requires Niagara to plan for a significant increase in population and employment growth to 2051. Proactive growth management is needed to ensure we are ready for this growth, including having the appropriate infrastructure and housing available.

Section 2.1 - Growth Allocations and Land Needs - Appendix 3

Niagara must plan to accommodate a minimum population of 674,000 people and 264,000 jobs to 2051. It is essential to coordinate these growth forecasts with land use planning to ensure there is sufficient land available to meet projected population and employment needs.

To do this, the Region is required to allocate population and employment growth to its local municipalities and undertake a Land Needs Assessment (“LNA”), in conformance with a provincial methodology. The LNA is a technical, Region-led process, which determines the amount of “community area” (mostly, where people live and shop) and “employment area” (mostly, where traditional-type businesses are located) required to accommodate the forecast referenced above.

The LNA suggests the Region has an overall need for approximately 460 ha of community area land and a slight oversupply of 20 ha of employment area.

On a municipal-scale, some municipalities need community or employment lands, or both, to accommodate growth: Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and West Lincoln. Other municipalities may have too much land to accommodate forecasted growth: Thorold and Pt. Colborne. The rest have an appropriate amount of land.

The Province approves the LNA; the Region must satisfy the Province that the assessment conforms to the Provincial LNA methodology. Most importantly, the Region must have an overall amount of land need for community and employment lands, regardless of individual municipal needs.

The draft LNA is presented now for information only – no decisions are sought. Staff provide it to seek input in advance of further reporting in August 2021.

Staff ask that comments be provided by July 2, 2021 so that there is sufficient time to consider and report on it, with recommendations, in August 2021.

Section 2.2 - Regional Structure – Appendix 4

The Regional Structure directs how growth within settlement areas can be accommodated.

A significant amount of forecasted growth is focused in “strategic growth areas” as directed by Provincial policy. Strategic growth areas are those locations with existing or planned transit service, areas with existing or planned public service facilities, and those which can more easily integrate more intense forms of development.

In addition to strategic growth areas, growth will occur in built-up areas through intensification and redevelopment, and within designated greenfield areas. General policies are provided; most of the implementation will be done by local municipalities.

Regional Structure policies set minimum density targets for strategic growth areas, provide direction for infill and intensification in built-up areas, density targets for designated greenfield areas, and contain policies for settlement area boundary expansions (as described later in this report).

Section 2.3 – Housing - Appendix 5

This Housing section includes a consultant report from CANCEA which sets out Niagara’s needs for a greater supply of housing to address affordability (being the main component of core housing needs).

The Region currently has a core housing need at 13% of its population; primarily driven by a lack of affordable housing options within the community. This core housing need will remain at the same rate if the Region achieves its forecasted growth set out above. If the Region does not accommodate this forecasted growth, and grows at a slow rate, core housing need will be 19%. The Region needs to improve on its 13% core housing need; more housing is needed to do so.

Housing policies focus on providing a mix of housing and built form, incorporating more affordable housing options for low and moderate households and ensuring a full spectrum of housing options along the housing continuum. The provision of more affordable housing options is a needed to support the Region’s economy.

Chapter 3 - Sustainable Region

Niagara must enhance the sustainability and resilience of its built and natural environment. Protection of the natural environment systems will assist in maintaining ecological health, conserving biodiversity and support recovery from changing conditions.

Section 3.1 - Natural Environment Section - Appendix 6

The NES is described in the above section 4, “Decision on Natural Environment System Option.”

In order to meet the NOP conformity timelines, a decision on the NES Option must be made at this time.

Section 3.2 - Watershed Planning - Appendix 7

The Niagara Watershed Plan is informing the NOP. This work is ongoing on an iterative basis, which is the typical way that watershed planning informs land use planning.

This work includes:

- Informing what features and systems should be considered required components of the WRS;
- The integration of the NHS and WRS. It was the work of the NWP that confirmed the need to consider these systems collectively as the integrated NES.
- Providing criteria to support the settlement area boundary review portion of the NOP.

Section 3.5 - Climate Change – Appendix 8

The NOP will include policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This will be done throughout the NOP, including policies that support the achievement of resilient complete communities that are compact, walkable, and transit-supportive, implementing sustainable design principles, protecting agricultural lands, and water resources and natural areas.

Draft climate change policies are not yet included in this Appendix. They will be in the consolidated draft Official Plan following consultant prepared climate modeling and projections work set to conclude in the fall of 2021.

Although climate change will be addressed throughout the NOP, a specific section of the NOP will include policy supporting the development of a Regional Greening Initiative, among other things. This section will also identify future required studies such as vulnerability assessments.

CHAPTER 4 - Competitive Region

Plan and manage growth to position Niagara for economic prosperity.

Section 4.1 – Agriculture – Appendix 9

Niagara Region has an active and vibrant farming sector that must be protected and enhanced through the NOP.

Niagara has approximately 218,251 acres of farmland, which has a \$1.41 billion impact on Gross Domestic Product. Agriculture in Niagara has an employment impact of approximately 19,892 jobs.

NOP agricultural policies will enable the agri-food sector to thrive and support agricultural uses, normal farm practices, and diversification of uses.

Section 4.2 - Employment - Appendix 10

The Region and local municipalities have different policy roles for managing employment.

The Region primarily addresses “Employment Areas”, a term used for clusters of generally more traditional industrial-type businesses. It’s critical that these areas are protected from sensitive uses over the long-term.

The Region has identified 34 draft employment areas. These were identified after considerable collaboration with local municipalities and stakeholders.

Employment policies identify and protect employment areas, establish density targets for those areas, assist with evaluation of any proposed conversion of employment areas or employment lands, and establish a process to identify and implement future employment areas.

Section 4.3 – Aggregates - Appendix 11

Protecting aggregate resources, and providing for extraction where appropriate, is important to Niagara’s economy.

Mineral aggregate resources, such as sand, gravel, stone, and shale, are located throughout Niagara Region. These resources are finite and must be protected from incompatible land uses or uses that would limit their extraction in the future. The extraction, processing, and transportation of mineral aggregate resources must take place in a manner that minimizes environmental and social impacts.

Chapter 5 - Connected Region

Provide connections within and between communities and outside the Region.

Section 5.1 – Transportation - Appendix 12

The Region must plan for a sustainable transportation system that appropriately accommodates forecasted population and employment growth.

The transportation policies are mostly carried-forward from the recently approved Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 13 that covered these matters.

The policies prioritize investments in public transit, the design and construction of complete streets at the regional and local levels, and the incorporation of active transportation infrastructure into the transportation system and new development.

Section 5.2 – Infrastructure - Appendix 13

Well planned and managed infrastructure is fundamental to attaining the Region's vision for thriving and resilient communities. Forecasted population and employment growth should be aligned with planned infrastructure to ensure that growth can be accommodated.

Infrastructure policies address the Region's existing and future infrastructure needs relating to drinking water, wastewater, waste, energy, and utility services. The planning and development of infrastructure must ensure capacity for growth, ensure financial sustainability and integrate climate change resiliency.

Chapter 6 - Vibrant Region

Elevate the livability and engaging qualities of communities, facilities and attractions.

Section 6.1 - District Plans and Secondary Plans - Appendix 14

District Plans and Secondary Plans provide a framework for proactive, coordinated and comprehensive growth management planning within defined areas.

District Plans are prepared by the Region to strategically direct a significant portion of population and employment growth to areas that have cross-jurisdictional interests and require regional level planning.

Secondary Plans follow a similar process, although they may, or may not, be used to help direct anticipated population and employment growth. Secondary plans will help to implement the regional structure at the local level, and will be required for strategic growth areas, newly designated greenfield areas and to implement district plan direction.

Section 6.2 - Urban Design - Appendix 15

Urban design assists the Region in achieving a high-quality built environment with buildings and streetscapes. By committing to excellence in urban design, the Region is taking a leadership role in guiding the design of the built environment towards attractive, safe, diverse, and functional communities.

Section 6.3 – Archaeology – Appendix 16

Cultural heritage resource conservation is an important priority and needs to be balanced with the forecasted growth to the Region.

The Region's Archaeological Management Plan will set out a more coordinated and consistent planning system in Niagara that accurately screens *Planning Act* applications for significant archaeological resources prior to development occurring.

Chapter 7 – Implementation

An update on this Chapter's policies will be provided at the next report, in August 2021. Policies will address Plan Interpretation, Performance Indicators and Monitoring, Roles, Coordination, Complete Applications, Phasing and Site Specific Policies.

Other Niagara Official Plan Items

The Niagara Official Plan will include Schedules (maps) that will compliment policies. For the purpose of this Report, draft schedules are included within the relevant Appendix.

Also included is a **Glossary of Terms** (Appendix 17).

Further, the Region has developed a “Settlement Area Boundary Review” (SABR) program. This is the process by which the Region will review and determine whether Settlement Areas should be adjusted, including expansions.

At this time, no recommendations are being made relating to SABR.

The Region has received a number of requests for consideration of both urban area and rural settlement boundary expansions. The Region has started its review of these requests and will continue to do so over the coming months.

Draft criteria have been prepared to guide this SABR process. The SABR criteria is included in Appendix 18. This Appendix includes criteria for urban area, rural settlement, and technical boundary reviews. These documents are draft for consideration. The SABR criteria is not intended to form part of the NOP; rather, it is intended to inform boundary recommendations as transparently as possible.

Local Municipal Conformity

The *Planning Act, 1990* sets out that local municipalities have one year after the NOP is approved by the Province to have their respective Official Plans conform with the NOP.

Each draft policy section in the draft NOP contains policies to help guide local municipal conformity.

The Region will continue to work with local municipalities to assist this local conformity and provide support through the process. The Region is the approval authority for local Official Plan conformity.

4. What is Happening Next

As noted, a decision on the NES Option is critical to allowing the entire NOP to move forward.

All other sections are provided for information and to receive feedback.

Assuming a decision is made on the NES Options at this Committee meeting, the following are the key future steps:

- Circulate all materials in this Report to local municipalities, agencies, stakeholders and the public (if not already complete prior to consideration of this Report).
- Prepare and distribute the next edition of Niagara Official Plan Newsletter to notify the approximately 390 subscribers of the materials in this Report.
- Notify all those who have attended consultation events and submitted previous comments of the materials in this Report.

Those persons and groups noted in the above bullets can be directed to the Region's website dedicated to all information included in this Report, at: [Official Plan](http://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx) (www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx)

- Continue the Region's regular meeting with Provincial staff. Critical to the NOP's success is the Province's support. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the approval authority for the whole of the NOP; therefore, those staff must be satisfied with the NOP. The draft land needs assessment will be of particular focus in the near term.
- **Staff ask that comments on the materials included in this Report be submitted by July 2, 2021.** This is important to allow staff sufficient time to review those submissions and report in August 2021.
- **The July 2, 2021 date is particularly important for those interested in commenting on the land needs assessment, settlement area boundary expansions, or employment conversions. The Region will report further on those matters in August 2021. Only those submissions received prior to**

July 2, 2021 will be considered for comment in the Region's August 2021 Report.

- Parties with requests for settlement area boundary expansions that cannot be considered due to explicit prohibits on expansion restrictions, such as those within the Protected Countryside of the *Greenbelt Plan*, will be notified of such.
- In June and/or July, the Region will hold a series of public consultation events to seek feedback on the materials included in this Report.
- Additional consultation events will be planned with stakeholder groups, including those involved in agricultural, environmental, development, and business. Also, input will be sought from the Region's Planning Advisory Committee.
- Focused consultation with indigenous groups will continue.

As noted above, the next major reporting on the NOP will be in August 2021.

Regional Planning staff will continue to finalize background studies, collect data and prepare/revise draft policies to complete a full consolidated draft NOP by the end of 2021.

The above date cannot be met if there is a delay in the NES Option selection. It will take considerable time to develop the policies and mapping after the Option is selected.

The NOP must be adopted by July 1, 2022 to meet the conformity deadline set by the Province.

Alternatives Reviewed

Several NES Options are outlined in this Report and Appendices. Staff recommend Option 3B, but are able to advance any of the Options as all meet the Provincial standards. It is important that a decision be made on an NES to provide the opportunity to complete the Official Plan for the end of the year.

The decision on an NES Option is an important step in the development of the NOP, to ensure it is complete and adopted in this term of Council.

No alternatives are offered for the balance of the material presented since it is presented for information only, without recommendations.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The Niagara Official Plan will support the following Strategic Priority Objectives:

Objective 1.1: Economic Growth and Development

- Enhance integration with local municipalities' economic development and planning departments to provide supports and improve interactions with businesses to expedite and navigate development processes.
- Forward thinking approach to economic development in Niagara through long term strategic planning and leveraging partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

Objective 1.4: Strategically Target Industry Sectors

- Define Niagara's role in tourism including areas such as sport, eco, agricultural and culture tourism.

Objective 2.3: Addressing Affordable Housing Needs

- Retain, protect and increase the supply of affordable housing stock to provide a broad range of housing to meet the needs of the community.

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
- Drive environmental protection and addressing climate change such as through increasing waste diversion rates and reducing our carbon footprint

Objective 3.3: Maintain Existing Infrastructure

- Sound asset management planning to ensure sustainable investments in the infrastructure needed to support existing residents and businesses, as well as future growth in Niagara.

Other Pertinent Reports

The NOP has many pertinent reports. Please see Consultation Events Appendix 1.

Prepared by:
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Official Plan Policy Consultant

Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:
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Acting Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:
Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with **all staff** in the Community and Long Range Planning divisions, and reviewed by Erik Acs, MCIP, RPP, Manager of Community Planning, Kirsten McCauley, MCIP, RPP, Acting Manager of Long Range Planning, and Isaiah Banach, Acting Director of Community and Long Range Planning.

Appendices:

***Located at: [Official Plan](#)**

(www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx)

Appendix 1	Consultation Events
Appendix 2	Draft Framework
Appendix 3.1	Growth Allocations and Land Needs Assessment Executive Overview
Appendix 3.2	Report: Draft Land Needs Assessment Summary
Appendix 3.3	Memorandum: Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051 (Hemson Consulting)
Appendix 3.4*	Draft Growth Forecasting Policies
Appendix 4.1	Regional Structure Executive Overview
Appendix 4.2	Report: Regional Structure Policy Paper

Appendix 4.3*	Draft Regional Structure Policies
Appendix 4.4*	Draft Regional Structure Schedule
Appendix 5.1	Housing Executive Overview
Appendix 5.2	Memorandum: Housing Affordability and Growth Plan 2051 (CANCEA)
Appendix 5.3*	Draft Housing Policies
Appendix 6.1	NES Executive Overview
Appendix 6.2	Report: Status Update and Recommendations
Appendix 6.3	Memorandum: Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment System in the Region's Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications
Appendix 7.1	Watershed Planning Executive Overview
Appendix 8.1	Climate Change Executive Overview
Appendix 8.2	Report: Climate Change Section Update
Appendix 9.1	Agriculture Executive Overview
Appendix 9.2*	Draft Agriculture Policies
Appendix 9.3*	Draft Agricultural Land Base Schedule
Appendix 10.1	Employment Executive Overview
Appendix 10.2*	Report: Employment Policy Paper
Appendix 10.3*	Draft Employment Policies
Appendix 10.4*	Draft Employment Areas Schedule
Appendix 11.1	Aggregates Executive Overview
Appendix 11.2*	Draft Mineral Aggregate Resources Policies

Appendix 11.3*	Draft Known Deposits of Mineral Aggregate Resources – Sand and Gravel Schedule
Appendix 11.4*	Draft Known Deposits of Mineral Aggregate Resources – Bedrock Schedule
Appendix 11.5*	Draft Mineral Aggregate Operations Schedule
Appendix 12.1	Transportation Executive Overview
Appendix 12.2*	Draft Transportation Policies
Appendix 12.3*	Draft Transportation Infrastructure Schedule
Appendix 12.4*	Draft Strategic Cycling Network Schedule
Appendix 13.1	Infrastructure Executive Overview
Appendix 13.2*	Draft Infrastructure Policies
Appendix 14.1	District and secondary Plans Executive Overview
Appendix 14.2*	Draft District and Secondary Plans Policies
Appendix 15.1	Urban Design Executive Overview
Appendix 15.2*	Draft Urban Design Policies
Appendix 16.1	Archaeology Executive Overview
Appendix 17	Glossary of Terms
Appendix 18.1	Settlement Area Boundary Revisions Executive Overview
Appendix 18.2	Criteria: MCR Urban Area Boundary Expansion Assessment Criteria
Appendix 18.3	Criteria: Rural Settlement Boundary Review Process
Appendix 18.4	Criteria: Boundary Technical Mapping Updates

CONSULTATION EVENTS

This Appendix outlines all consultation with the public, stakeholder groups and consultants. There is some overlap between the categories below, particularly as it relates to Natural Environment Work Program consultation.

Public Outreach

Public Information Centres

Date		Topics
1	30-May-19	Natural Environment – Public Information Centre (West Lincoln)
2	6-Jun-19	Natural Environment – Public Information Centre (Welland)
3	6-Nov-19	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Thorold)
4	7-Nov-19	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Niagara Falls)
5	13-Nov-19	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Grimsby)
6	14-Nov-19	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Fort Erie)
7	23-Sep-20	(Web PIC via Zoom) Natural environment • Natural heritage system (information and options)
8	24-Sep-20	(Web PIC via Zoom) Natural environment • Water resource system (Information and options) and watershed plan
9	7-Oct-20	(Web PIC via Zoom) Growth management • Regional structure, land needs, growth allocations, settlement area boundary review and housing
10	8-Oct-20	(Web PIC via Zoom) Employment Lands and Community Planning • District and secondary plans, urban design, employment lands
11	20-Oct-20	(Web PIC via Zoom) Agriculture, Aggregates and Archaeology • Rural and agriculture, mineral and aggregate resources, archaeology and culture
12	21-Oct-20	(Web PIC via Zoom) Transportation and Servicing • Infrastructure, water and wastewater, transportation

Public Outreach Surveys

Date		Topics
1	9-Jul-20	Employment Policy Paper Survey (MetroQuest and SurveyGizmo) 106 Responses
2	10-Sep-20	Growth Management Survey (MetroQuest and SurveyGizmo) 219 Responses
3	15-Dec-20	Official Plan - Pillars and Directives (MetroQuest and SurveyGizmo) 873 Responses

Local Council Presentations

Date		Municipality
1	22-May-18	Pelham
2	29-May-18	Wainfleet
3	4-Jun-18	Niagara-on-the-Lake
4	5-Jun-18	Thorold
5	12-Jun-18	Welland
6	18-Jun-18	Fort Erie
7	19-Jun-18	Niagara Falls
8	25-Jun-18	Port Colborne
9	9-Jul-18	Lincoln
10	23-Jul-18	West Lincoln
11	13-Aug-18	St. Catharines
12	11-Sep-18	Grimsby
13	15-Apr-19	St. Catharines
14	23-Apr-19	Fort Erie
15	6-May-19	Grimsby
16	7-May-19	Thorold
17	13-May-19	Niagara-on-the-Lake
18	14-May-19	Niagara Falls
19	27-May-19	Port Colborne
20	28-May-19	Wainfleet
21	3-Jun-19	Pelham
22	10-Jun-19	West Lincoln
23	11-Jun-19	Welland
24	17-Jun-19	Lincoln

Local OP Council Workshops

Date		Municipality
1	22-Mar-21	Niagara-on-the-Lake
2	24-Mar-21	Pelham
3	24-Mar-21	West Lincoln
4	25-Mar-21	Fort Erie
5	25-Mar-21	Welland
6	26-Mar-21	Grimsby
7	26-Mar-21	Port Colborne
8	31-Mar-21	Thorold
9	31-Mar-21	Wainfleet
10	1-Apr-21	Lincoln
11	7-Apr-21	Niagara Falls
12	7-Apr-21	St. Catharines

Local Municipal Planner Meetings

Date		Topics
1	24-Jul-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Comprehensive Review • Niagara Official Plan • Growth Plan – Employment Lands Strategy
2	25-Aug-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Policy • Greater Golden Horseshoe – Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System
3	27-Oct-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Official Plan Update – Employment Areas and Employment Lands Strategy
4	17-Nov-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Needs Methodology • Growth Plan – Agricultural Impact Assessment and Natural heritage System
5	26-Jan-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Needs Assessment • Process for Individual Urban Boundary Expansion Requests • Urban Structure • Employment Lands Strategy • Housing • Natural Environment • Aggregates • Agriculture • Climate Change

Date		Topics
6	16-Mar-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Environment Framework • Agriculture Framework • Climate Change Framework • Watershed Planning • MNR Species at Risk
7	22-Jun-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenbelt Alternative Land Use Analysis • Urban Boundary Expansion Requests
8	28-Sep-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Official Plan – Open Houses • Secondary Plans • 2016 Census Population
9	25-Jan-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Official Plan Amendment – Exemptions from Approval • Niagara Official Plan Update • Rural Lots
10	22-Mar-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Official Plan Consultation Strategy • Growth Plan Comments
11	11-Jul-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Growth Plan – Employment Land Conversion and Urban Expansion Criteria
12	26-Jul-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Official Plan Update • Employment Land • Housing • Urban Strategy • Land Needs • Natural Environment • Agriculture • Aggregates • Climate Change
13	27-Sep-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Official Plan – Public Information Centres • Employment Land Strategy and Regional Official Plan Amendment 16 • Provincially Significant Employment Zones
14	8-Oct-19	Employment Strategy Municipal Workshop with Area Planners
15	24-Jan-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Official Plan – Update on Consultation • Employment Land Strategy and Regional Official Plan Amendment 16
16	28-Aug-20	Area Planners (All)

Local Area Municipal Consultations – General Official Plan - Growth Management and Natural Environment

Meetings with Local Municipal Planners

Date		Topics
1	15-Sep-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Niagara-on-the-Lake)
2	28-Sep-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Fort Erie)
3	29-Sep-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Niagara Falls)
4	29-Sep-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Thorold)
5	12-Oct-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Pelham)
6	12-Oct-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (West Lincoln)
7	16-Oct-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Grimsby)
8	16-Oct-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Lincoln)
9	17-Oct-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Welland)
10	29-Oct-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (St. Catharines)
11	3-Nov-17	Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan (Wainfleet)
12	1-Feb-18	• Individual Meetings with Local Municipal Planners to discuss: o Key Issues Relative to Framing of Background Studies
13	25-Mar-19	Niagara Housing Data Consultation Sessions with Local Municipal Planners
14	26-Mar-19	Niagara Housing Data Consultation Sessions with Local Municipal Planners
15	3-May-19	Natural Environment Workshop with Development Community, Consultants, and Local Planning Staff
16	6-Jun-19	Housing Database/Market Analysis and Scenario Development Workshop with Area Planners and Local Municipal Staff
17	8-Jul-19	Town of Fort Erie
18	16-Jul-19	Town of Lincoln
19	17-Jul-19	Town of Pelham
20	18-Jul-19	City of Thorold
21	23-Jul-19	City of St. Catharines
22	25-Jul-19	Township of West Lincoln
23	26-Jul-19	City of Welland

Date		Topics
24	30-Jul-19	Township of Wainfleet
25	31-Jul-19	Town of Grimsby
26	13-Aug-19	Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
27	15-Aug-19	City of Port Colborne
28	28-Aug-19	City of Niagara Falls
29	11-Sep-20	City of Port Colborne
30	14-Sep-20	City of Niagara Falls
31	15-Sep-20	City of St. Catharines
32	17-Sep-20	Town of Fort Erie
33	18-Sep-20	Town of Lincoln
34	21-Sep-20	Township of Wainfleet
35	22-Sep-20	Township of West Lincoln
36	23-Sep-20	Town of Grimsby
37	25-Sep-20	Town of Pelham
38	28-Sep-20	City of Welland
39	29-Sep-20	City of Thorold
40	1-Oct-20	Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
41	6-Oct-20	City of Niagara Falls
42	6-Oct-20	Town of Fort Erie
43	8-Oct-20	Township of West Lincoln
44	9-Oct-20	Town of Grimsby
45	19-Oct-20	Township of West Lincoln / Township of Wainfleet
46	22-Oct-20	Town of Fort Erie
47	27-Oct-20	City of Thorold
48	3-Nov-20	City of St. Catharines
49	3-Nov-20	Town of Fort Erie
50	5-Nov-20	City of Niagara Falls
51	10-Nov-20	Town of Fort Erie
52	18-Feb-21	City of Niagara Falls
53	18-Feb-21	Town of Fort Erie
54	18-Feb-21	Town of Grimsby
55	18-Feb-21	Town of Lincoln
56	19-Feb-21	City of St. Catharines
57	19-Feb-21	City of Welland
58	19-Feb-21	Town of Pelham
59	19-Feb-21	Township of West Lincoln
60	22-Feb-21	City of Port Colborne
61	22-Feb-21	City of Thorold
62	22-Feb-21	Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
63	22-Feb-21	Township of Wainfleet

Stakeholder Sessions

Workshops/Sessions

Date		Topics
1	15-Sep-17	Meeting with Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce
2	16-May-19	Natural Environment Workshop with Agricultural Community
3	16-May-19	Natural Environment Workshop with Environmental Stakeholder Groups
4	10-Oct-19	Employment Strategy Industry Workshop with Industry Stakeholders
5	25-Feb-20	Employment Area Strategy Update and Q/A Session with Industry Stakeholders
6	27-Jun-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting with Niagara Parks Commission Senior Staff to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Background Studies for Official Plan

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Meetings

Date		Topics
1	19-Oct-17	Meeting with Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
2	1-Feb-18	Meeting with NPCA Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
3	6-Jun-19	Meeting with NPCA Senior Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
4	13-Jun-19	Meeting with NPCA Technical Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
5	23-Jul-19	Meeting with NPCA Technical Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
6	18-Sep-19	Presentation to NPCA Board – Natural Environment Work Program

Meetings with Indigenous Groups

Date		Topics
1	1-May-19	Haudenosaunee Development Institute – Niagara Official Plan
2	1-May-19	Six Nations Elected Council – Niagara Official Plan
3	7-May-19	Fort Erie Friendship Centre – Niagara Official Plan
4	29-May-19	Niagara Region Métis Council – Niagara Official Plan
5	5-Jun-19	Niagara Regional Native Centre – Niagara Official Plan
6	11-Jun-19	Mississauga of the Credit First Nation – Niagara Official Plan
7	21-Aug-19	Haudenosaunee Development Institute – Regional Archaeological Management Plan
8	21-Aug-19	Mississauga of the Credit First Nation – Regional Archaeological Management Plan

Date		Topics
9	11-Dec-21	Meeting with Mississauga of the Credit First Nations staff (Official Plan)

Planning and Economic Development Committee Meetings

Date		Topics
1	November, 2016	PDS 40-2016 Regional Official Plan Update
2	December, 2017	PDS 41-2017 New Official Plan Structure and Framework
3	January, 2018	PDS 6-2018 Natural Environment Project Initiation Report
4	January, 2018	PDS 7-2018 Agricultural Policy Initiation Report (incl. Presentation)
5	February, 2018	PDS 3-2018 New Official Plan Update
6	April, 2018	PDS 17-2018 Agricultural Framework
7	April, 2018	PDS 18-2018 Natural Environment – Project Framework
8	May, 2018	PDS 21-2018 Municipal Comprehensive Review Update: New Regional Official Plan & Growth Management Program
9	May, 2018	PDS 21-2018 Municipal Comprehensive Review Update: New Regional Official Plan & Growth Management Program
10	May, 2018	PDS 22-2018 Climate Change Framework
11	February, 2019	PDS 10-2019 Update on Natural Environment Work Program – New Regional Official Plan
12	March, 2019	PDS 9-2019 New Official Plan Consultation Timeline Framework
13	July, 2019	PDS 27-2019 Niagara Housing Statement Final Summary Report
14	September, 2019	PDS 33-2019 Growth Management Program Update for New Regional Official Plan
15	October, 2019	PDS 35-2019 Employment Policies Update: Project Initiation Report

Date		Topics
16	November, 2019	PDS 32-2019 Natural Environment Work Program – Phases 2 & 3: Mapping and Watershed Planning Discussion Papers and Comprehensive Background Study
17	January, 2020	PDS 1-2020 New Niagara Official Plan – Public Consultation Summary
18	February, 2020	PDS 3-2020 Ecological Land Classification Mapping Update

Date		Topics
19	March, 2020	PDS 9-2020 Niagara Official Plan – Consultation Details and Revised Framework
20	March, 2020	PDS 9-2020 Niagara Official Plan - Consultation Details and Revised Framework
21	May, 2020	PDS 14-2020 Employment Area Strategy - Background Report & Recommendations
22	July, 2020	PDS 21-2020 Updated Employment Work Program for the New Niagara Official Plan
23	July, 2020	PDS 26-2020 Natural Environment Work Program – Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Options”
24	July, 2020	PDS 26-2020 Natural Environment Work Program – Phase 4: Identification and Evaluation of Options
25	September, 2020	PDS 29-2020 Settlement Area Boundary Review Program: Growth Plan Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment Update
26	September, 2020	PDS 28-2020 Regional Structure Background Report
27	October, 2020	PDS-C 15-2020 Regional Official Plan Update
28	December, 2020	PDS 35-2020 Niagara Official Plan Consultation Update
29	December, 2020	PDS 33-2020 Ecological Land Classification Mapping Project
30	December, 2020	PDS 38-2020 Growth Management Survey Results
31	January, 2021	PDS 4-2021 Niagara Official Plan - Steps and Directions Moving Forward

Date		Topics
32	January, 2021	PDS 6-2021 Climate Change Work Program Update
33	February, 2021	PDS 1-2021 Natural Environment Work Program – 2nd Point of Engagement
34	February, 2021	PDS 7-2021 Niagara Official Plan Process and Local Municipality Conformity

Planning Advisory Committee Meetings

Date		Topics
1	12-Sep-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introductions • Planning Areas of Responsibility • Planning Advisory Committee – Points of Interest • Official Plan Framework and Document Structure • Official Plan Themes – Key Priority Background Studies • Urban Structure
2	14-Nov-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Workshop Overview • Natural Environment • Urban Structure • Secondary Plans – Content and Performance Measures
3	20-Mar-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial Planning Policy Restructuring • Update on Employment Lands Strategy • Performance Measures/Urban Structure and Secondary Plans
4	14-Aug-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Strategy • Draft Vision and Directives
5	23-Oct-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archaeological Management Plan • Employment Lands Strategy • Vision and Directives • Proposed Provincial Policy Changes
6	15-Jan-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change • Official Plan Consultation Feedback
7	16-Sep-20	Updates on Growth Management and Natural Heritage & Water systems background work.

Natural Environment Work Program

Date		Topics
1	20-Feb-19	Presentation to Planning and Economic Development Committee (PDS 10-2019)
2	22-Feb-19	Presentation to the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC)

Date		Topics
3	22-Feb-19	Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting
4	23-Apr-19	Presentation to Fort Erie Council
5	1-May-19	Meeting with Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council
6	1-May-19	Meeting with Six Nations Elected Council Staff
7	3-May-19	Workshop – Development Community, Consultants, and Local Planning Staff
8	6-May-19	Presentation to Grimsby Council
9	7-May-19	Meeting with Fort Erie Friendship Centre Staff
10	7-May-19	Presentation to Thorold Council
11	13-May-19	Presentation to Niagara-on-the-Lake Council
12	14-May-19	Presentation to Niagara Falls Council
13	16-May-19	Workshop – Agricultural Community
14	16-May-19	Workshop – Environmental Stakeholder Groups
15	22-May-19	Workshop – Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)
16	27-May-19	Presentation to Port Colborne Council
17	28-May-19	Presentation to Wainfleet Council
18	29-May-19	Meeting with Niagara Region Metis Council
19	30-May-19	Public Information Centre – West Lincoln
20	3-Jun-19	Presentation to Pelham Council
21	5-Jun-19	Meeting with Niagara Region Native Centre Staff
22	6-Jun-19	Meeting with NPCA Senior Staff
23	6-Jun-19	Public Information Centre - Welland
24	10-Jun-19	Information Package to St. Catharines Council
25	10-Jun-19	Presentation to West Lincoln Council
26	11-Jun-19	Meeting with Mississauga-of-the-Credit Staff
27	11-Jun-19	Presentation to Welland Council
28	13-Jun-19	Meeting with NPCA Technical Staff
29	17-Jun-19	Presentation to Lincoln Council
30	23-Jul-19	Meeting with NPCA Technical Staff
31	18-Sep-19	Presentation to NPCA Board
32	15-Jul-20	Presentation to Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) (PDS 26-2020)
33	28-Aug-20	Introduction Presentation to Area Planners
34	11-Sep-20	Meeting with Port Colborne Planning Staff
35	14-Sep-20	Meeting with Niagara Falls Planning Staff
36	15-Sep-20	Meeting with St. Catharines Planning Staff
37	16-Sep-20	Presentation to Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) Staff
38	16-Sep-20	Presentation to Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)
39	16-Sep-20	Presentation to Provincial Planning Staff (MMAH, MNRF, & MECP)
40	17-Sep-20	Presentation to Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Board

Date		Topics
41	18-Sep-20	Meeting with Lincoln Planning Staff
42	18-Sep-20	Stakeholder Workshop – Development Community & Planning and Ecological Consultants
43	21-Sep-20	Meeting with Fort Erie Planning Staff
44	21-Sep-20	Meeting with Wainfleet Planning Staff
45	21-Sep-20	Stakeholder Workshop – Agricultural Community
46	22-Sep-20	Meeting with West Lincoln Planning Staff
47	22-Sep-20	Stakeholder Workshop – Environmental Stakeholder Groups
48	23-Sep-20	Meeting with Grimsby Planning Staff
49	23-Sep-20	Virtual Public Information Centre 1 (Natural Heritage System)
50	24-Sep-20	Presentation to NPCA Public Advisory Committee
51	24-Sep-20	Virtual Public Information Centre 2 (Water Resource System and Watershed Planning)
52	25-Sep-20	Meeting with Pelham Planning Staff
53	25-Sep-20	Presentation to the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC)
54	28-Sep-20	Meeting with Welland Planning Staff
55	29-Sep-20	Meeting with Thorold Planning Staff
56	29-Sep-20	Presentation to Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) Staff
57	29-Sep-20	Presentation to NPCA Staff
58	30-Sep-20	Participate in Trout's Unlimited 12 Mile Creek Subwatershed Study Meeting
59	1-Oct-20	Meeting with Niagara-on-the-Lake Planning Staff
60	19-Nov-20	Presentation to Team Niagara
61	11-Dec-20	Meeting with Mississauga of the Credit First Nation Staff

NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN – DRAFT FRAMEWORK

The following is the draft framework for the Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”).

This framework sets out the type of materials in the NOP, what is provided in this Report, and where to find it.

All information is available on the Region’s website at the following link: [NOP Website](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx) (https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx). Some material is also included with the May 12, 2021 Planning and Economic Development agenda (not all, due to size limitations).

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
1. INTRODUCTION - MAKING OUR MARK			
1.1 Niagara Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning context Challenges and opportunities Two Tier Organization 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
1.2 Niagara’s Strategy for the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision and key directions 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
1.3 How to use the Niagara Official Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative basis Format Provincial Plans Status of Comment boxes, Appendices, Guidance documents 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
2. GROWING REGION			
2.1 Growth Allocation and Land Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate Regional population and employment growth forecasts Provide direction for municipalities to implement forecasts Ensure a sufficient supply of developable land is available within municipalities 	<p>Executive Overview</p> <p>Report: Draft Land Needs Assessment Summary</p> <p>Memorandum: Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051 (Hemson Consulting)</p> <p>Draft Forecasted Growth Policies</p>	<p>Appendix 3.1</p> <p>Appendix 3.2</p> <p>Appendix 3.3</p> <p>Appendix 3.4</p>	<p>Included in this Report & NOP Website</p> <p>Included in this Report & NOP Website</p> <p>Included in this Report & NOP Website</p> <p>NOP Website</p>
2.2 Regional Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodate growth in settlement areas through intensification rates and density targets Manage growth by directing a significant portion to Strategic Growth Areas Plan for the orderly implementation of infrastructure and land use patterns 	<p>Executive Overview</p> <p>Report: Regional Structure Policy Paper</p> <p>Draft Regional Structure Policies</p> <p>Draft Regional Structure Schedule</p>	<p>Appendix 4.1</p> <p>Appendix 4.2</p> <p>Appendix 4.3</p> <p>Appendix 4.4</p>	<p>Included in this Report & NOP Website</p> <p>Included in this Report & NOP Website</p> <p>NOP Website</p> <p>NOP Website</p>

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
2.3 Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for a mix of housing options, including affordable options for low and moderate income households Coordinate with the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Establish an affordable housing target 	Executive Overview Memorandum: Housing Affordability and Growth Plan 2051 (CANCEA) Draft Housing Policies	Appendix 5.1 Appendix 5.2 Appendix 5.3	Included in this Report & NOP Website Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website
3. SUSTAINABLE REGION			
3.1 Natural Environment System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a regional-scale natural heritage and water resource system Determine appropriate goals, objectives, and targets 	Executive Overview Report: Status Update and Recommendations Memorandum: Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment System in the Region's Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications	Appendix 6.1 Appendix 6.2 Appendix 6.3	Included in this Report & NOP Website Included in this Report & NOP Website Included in this Report & NOP Website
3.2 Watershed Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the NOP and other land-use planning is appropriately informed by watershed planning in accordance with Provincial direction Provide a framework and policies for subsequent watershed planning in the Region 	Executive Overview	Appendix 7.1	Included in this Report & NOP Website

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
3.3 Source Water Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect existing and future sources of drinking water 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
3.4 Stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greening initiative link Partnerships Rehabilitation 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
3.5 Climate change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles to address climate change Climate modeling and projections, vulnerability assessments, adaptation strategies Regional Greening Initiative 	Executive Overview Report: Climate Change Section Update	Appendix 8.1 Appendix 8.2	Included in this Report & NOP Website Included in this Report & NOP Website
3.6 Niagara Escarpment Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direction from the Niagara Escarpment Plan 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
3.7 Excess Soils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal excess soil reuse strategies Excess soil reuse best practices 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
4. COMPETITIVE REGION			
4.1 Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance the geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and connections to the Agri-food network Protect the agricultural land base Promote a full range of agricultural & value added uses Requirements for Agricultural Impact Assessments (AIA) 	Executive Overview Draft Agriculture Policies Draft Agricultural Land Base Schedule	Appendix 9.1 Appendix 9.2 Appendix 9.3	Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website NOP Website
4.2 Employment Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and plan for Employment Areas Further protect Employment Areas against conversions and sensitive land use encroachment Identify opportunities for strategic investments, future employment areas and Provincially Significant Employment Zones 	Executive Overview Report: Employment Policy Paper Draft Employment Policies Draft Employment Areas Schedule	Appendix 10.1 Appendix 10.2 Appendix 10.3 Appendix 10.4	Included in this Report & NOP Website Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website NOP Website

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
4.3 Aggregates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect mineral aggregate resources and existing mineral aggregate operations Provide for efficient, compatible extraction of mineral aggregate resources with minimal impacts 	Executive Overview	Appendix 11.1	Included in this Report & NOP Website
	Draft Mineral Aggregate Resources Policies	Appendix 11.2	NOP Website
	Draft Known Deposits of Mineral Aggregate Resources – Sand and Gravel Schedule	Appendix 11.3	NOP Website
	Draft Known Deposits of Mineral Aggregate Resources – Bedrock Schedule	Appendix 11.4	NOP Website
	Draft Mineral Aggregate Operations Schedule	Appendix 11.5	NOP Website
4.4 Economic Prosperity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable tourism development Partnerships with higher education institutions Diversified rural economy 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
5. CONNECTED REGION			

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
5.1 Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the needs and safety of all road users through a complete streets approach Prioritize investments in public transit and active transportation infrastructure Support goods movement facilities and transportation corridors 	Executive Overview Draft Transportation Policies Draft Transportation Infrastructure Schedule Draft Strategic Cycling Network Schedule	Appendix 12.1 Appendix 12.2 Appendix 12.3 Appendix 12.4	Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website NOP Website NOP Website
5.2 Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate land use and infrastructure planning Ensure servicing capacity for growth. Ensure servicing is financially sustainable and assists in addressing a changing climate. Integrated waste management 	Executive Overview Draft Infrastructure Policies	Appendix 13.1 Appendix 13.2	Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website
5.3 Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails, and Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicly accessible and connected systems, within settlement area 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
6. VIBRANT REGION			
6.1 District and Secondary Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare District Plans to guide urban growth in regionally significant areas Prepare Secondary Plans to implement regional and local planning priorities 	Executive Overview Draft District and Secondary Plans Policies	Appendix 14.1 Appendix 14.2	Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website
6.2 Urban Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban design direction for more attractive, safe, diverse, and functional communities Regional interest Urban/rural transition (edge planning) 	Executive Overview Draft Urban Design Policies	Appendix 15.1 Appendix 15.2	Included in this Report & NOP Website NOP Website
6.3 Archaeology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archaeological screening criteria 	Executive Overview	Appendix 16.1	Included in this Report & NOP Website
6.4 Cultural Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural heritage conservation Built heritage and Cultural Heritage Landscapes Cultural heritage districts 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7. IMPLEMENTATION			
7.1 Plan Interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to read the Plan 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
7.2 Region and Local Roles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination • Exemptions • Memorandum of Understandings • Guidance documents 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7.3 Performance Indicators and Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor intensification and density targets • Land developed • Natural environment mapping updates • AMP potential mapping updates 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7.4 Phasing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local municipalities phasing growth • Excess lands 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7.5 Health Impact Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria - Secondary Plans 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7.6 Asset Management Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure planning 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7.7 Complete Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies required 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
7.8 Review / Updates / Amendments to OP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of Amendments 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
7.9 Consultation and engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public consultation Consulting with other governments Engaging local municipalities Engaging Indigenous groups 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
8. SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES			
8.1 Site Specific Policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies to address site specific developments (carried over from existing OP) 	For incorporation in next OP draft		N/A
9. DEFINITIONS			
9.1 Glossary of Terms	Glossary of Terms	Appendix 17	Included in this Report
SCHEDULES/MAPS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule A - Local Municipalities Schedule B - Regional Structure Schedule C1 - Natural Environment System - TBD Schedule C2 - Natural Environment System - TBD Schedule D - Source Water Protection Schedule E - Agricultural Land Base Schedule F - Employment Areas 	Incorporation in next OP draft Included in this Report Incorporation in next OP draft Incorporation in next OP draft Incorporation in next OP draft Included in this Report Included in this Report	Appendix 4.4 Appendix 9.3 Appendix 10.3	NOP Website NOP Website NOP Website

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule G1 - Known Deposits of Mineral Aggregate Resources – Sand and Gravel Schedule G2 - Known Deposits of Mineral Aggregate Resources – Bedrock Schedule G3 - Mineral Aggregate Operations in the Region Schedule H - Mineral and Petroleum Resources Areas - TBD Schedule I1 - Transportation Infrastructure Schedule I2 - Strategic Cycling Network Schedule J - Areas of Archaeological Potential - TBD 	Included in this Report	Appendix 11.3	NOP Website
	Included in this Report	Appendix 11.4	NOP Website
	Included in this Report	Appendix 11.5	NOP Website
	Incorporation in next OP draft		
	Included in this Report	Appendix 12.3	NOP Website
	Included in this Report	Appendix 12.4	NOP Website
	Incorporation in next OP draft		
APPENDICES			
1. Settlement Area Boundary Review	Executive Overview	Appendix 18.1	Included in this Report & NOP Website
	Criteria: MCR Urban Area Boundary Expansion Assessment Criteria	Appendix 18.2	Included in this Report & NOP Website
	Criteria: Rural Settlement Boundary Review Process	Appendix 18.3	Included in this Report & NOP Website

Chapter / Section - Key Points	What is Provided in this Report	Appendix	Where to find it
	Criteria: Boundary Technical Mapping Updates	Appendix 18.4	Included in this Report & NOP Website

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 - Section 1. GROWTH ALLOCATION AND LAND NEEDS

SUMMARY

The Province assigned Niagara Region a minimum population and job forecast to 2051. The Region must plan to this minimum: 674,000 people and 272,000 jobs to 2051.

Staff's recommendations and Council's decisions must conform to the Provincial *Growth Plan* that sets out this minimum population and job forecast.

To do this, the Region is required to allocate population and job (employment) growth to its local municipalities and undertake a Land Needs Assessment ("LNA"), in conformance with a provincial methodology.

The LNA is a technical, Region-led process, which determines the amount of Community Area (mostly, where people live, work and shop) and Employment Area (mostly, where traditional-type businesses are located) that is needed to accommodate the growth forecasts within municipalities and the overall Region.

The following summarizes the growth Allocations and LNA:

- Niagara Region must plan for a minimum population of 674,000 people and 272,000 jobs to 2051.
- The Province makes the decision on the Region's LNA. They will assess the overall growth across Niagara, not just what may be needed in individual municipalities, to determine whether or not to approve.
- Balancing interests is important in creating the LNA. This includes inputs from other strategies set out in this Report. For example:
 - The Regional Structure, **Appendix 4.3**, sets out Regional Intensification Rate of 56%, above the minimum Provincial *Growth Plan* target of 50%. This is important to support affordable housing, reduce overall Community Area land need, greater preservation of agricultural lands, and helps climate change mitigation. Changes to the Regional Intensification Rate will directly impact the Region's ability to support market-based housing demand.
 - The Housing Report, **Appendix 5.2**, sets out that the Region's core housing need (including, affordability) will get worse if we continue growth at the existing level. Growing at the minimum rates set out the Provincial *Growth Plan* will keep core housing need level at about 13%. To reduce core housing need, even more housing is needed.
 - The Employment Strategy, **Appendix 10.2**, sets out existing and planned densities for Employment Areas. This is used in calculating Employment



Area need for the LNA, and helps ensure a consistent location and supply of Employment Area lands.

- The LNA requires a Market-Based Demand assessment. Such an assessment suggests lower-density housing demand remains significant in municipalities outside of the *Greenbelt Plan* area.
- The draft LNA sets out that Niagara Region requires approximately 460 ha of Community Area land and has a slight oversupply of 20 ha of Employment Area to accommodate 2051 growth. As previously noted, the Province considers these overall numbers rather than municipal-specific numbers.
- When reviewing individual municipalities, Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and West Lincoln suggests they have a need for additional Community Area lands to accommodate population growth to 2051. Pelham has a small need of Community Area land.
- The LNA suggests Fort Erie and West Lincoln have a need for additional Employment Area land to accommodate employment growth to 2051.
- In January 2021, Regional Council approved Welland's urban boundary expansion of approximately 95 Ha – no additional land is required in Welland.
- Grimsby, Lincoln, St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake have an appropriate supply of Community and Employment Area lands to accommodate 2051 forecasts. Wainfleet is entirely rural lands, which has assigned growth, but not in the Community and Employment Area lands categories.
- The LNA information provided here is for review and discussion. Comments are sought by **July 2, 2021**. After receiving feedback, a recommended LNA will be advanced for Regional Council consideration in August 2021.
- After receiving direction on the LNA, recommendations to settlement area boundaries will be made. A discussion of the Settlement Area Boundary Review (SABR) process is set out in **Appendix 18.1**.
- The LNA itself does not propose policy direction nor does it provide a range of options; it is simply the calculated land required for growth to 2051 based on inputs identified in associated strategies.
- Included in this Appendix are the following:

- LNA Executive Overview (This document, **Appendix 3.1**)
- Land Needs Assessment Summary Document (**Appendix 3.2**). This document has details about the draft 2051 LNA calculation and results.
- Memo from Hemson Consulting Ltd. “Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051” (**Appendix 3.3**). Hemson provided the Region with background information and recommendations that formed the input to this LNA.
- Draft Forecasted Growth policies (**Appendix 3.4**).

A Draft Policy set and supporting information is provided with this sub-section document.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Land Needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SABR	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watershed Planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate Change

OVERVIEW

The Region of Niagara must plan to accommodate a minimum population of 674,000 people and 264,000 jobs to 2051 as identified in the *Growth Plan* Schedule 3. This growth must be proactively planned to help achieve it in a fiscally and environmentally sustainable manner.

The *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (“PPS”) and *Growth Plan* provide direction to municipalities on how to plan for, accommodate and manage growth. The *PPS* directs municipalities to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet long-term needs and ensure sufficient land is made available to meet projected needs for a time horizon consistent with the *Growth Plan*.

An updated Provincial LNA methodology (“LNA”) was released in August 2020. The LNA introduced new requirements to ensure land need is analyzed in terms of total housing, as well as housing by type, so that a “market-based supply of housing” is

provided to the extent possible when determining lands required to accommodate growth.

Market demand consideration is a requirement for planning to *Growth Plan* targets.

The Region is solely responsible for allocating population and employment growth to local municipalities. The Region does so through a LNA to identify the land required to accommodate minimum 2051 forecasts assigned by the Province.

Growth Forecasts and Municipal Allocations

The Region has been working on the growth allocations and LNA for a number of years. Initial forecasts were based on a planning horizon of 2041. In August 2020, the Province released an amended *Growth Plan* which extended the planning horizon from 2041 to 2051. Significant consultation has been ongoing with municipalities, stakeholders and the public since the release of the amended *Growth Plan*.

Hemson Consulting, the Region's consultants on land need matters, provided the Region with updated municipal-level forecasts based on inputs from consultation and associated Official Plan background strategies, including Watershed Planning, the Natural Environment Strategy, Employment Strategy and Regional Structure Strategy.

A copy of the Hemson Consulting memo that addresses municipal-level forecasts (and several other matters later discussed) is attached as **Appendix 3.3**.

Table 1 provides an overview of municipal allocations to 2051 as set out by Hemson Consulting.

Table 1: Municipal Population, Household and Employment Forecasts (2021 and 2051)

Municipal Growth Allocations: 2021 and 2051						
Municipality	Population		Households		Employment	
	2021	2051	2021	2051	2021	2051
Fort Erie	33,930	48,050	14,150	21,510	10,530	17,430
Grimsby	30,300	37,000	11,470	16,070	10,690	14,670
Lincoln	26,860	35,660	9,590	14,190	11,390	15,960
Niagara Falls	97,220	141,650	38,520	58,740	37,780	58,110
Niagara-on-the-Lake	19,970	28,900	7,910	12,500	11,800	16,960
Pelham	19,320	28,830	7,150	11,280	4,810	7,140
Port Colborne	19,250	23,230	8,210	10,500	5,910	7,550
St. Catharines	140,250	171,890	58,550	78,320	61,780	81,010
Thorold	24,440	39,690	9,230	15,660	8,530	12,080
Wainfleet	7,000	7,730	2,580	3,040	1,400	1,830
Welland	56,210	73,000	23,610	32,340	18,030	28,790
West Lincoln	16,370	38,370	5,330	14,060	4,460	10,480
Niagara Region	491,120	674,000	196,300	288,200	187,110	272,000

Source: Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051 (Hemson Consulting, 2021). **Appendix 3.3.**

Preliminary Land Needs Assessment Summary

The LNA sets out a plan for managing growth by calculating the overall Community Area and Employment Area land needs associated with *Growth Plan* forecasts.

Community Area is defined as the Urban Area, minus Employment Areas, and is made up of both the Built-Up Area (as defined and mapped by the Province in 2006) and the Designated Greenfield Area.

Employment Area is defined as a cluster of business and economic activities including, but limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities.

The LNA requires household and employment forecasts be categorized by housing and employment type prior to allocating forecasts to the Community and Employment Areas.

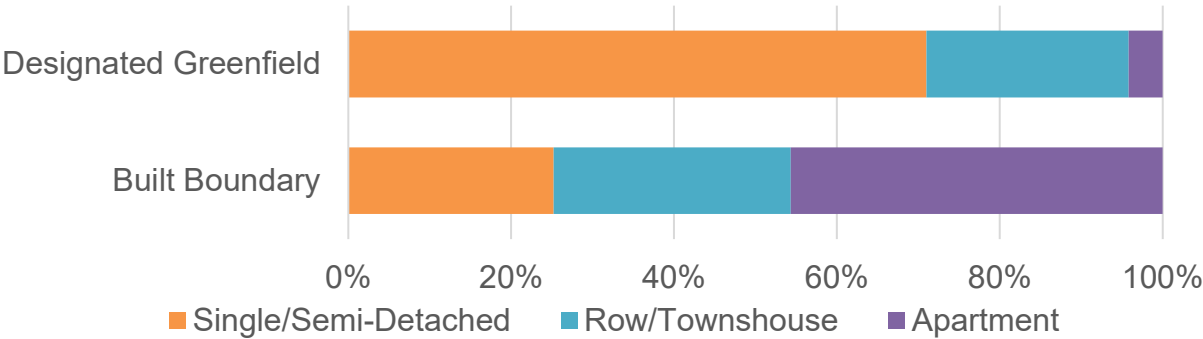
The starting point to look at housing by type is from a market-based demand forecast. Hemson did so in their work, and concluded a mix of 23% apartment units and 77% ground-related units. Further details is provided in **Appendix 3.3.**

This overall housing by type mix is allocated across the Community Area to the Delineated built-up area (“BUA”) and Designated greenfield area (“DGA”) based on municipal Intensification Rates identified within the Regional Structure Strategy. Those terms are further explained in the Regional Structure Policies (**Appendix 4.3**).

The BUA has a greater concentration of higher density and more affordable housing types; the DGA has a greater share of lower density housing types.

Figure 1 identifies the share of housing units within the Community Area geographies.

Figure 1: Share of Housing Unit Types within Delineated Built-Up Area and Designated Greenfield Area

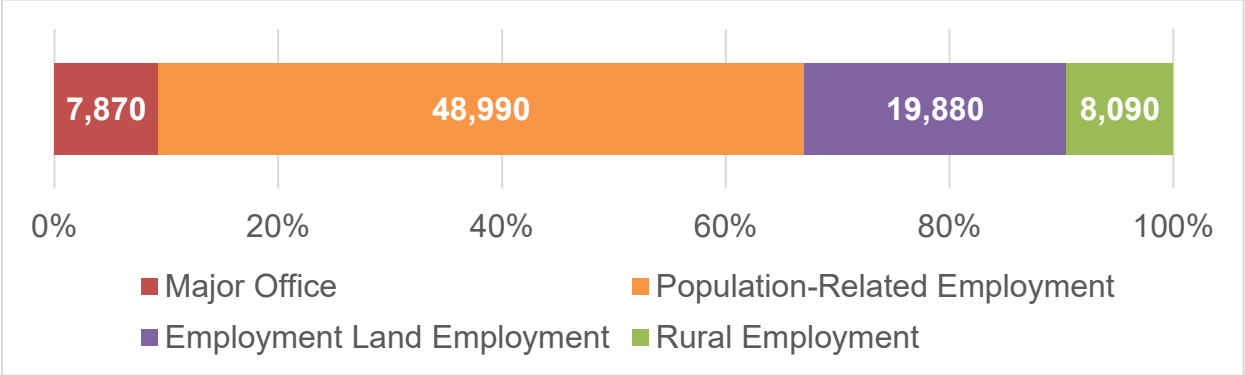


Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Tables 13 and 15.

Employment growth is factored into both the Community and Employment Areas based on employment type. The *Growth Plan* provides a preliminary breakdown of employment by type. That data was further refined by Hemson Consulting from data provided by the Region from the Niagara Region Employment Inventory.

Figure 2 provides a breakdown of employment growth by type.

Figure 2: Growth Plan Employment Forecasts by Employment Type



Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Tables 22-25.

The majority of Population-Related employment and half of Major Office employment jobs are allocated to the Community Area. The majority of Employment Land Employment, remainder of Major Office employment and a small portion of Population-Related employment are allocated to the Employment Area.

The remaining rural households and employment are directed to the Rural area. The Provincial LNAM does not provide detail on calculating need for additional Rural Settlement Area lands and, therefore, are not a component of the draft Land Needs Assessment. Additional consultation is underway with West Lincoln and Wainfleet to ensure Rural Settlement Areas also have a sufficient supply of developable land to support growth to 2051.

Table 2 provides the draft Community and Employment Area Land Needs. This is further detailed in the Land Needs Assessment Summary Document (**Appendix 3.2**).

Table 2: Draft Community and Employment Area Land Needs Assessments

Draft Land Needs Assessment Summary		
Municipality	New Community Area Land Need (ha)	New Employment Area Land Need (ha)
Fort Erie	105	130
Grimsby	5	0
Lincoln	0	15
Niagara Falls	260	(35)
Niagara-on-the-Lake	0	(25)
Pelham	40	0
Port Colborne	(175)	(120)
St. Catharines	15	30
Thorold	(160)	(55)
Wainfleet	0	0
Welland	0	(10)
West Lincoln	370	50
Niagara Region	460	(20)

Although Table 2 shows Community Area and Employment Area land needs as two separate assessments, the Province requires one overall land need number Region-wide. The final LNA will present local municipal needs, but ensure an overall Region-wide supply to meet the 2051 forecasts.

Relationship between LNA and Other Official Plan Strategies in this Report

The **Regional Structure (Appendix 4.3)** proposes an overall Intensification Rate of 56%, which is above the *Growth Plan* minimum of 50%. This allows for a housing mix that conforms to market-based demand. The higher intensification rate provides a stronger focus on higher density units, reduced Community Area land need, a greater preservation of agricultural lands, and assists with climate change mitigation.

Significant changes to municipal allocations or Intensification Rates will directly impact the housing by type mix as currently identified. This may impact the Region's ability to support a market-based supply of housing.

The Region is responsible for identifying Employment Areas. The **Employment Strategy (Appendix 10.2)** provides direction to the LNA on the Region's Employment Areas including proposed density targets, land supply and characteristics of the area.

Since Employment Areas are discounted from Community Area land needs, there is a direct relationship between the two assessments.

If an Employment Area boundary is changed, it will directly impact the Community Area land need. If the Employment Area is within the BUA, the result may be an increase to the Intensification Rate. If the Employment Area is within the DGA, the result would be a decrease in Community Area land needs.

Finally, developable land supply is a core component of both the Community Area and Employment Area calculations. Developable supply removes natural heritage features and will be based on the Natural Environment System (NES). Generally, there is little impact on the LNA results between the NES Options under consideration.

Consultation

The draft LNA was prepared over many years with significant input from local municipal planners, public feedback and direction from our consultant, Hemson (refer to the Public Consultation and Engagement section in **Appendix 3.2** for more information).

Most recently, the Region reported on land needs in September 2020, in PDS 29-2020: Settlement Area Boundary Review Program: Growth Plan Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment Update.

The Region has consulted with the Province on several occasions, including most recently, in mid-March. This is critical as it is the Province which will approve the LNA.

Additional consultation is planned for the spring and summer 2021. Consultation will seek to confirm and refine the LNA results as necessary. Outside the LNA specifically, changes to the Natural Environment System option, Regional Structure and Employment Strategy will all result in changes to the final LNA.

We welcome all feedback and ask that it be provided no later than July 2, 2021.

This date is selected to allow the Region sufficient time to review and comment for reporting to Planning and Economic Development Committee in August 2021. At that meeting, the Region will seek endorsement of a final land needs assessment to establish 2051 land needs.

Doing so at that time will allow Regional staff to, at a later time, make recommendations on Settlement Area Boundaries. Details of the Settlement Area Boundary Review is provided in Appendix **18.1**.



NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

Draft Land Needs Assessment Summary

Preliminary results, subject to refinement following consultation with the Province, local municipalities, and public

Niagara Region
May 2021

GROWING REGION



Table of Contents

Land Needs Assessment Overview.....	3
How to Read this Report	3
Relationship to Official Plan Strategies	4
Public Consultation and Engagement	6
Community Area Land Needs Assessment.....	9
Component 1: Population Forecasts.....	9
Component 2: Housing Need.....	9
Component 3: Allocation of Housing Need to Local Municipalities	11
Component 4: Housing Supply Potential by Policy Area	13
Component 5: Community Area Jobs	16
Component 6: Need for Additional Land.....	18
Community Area Land Needs Summary	20
Additional Considerations and Revisions.....	20
Employment Area Land Needs Assessment	21
Component 1: Employment Forecasts.....	21
Component 2: Employment Allocation	22
Component 3: Employment Area Capacity	23
Component 4: Need for Additional Employment Area Land	24
Employment Area Land Needs Summary.....	25
Differences between Draft 2019 LNA Results and 2020 LNA Results	26
Natural Environment System Impacts	27
Conclusion	28
Glossary of Terms	30

Land Needs Assessment Overview

The Land Needs Assessment (“LNA”) is a technical, Region-led process that determines the amount of land required for each local municipality based on the Provincially-allocated overall growth to 2051.

Specifically, the Region must calculate the amount of designated land each local municipality requires to accommodate population, housing and employment forecasts provided in *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (“Growth Plan”).

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as directed by the *Growth Plan*, released the *Land Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (“the *Methodology*”) in August 2020. The Region is required to use the *Methodology* in combination with the policies of the *Growth Plan* to determine the amount of land required to accommodate forecasted growth.

The *Methodology* is used to calculate two separate land needs, one for *Community Area* and one for the *Employment Area*.

Conducting the LNA is an iterative process and requires substantial direction and input from background strategies associated with the Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”) as well as consultation with the public, local municipalities and Province.

This report provides a summarized version of a LNA and the results are to be considered preliminary and for the purpose of engagement and consultation.

Following this consultation, a final Land Needs Assessment will be prepared for Regional Council consideration in August 2021. Feedback is requested by July 2, 2021 to ensure the August 2021 date can be met.

How to Read this Report

This report follows the Provincial *Methodology* process and provides a summary for each component outlined within it. The report does not represent the final land needs assessment.

Updated Provincial Methodology

The *Methodology* replaces a previous 2018 version. The revised *methodology* follows a similar process, but includes a focus on providing for market-based demand for housing mix and targets. An interim draft LNA was conducted in 2019 using the previous 2018 methodology. A summary of the results between the 2019 and current *methodology* is provided later in this report.

Importantly, if other associated Official Plan Strategies are revised, inputs from those revisions may change the output of the LNA.

The Region retained Hemson Consulting to provide assistance with land needs assessment work. The Region worked with Hemson Consulting to revise and extend growth allocations to 2051. Previous work from Hemson Consulting identified growth to 2041, since that was the time horizon prior to the release of the August 2020 *Growth Plan and Methodology*.

Appendix 3.3 contains the Hemson Technical update *Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051* (“2051 Growth Update Memo”).

The *2051 Growth Update Memo* should be read in conjunction with this Report. That document provides greater details on allocations, housing mix, employment forecasts and accommodating market-demand. The *2051 Growth Update Memo* is referenced frequently within this document.

Finally, the results of the LNA must be viewed as preliminary and will continue to be refined through the Official Plan process and consultation noted above.

The Province is the approval authority on the LNA and requires consultation be done prior to submitting the final LNA.

A **Glossary of Terms** is provided at the end of this summary to provide clarity on frequently used terms and/or terms from Provincial policy.

Relationship to Official Plan Strategies

The Land Needs Assessment implements the directions of other Official Plan strategies provided as part of this overall Joint Report.

The LNA itself does not propose policy direction nor does it provide a range of options – it is simply the calculated land required for growth to 2051 based on inputs identified in associated Official Plan strategies.

The table below sets out how other Official Plan Strategies provide input in to the LNA.

Official Plan Strategy or Report	Input in LNA
2051 Growth Update	Population Forecast Housing Forecast Employment Forecast
Regional Structure	Intensification Rate Designated Greenfield Area Density Strategic Growth Area Density
Employment Strategy	Employment Area Delineation Employment Area Supply Vacant Employment Area (ha)
Natural Environment Strategy	Non-Developable Natural Features Vacant Designated Community Area Lands

Changes made to the inputs in the above Official Plan strategies may impact the *Community* or *Employment Area* land needs.

Details about the above inputs, and the relationship to the identified Strategies, is provided throughout this LNA Summary.

Public Consultation and Engagement

The Municipal Comprehensive Review (now, called the Niagara Official Plan) was first initiated in 2014 and has been through significant consultation and continuous evolution.

The following summary identifies milestone consultation efforts made so far which covered growth allocations and land needs assessment.

Project Phase	Date	Description
Niagara 2041: Growth Options	November 17, 2015	Public Information Center: Town of Grimsby
	November 18, 2015	Public Information Centre: City of Port Colborne
	November 19, 2015	Public Information Centre: City of St. Catharines
Council approved Phase 1 and 2 Report (PDS 15-2016)		
Niagara 2041: Preferred Growth Option	June 15, 2016	Public Information Centre: Town of Fort Erie
	June 16, 2016	Public Information Centre: Township of West Lincoln
	June 22, 2016	Public Information Centre: City of Welland
	November 30, 2016	Public Information Centre: City of Niagara Falls
	December 6, 2016	Public Information Centre: City of Thorold
	December 7, 2016	Public Information Centre: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
	December 8, 2016	Public Information Centre: Town of Lincoln
Preferred Growth Option Forecast approved for Development Charges Study (PDS 37-2016)		

Project Phase	Date	Description
2017 Provincial Plan Review and Release of Growth Plan (2018)		
Regional Council deem Pre-2017 Growth Plan MCR complete and Growth Management work transitioned into new Niagara Official Plan (PDS 21-2018)		
Niagara Official Plan: Employment Strategy	October 10, 2019	Industry Stakeholder Session: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Niagara Official Plan: Growth Strategy	November 6, 2019	Public Information Centre: City of Thorold
	November 7, 2019	Public Information Centre: City of Niagara Falls
	November 13, 2019	Public Information Centre: Town of Grimsby
	November 14, 2019	Public Information Centre: Town of Fort Erie
Niagara Official Plan: Employment Strategy	February 25, 2020	Industry Stakeholder Session: Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake
Release of Growth Plan (2020) and Revised Land Needs Assessment Methodology		
Settlement Area Boundary Review Program: Growth Plan Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment Update presented to Council (PDS 29-2020)		
Niagara Official Plan: Growth Management Survey	September – October, 2020	Online Survey related to Growth Management directions and options
Niagara Official Plan: Land Needs, Growth Allocations and Settlement Area Boundary Adjustment	October 7, 2020	Virtual Public Information Centre
Niagara Official Plan: Employment Strategy	October 8, 2020	Virtual Public Information Centre

Community Area Land Needs Assessment

Community Area is defined as the Urban Area, minus *Employment Areas*, and is made up of both the *Delineated Built-Up Area* (as defined and mapped by the Province in 2006) and the Designated Greenfield Area (DGA).

The *Community Area* part of the Land Needs Assessment seeks to quantify the amount (in hectares) of DGA lands that is needed to accommodate the required growth forecasts to 2051.

The *Community Area* Land Needs Assessment is comprised of six components. Below is a discussion of those components and the results.

Component 1: Population Forecasts

The starting point is the population projection by age group for the Region. This comes from *Growth Plan* Schedule 3, which provides a forecast 2051 population of **674,000** for Niagara Region. The Region must plan to this forecast population, at minimum.

Component 2: Housing Need

The *Methodology* requires population to be converted into housing units based on household formation rates. Household formation rates are based on the likelihood or tendency of age groups to live in households.

Niagara's household formation rates are anticipated to increase between 2016 (the base Census year) and 2051. A contributing factor is Niagara's aging demographic, which will continue to grow to 2051, with a significant increase in households maintained by people 75 years of age and older. Details are provided in the *2051 Growth Update Memo*.

Table 1 identifies a need for **288,600** households based on the 2051 population forecast of 674,000.

Table 1: 2016 and 2051 Occupied Households by Age of Household Maintainer

Age	Headship Rate	Occupied Households		2016-2051 Growth	2016-2051 Growth %
		2016	2051		
15 - 19	1.7%	430	550	120	27.9%
20 - 24	14.5%	4,000	4,920	920	23.0%
25 - 29	35.2%	8,640	12,400	3,760	43.5%
30 - 34	48.7%	11,435	17,060	5,625	49.2%
35 - 39	52.9%	12,385	18,900	6,515	52.6%
40 - 44	54.1%	13,825	19,550	5,725	41.4%
45 - 49	57.4%	16,365	21,580	5,215	31.9%
50 - 54	57.7%	19,920	24,180	4,260	21.4%
55 - 59	58.6%	20,050	25,200	5,150	25.7%
60 - 64	58.9%	18,845	24,370	5,525	29.3%
65 - 69	61.2%	18,015	24,970	6,955	38.6%
70 - 74	61.7%	13,675	23,630	9,955	72.8%
75 - 79	65.3%	10,480	23,510	13,030	124.3%
80 - 84	66.5%	8,190	21,120	12,930	157.9%
84 - 89	60.7%	5,185	15,530	10,345	199.5%
90 +	46.3%	2,390	10,730	8,340	349.0%
Total	48.2% (2016)	183,830	288,200	104,370	56.8%
	50.8% (2051)				

Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Table 3

The forecast population age structure and household formation information is further used to determine households by housing type. The *Methodology* requires housing forecast by four housing types; single/semi-detached, row houses, accessory dwelling and apartment.

As referenced in the *2051 Growth Update Memo*, the starting point for household forecast by housing type was a market-based demand. Market-based demand is a key consideration within the LNA process and, along with housing affordability, is one of the main drivers in establishing housing mix and land need requirements.

Table 3 provides a summary of household forecast by housing type between 2021 and 2051.

Table 2: Household Forecast by Housing Type - 2021 to 2051

Household Forecast by Housing Type: 2021 to 2051					
Niagara Region	Single/Semi-Detached	Row House	Accessory Dwelling	Apartment Building	Total
Units	45,150	24,860	1,890	20,140	92,040
Share	49%	27%	2%	21%	100%

Source: Hemson Consulting

Component 3: Allocation of Housing Need to Local Municipalities

Allocation of Housing Need to local municipalities is based on collaboration with local municipalities and consultation with public and private stakeholders.

Draft allocation covering the period between 2016 and 2041 was completed through Niagara 2041 (see PDS 37-2016) and formed the basis for completion of the pre-2017 Municipal Comprehensive Review (see PDS 21-2018).

After that, additional consultation was undertaken through the Niagara Official Plan process, including Public Information Centres, Official Plan surveys and continued collaboration with local municipalities. The Consultation and Engagement section earlier in this report provides specific details.

Final adjustments to municipal allocations were done to reflect direction from associated Official Plan strategies, including Watershed, Housing and Employment Strategies.

Housing Affordability

The Housing Report, **Appendix 5.2**, sets out that that the Region's core housing need (including, affordability) will get worse if we continue growth at the existing level. Achieving the minimum forecasts set out the *Growth Plan* will keep the core housing need level at about 13%. To reduce core housing need, even more housing is needed.

One way to create more housing is to provide a greater share of higher density housing types. Row/townhouse and apartment units have a lower average number of people per unit compared to single and semi-detached units. Therefore, increasing the supply of higher density units will require more housing options and reduce core housing need.

The LNA considers a market-based housing mix and its relationship to the planned housing mix. This is a requirement of the *Methodology*. A market-based approach is useful to identify an appropriate variety of housing units to be built to meet the needs of Niagara's population.

The Greenbelt specialty crop designation, present in northern Niagara municipalities, prohibits expansion of Settlement Areas boundaries. In the communities of Grimsby, Lincoln, St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake, growth is proposed within existing Settlement Areas through intensification of the Built-Up Area – requiring a greater proportion of higher density housing types.

Municipalities outside of the *Greenbelt Plan* area have a relatively lower intensification rate and, therefore, a higher proportion of lower density housing types. The balance between these two geographies is important for supporting market-based demand for housing and protection of specialty crop lands within the Greenbelt Plan area.

Table 3 provides municipal-level housing allocations by housing type.

Table 3: Housing Unit Growth by Type and Municipality, 2021 to 2051

Housing Unit Growth by Type and Municipality, 2021 to 2051				
Municipality	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	4,060	2,700	600	7,360
Grimsby	120	1,350	3,130	4,600
Lincoln	1,590	1,540	1,470	4,600
Niagara Falls	11,980	5,090	3,150	20,220
Niagara-on-the-Lake	3,050	910	630	4,590
Pelham	2,390	1,070	680	4,140
Port Colborne	1,690	430	170	2,290
St. Catharines	3,040	4,500	12,230	19,770
Thorold	3,890	2,390	150	6,430
Wainfleet	450	0	10	460
Welland	3,590	2,450	2,690	8,730
West Lincoln	6,030	2,390	310	8,730
Niagara Region	41,880	24,800	25,220	91,900

Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Table 17

Component 4: Housing Supply Potential by Policy Area

The *Methodology* requires municipalities to plan for growth within three policy areas:

1. Delineated Built-Up Area
2. Designated Greenfield Area
3. Rural Area

Development within the *delineated built-up area* is referred to as Intensification. The *delineated built-up area* was established by the Province in 2008 and was further refined through Niagara 2031, the Region's Growth Management Strategy that implemented the policies of the 2006 Growth Plan.

The *Growth Plan* requires 50% of future household growth in Niagara to be directed to the *delineated built-up area*. This is an increase from 40% in the Region's current Official Plan, which was the intensification target in the 2006 Growth Plan.

The Region seeks to exceed this requirement. The analysis conducted through the Regional Structure Strategy (**Appendix 4.2**) identified a **Regional Intensification Rate of 56%**. This target is well above the minimum 50% identified in the *Growth Plan*.

The impact of the higher intensification rate is a reduction in overall *Community Area Land Need*. Changes to the Regional Structure, allocations of growth or density targets, will have a direct impact on overall land need and may impact the Region's ability to support market-based demand for housing.

The *Designated Greenfield Area* ("DGA") is the remainder of the designated urban area outside of the *delineated built-up area*.

The *Growth Plan* sets out that the Region must plan for a minimum density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare within the DGA.

The Rural Area is considered all areas outside of Urban Settlement Areas, and includes the Agricultural System and Rural Settlements (Hamlets). Rural housing need will be addressed in the final Land Needs Assessment.

Housing forecasts by municipality, within the three policies areas, is based on an assessment of intensification opportunities and development potential within the DGA. Intensification rates, established through the Regional Structure, are based

on a combination of consultation with local municipalities and an assessment of the capacity for growth within the *delineated built-up area*.

Table 4 provides household forecast by policy area for each municipality and identifies the overall intensification rate of 56%.

Table 4: Housing Forecast by Policy Area and Municipality, 2021 to 2051

Shares of Household Growth by Policy Area Niagara Region by Local Municipality, 2021-2051				
Municipality	Built Up Area	DGA	Rural	Total
Fort Erie	50.0%	49.5%	0.5%	100%
Grimsby	98.0%	1.5%	0.5%	100%
Lincoln	80.0%	19.5%	0.5%	100%
Niagara Falls	50.0%	49.5%	0.5%	100%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	25.0%	74.5%	0.5%	100%
Pelham	25.0%	74.5%	0.5%	100%
Port Colborne	30.0%	69.5%	0.5%	100%
St. Catharines	95.0%	4.5%	0.5%	100%
Thorold	25.0%	74.5%	0.5%	100%
Wainfleet	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100%
Welland	60.0%	39.5%	0.5%	100%
West Lincoln	13.0%	86.5%	0.5%	100%
Niagara Region	56.0%	43.0%	1.0%	100.0%

Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Table 8

As with Component 3, the *Methodology* requires housing forecasts within each of the policy areas to be broken out into housing type. The distribution of housing type within each policy area must be based on an achievable housing mix and consider market-demand.

Within the *delineated built-up area*, the housing mix is predominately higher density forms of housing including row and apartment housing. In contrast, the housing forecast within the DGA and Rural area is predominately ground-related, with 72% of units anticipated to be single or semi-detached.

Table 5 and **Table 6** provide housing unit forecasts by municipality within the *delineated built-up area* and DGA.

The Township of Wainfleet is excluded from both tables as Wainfleet does not have an Urban Settlement Area and all forecast housing growth will occur within the *Rural Area*, in Rural Settlements and on other agricultural lands.

Table 5: Housing Forecast by Unit Type, Delineated Built-Up Area, 2021 to 2051

Delineated Built-Up Area Housing Unit Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Municipality	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	1,520	1,620	540	3,680
Grimsby	110	1,330	3,060	4,500
Lincoln	1,430	920	1,320	3,670
Niagara Falls	4,220	3,050	2,830	10,100
Niagara-on-the-Lake	240	350	560	1,150
Pelham	350	500	180	1,030
Port Colborne	400	130	160	690
St. Catharines	2,480	4,370	11,930	18,780
Thorold	580	890	140	1,610
Welland	920	1,730	2,590	5,240
West Lincoln	760	120	250	1,130
Niagara Region	13,020	15,010	23,560	51,590

Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Table 13

Table 6: Housing Forecast by Unit Type, DGA, 2021 to 2051

Designated Greenfield Area Housing Unit Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Municipality	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	2,500	1,080	60	3,640
Grimsby	0	10	60	70
Lincoln	140	610	150	900
Niagara Falls	7,660	2,040	310	10,010
Niagara-on-the-Lake	2,800	564	66	3,430
Pelham	2,010	570	500	3,080
Port Colborne	1,280	300	20	1,600
St. Catharines	460	130	300	890
Thorold	3,290	1,500	20	4,810
Welland	2,630	720	100	3,450
West Lincoln	5,230	2,270	60	7,560
Niagara Region	28,000	9,794	1,646	39,440

Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051, Table 15

Component 5: Community Area Jobs

The *Methodology* requires *Community Area* jobs be allocated within the DGA portion of the *Community Area* to calculate the total number of residents and jobs occurring within it.

Community Area jobs are predominately within the Major Office and Population-Related Employment categories. For the purposes of the *Community Area* assessment, *Community Area* jobs are further distinguished between the *delineated built-up area* and *designated greenfield area*.

Community Area jobs were calculated based on existing development proposals, land use permissions, and factoring in Work At Home employment.

Work At Home

How Work at Home employment is incorporated into the Land Needs Assessment impacts *Community* and *Employment Area* Land needs.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic to the time of preparing this LNA Summary, many jobs have shifted to a Work at Home setting, although the Region does not have specific data quantifying such a shift.

At the time of writing, the Region and other experts are unsure the long-term impacts for Work at Home. For the preparation of the LNA, this is an important consideration for how Work at Home may impact the calculation of different Employment Types.

In Niagara, the majority of *Employment Areas* are considered Core and Dynamic (as defined in the Employment Strategy, **Appendix 10.2**). Jobs within these areas are largely categorized as Employment Land Employment and occur onsite. Therefore, moving Employment Land Employment jobs out of *Employment Areas* would result in an erroneous reduction in *Employment Area* land requirements.

Alternatively, Major Office and Population-Related Employment jobs are those that are most likely to be Work at Home. In other words, those are the types of jobs that may see long-term Work from Home changes. That type of job is predominantly located within the *Community Area*.

The approach taken in the draft LNA is to maintain similar Work at Home rates, generally consistent with pre-Covid-19 pandemic conditions. This ensures the greatest flexibility within *Employment Areas* and maintains a sufficient supply of lands in the event there is not a significant long-term shift to Work at Home.

In this way, the Region is being conservative in its LNA. Work from Home trends will be carefully monitored and, if warranted, future Official Plan changes will be advanced to address those trends.

Table 7 provides an estimated number of jobs within the DGA portion of the Community Area for each urban municipality.

Table 7: DGA Community Area Job Forecast, 2021 to 2051

DGA Community Area Job Forecast, 2021-2051	
Municipality	Total
Fort Erie	250
Grimsby	5
Lincoln	745
Niagara Falls	565
Niagara-on-the-Lake	630
Pelham	560
Port Colborne	110
St. Catharines	1,555
Thorold	500
Welland	265
West Lincoln	2,000
Niagara Region	7,185

Component 6: Need for Additional Land

The final component of the *Community Area* LNA brings together the forecast housing units and employment within the DGA to establish an overall land need based on achieving the minimum density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare.

To determine land need, the forecast housing units in **Table 6** are compared to the planned units (units that are within either a draft or registered Plan of Subdivision) within each municipality. The surplus, or shortfall, of units is converted into residents based on the Persons Per Unit rate¹ for each unit type.

Finally, DGA Community Area job forecasts in **Table 7** are added to establish an overall people and jobs target for the DGA.

¹ The Person Per Unit (PPU) rate is based on the 2017 Niagara Region Development Charges Background Study. This Study provides a PPU of 2.91 for single/semi-detached, 2.12 for row and 1.62 for apartment. PPU rates may be revised based on forthcoming Development Charges Study work undertaken later in 2021.

The overall population and employment target is converted to a land need in hectares based on the minimum density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare.²

Table 8 provides the *Community Area* Land Needs Assessment results.

Table 8: Overall Community Area Land Need, 2021 to 2051

DGA Community Area Land Need, 2021-2051				
Municipality	Population and Employment Growth within the Unplanned DGA	Area Required (ha)	Area Designated³ (ha)	Additional Land Need (ha)*
Fort Erie	8,170	165	60	105
Grimsby	120	5	0	5
Lincoln	2,410	25	25	0
Niagara Falls	22,970	460	200	260
Niagara-on-the-Lake	9,435	75	75	0
Pelham	3,215	65	25	40
Port Colborne	4,365	85	260	-175
St. Catharines	3,655	75	60	15
Thorold	4,795	95	255	-160
Welland	5,770	115	115	0
West Lincoln	20,545	410	40	370
Niagara Region	85,450	1,595	1,115	460

Note: Above numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

² The density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare excludes Lincoln and Niagara-on the Lake, which have a vacant DGA target of 100 people and jobs per hectare due to the land use permissions within the Major Transit Station Area and Glendale District Plan.

³ The Area Designated is the gross developable land, within the Designated Greenfield Area, free of non-developable features identified within the *Growth Plan*. The Natural Environment System area removed is based on Option 3B as recommended by the Natural Environment Strategy.

Community Area Land Needs Summary

Niagara's 12 local municipalities can be placed into three general categories as it pertains to the preliminary LNA results for Community Area:

1. Additional Community Area Land Required

Based on the draft LNA, the Town of Fort Erie, City of Niagara Falls and Township of West Lincoln do not have sufficient land to accommodate the 2051 forecast.

The Town of Pelham has a small insufficiency of land.

2. No Additional Community Area Land Required

Based on the draft LNA, The Town of Grimsby, Town of Lincoln, Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, City of St. Catharines, and City of Welland have a sufficient supply of designated lands to accommodate the 2051 forecast.

3. Excess Lands

Based on the draft LNA, the City of Thorold and City of Port Colborne have a surplus of designated lands to 2051. The Region is considering tools to address *Excess Lands*.

Additional Considerations and Revisions

The *Methodology* allows for final adjustments to be made to *Community Area Land Needs*, including a minor increase to land in the event of any expansions, to create a logical boundary.

The *Methodology* also allows for refinements based on constrained lands due to infrastructure and servicing. Determining servicing constraints will be important in assessing *Excess Lands* and where lands may be considered constrained, rather than surplus.

Finally, revisions to associated strategies will require updates to the Land Needs Assessment. Significant changes to municipal allocations or Intensification Rates will directly impact the housing by type mix as currently identified. This may impact the Region's ability to support a market-based supply of housing and change overall land needs.

If an *Employment Area* boundary is changed, it will directly impact the *Community Area* land need. If the *Employment Area* is within the BUA, the result may be an increase to Intensification Rate. If the *Employment Area* is within the DGA, the result would be a decrease in *Community Area* land needs.

All of these considerations will need to be reviewed prior to finalizing the Land Needs Assessment.

The final Land Needs Assessment will need to be a single overall number, endorsed by Council, and provided to the Province for approval.

Employment Area Land Needs Assessment

Component 1: Employment Forecasts

Similar to the *Community Area* assessment, the starting point for determining the overall *Employment Area* land need is the employment forecast set out in *Growth Plan* Schedule 3. The *Growth Plan* requires Niagara Region to plan for a minimum employment base of **272,000** jobs by 2051.

The *Methodology* requires the employment forecast to be allocated to local municipalities and be categorized by employment type, including Major Office, Population-Related Employment, Employment Land Employment and Rural based employment. These employment types are defined within the **Glossary of Terms** section at the end of this report.

2051 Growth Update Memo sets out the distribution of employment forecasts for Niagara Region.

Table 9 provides an overview of employment growth by municipality, by employment type, from 2021 to 2051.

Table 9: Niagara Region Employment Growth, 2021 to 2051, by Employment Type

Total Employment Growth by Employment Type, 2021-2051					
Municipality	Major Office	Population-Related Employment	Employment Land Employment	Rural Employment	Total Employment
Fort Erie	140	2,890	3,430	440	6,900
Grimsby	380	2,070	1,130	390	3,970
Lincoln	100	1,580	1,390	1,500	4,570
Niagara Falls	1,150	15,550	2,770	850	20,320
Niagara-on-the-Lake	350	3,040	290	1,480	5,160
Pelham	10	1,600	0	710	2,320
Port Colborne	0	750	350	540	1,640
St. Catharines	4,970	10,780	2,880	590	19,220
Thorold	250	2,540	580	170	3,540
Wainfleet	0	0	0	420	420
Welland	360	4,610	5,300	480	10,750
West Lincoln	160	3,580	1,760	520	6,020
Niagara Region	7,870	48,990	19,880	8,090	84,830

Source: Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051

Component 2: Employment Allocation

The *Methodology* requires municipalities to further refine forecasts by allocating employment to the *Community*, *Employment*, and *Rural Areas*.

Employment that is expected to occur outside of urban settlement area boundaries is allocated to the *rural area*. The *Methodology* sets out that a small share of employment land employment and population-related employment should be allocated to the *rural area*. This is particularly important in Niagara where certain local municipalities have existing industrial, manufacturing and greenhouse operations within the *rural area*.

The remaining, non-rural jobs are allocated to *Community Area* and *Employment Areas* within settlement areas. Within Niagara, the vast majority of population-

related employment is based within the *Community Area*; only about 5%⁴ occurring within *Employment Areas*.

Major office growth is also predominately within the *Community Area*, however, some major office growth will occur within *Employment Areas* that are classified as Knowledge and Innovation within the Employment Strategy.

Finally, the vast majority of employment-land-employment job growth will occur within the remaining *Employment Areas*.

Table 10 provides a summary of employment forecasts by location.

Table 10: Employment Growth by Type and Municipality, 2021 to 2051

Employment Growth by Policy Area, 2021-2051			
Municipality	Community Area	Employment Area	Rural Area
Fort Erie	2,785	3,610	505
Grimsby	2,135	1,410	420
Lincoln	1,535	1,240	1,795
Niagara Falls	15,785	3,500	1,035
Niagara-on-the-Lake	2,860	790	1,515
Pelham	1,595	0	725
Port Colborne	705	385	550
St. Catharines	14,255	4,270	725
Thorold	2,640	680	230
Wainfleet	0	0	420
Welland	4,515	5,660	580
West Lincoln	3,445	2,000	575
Niagara Region	52,255	23,545	9,075

Component 3: Employment Area Capacity

The *Methodology* requires employment potential within existing Employment Areas be determined.

⁴ 5% is an average. This varies by municipality, particularly those with Knowledge and Innovation Employment Areas as they have a higher share of population-related employment compared to Core and Dynamic Employment Areas.

This is calculated based on the vacant *Employment Area* employment lands and densities identified within the Employment Strategy.

The Employment Policy Paper (**Appendix 10.2**) provides a breakdown of occupied and vacant lands, as well as associated densities, for each of the 34 Employment Areas across the Region.

Table 11 provides a summary of existing capacity within Employment Areas, by municipality.

Table 11: Existing Employment Area Potential for Additional Employment

Existing Employment Area Potential	
Municipality	Additional Employment Potential
Fort Erie	1,670
Grimsby	1,375
Lincoln	500
Niagara Falls	4,720
Niagara-on-the-Lake	3,615
Pelham	0
Port Colborne	4,010
St. Catharines	2,745
Thorold	4,470
Wainfleet	0
Welland	5,830
West Lincoln	835
Niagara Region	29,765

Component 4: Need for Additional Employment Area Land

The final step in determining the *Employment Area* land need is to compare the forecast growth (**Table 10**) with the job growth potential within existing *Employment Areas* (**Table 11**). The difference between the forecast and the potential is divided by the municipal level vacant *Employment Area* land density target.

The vacant density target is based on the sub-grouping of employment type determined through the Employment Strategy. Generally, Core Employment Areas, with traditional/heavier employment type uses, have the lowest vacant land density target. Knowledge and Innovation Employment Areas, with more major office type uses, have the highest density target. Dynamic Employment Areas can have a mix of traditional and lighter employment type uses and have densities that fall in between Core and Knowledge and Innovation.

Employment Area Densities

Changes to any Employment Area density target within the Employment Strategy will directly impact the Existing Employment Area Potential in **Table 11** and Vacant Employment Area Density Target in **Table 12**. This will either increase or decrease the associated amount of Employment Area land required to meet 2051 forecasts.

Table 12 provides a summary of the Employment Area Land Needs.

Table 12: Employment Area Land Need, by Municipality, 2021 to

Employment Area Land Need by Municipality, 2021-2051			
Municipality	Unaccommodated Employment Growth	Vacant Employment Area Density Target (Jobs/ha)	Employment Area Land Need (ha)*
Fort Erie	1,940	15	130
Grimsby	40	50	0
Lincoln	740	45	15
Niagara Falls	(1,300)	35	(35)
Niagara-on-the-Lake	(2,220)	95	(25)
Pelham	0	0	0
Port Colborne	(3,625)	30	(120)
St. Catharines	1,450	50	30
Thorold	(1,690)	30	(55)
Wainfleet	0	0	0
Welland	(175)	20	(10)
West Lincoln	1,165	25	50
Niagara Region	(3,670)	30	(20)

Note: Above numbers have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Employment Area Land Needs Summary

The result of the *Employment Area* component of the LNA suggests the Town of Fort Erie and Township of West Lincoln do not have sufficient supply of *Employment Area* to accommodate the forecast growth to 2051.

Other municipalities that have a perceived surplus of *Employment Area* land, and a deficit of *Community Area* land, are encouraged to convert surplus lands prior to expanding settlement area boundaries. The conversion of *Employment Area* lands to *Community Area* lands can only occur under certain conditions. A discussion of conversions is provided in the Employment Policy Paper, **Appendix 10.2**.

Differences between Draft 2019 LNA Results and 2020 LNA Results

As referenced in the Overview section of this report, the Province released a new Land Needs Methodology in August, 2020. The *Methodology* replaced the previous 2018 version that had been a companion piece with the 2018 *Growth Plan*.

The Region and Hemson Consulting prepared an interim draft LNA in September 2019 based on the 2018 methodology and *Growth Plan*. The draft assessment was included in PDS 29-2020 *Settlement Area Boundary Review Program: Growth Plan Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment Update*, which was received by Council on September 17, 2020.

The 2019 draft LNA considered a planning horizon of 2016 to 2041.

The current draft LNA, presented here, is based on the revised *Methodology* and 2020 Growth Plan with a planning horizon of 2021 to 2051.

The 2020 *Growth Plan* continues to use the same Designated Greenfield Area density target and minimum Intensification Rate as the previous version of the *Growth Plan*.

The revised *Methodology* simplifies the process for calculating *Community Area* land needs and adds emphasis for ensuring the planned housing mix can accommodate market-based housing demands.

Comparing the results of the draft *Community Area* land needs between the 2019 and current LNA is a challenge given the different planning horizons, increased population, employment and housing forecasts and methodology changes.

The draft *Employment Area* (2019) and current LNA may be compared more easily. The process for calculating Employment Area land need is generally consistent between the two methodologies. Notwithstanding different planning horizons, the overall forecast for Employment Land Employment is consistent between the two documents. In other words, the updated 2051 employment forecasts have a similar number of Employment Land Employment jobs as the previous 2041 forecast.

In comparing the 2019 and current LNA, there is a difference of approximately 95 hectares of *Employment Area* land need. The difference can be attributed to revised *Employment Area* boundaries and associated densities between 2019 and 2021.

Employment Area Revisions

The Employment Policy Paper work has been ongoing since 2018. Throughout the Paper, numerous changes and revisions have been made based on consultation with local municipalities and industry.

As such, the draft *Employment Area* LNA conducted in 2019 used the best available information at the time and was based on consultation undertaken up until that point.

Appendix B within the Employment Policy Paper (**Appendix 10.2**) provides a comprehensive overview of changes made to each *Employment Area* since the draft 2019 assessment.

Natural Environment System Impacts

The Natural Environment System (“NES”) impacts the overall land need within both the *Community Area* and *Employment Area*.

The draft *Community Area* and *Employment Area* LNA set out in this report is based on NES Option 3B.

Generally, the LNA differences between the NES Options is relatively minor.

Looking specifically at *Community Area* LNA, the determination of future need is based on unplanned, vacant lands within the *Designated Greenfield Area*. The approach set out in the *Methodology* is to remove all natural features and systems from the developable land supply (i.e. DGA). This is done for the specific purpose of ensuring a sufficient land supply is designated within each municipality to accommodate 2051 forecasts.

Impacts on the *Employment Area* LNA is also minor given the *Methodology* is focused on vacant, developable lands and some intensification on developed lands.

In other words, since DGA land supply is relatively similar between the NES Options, the impact between Options on LNA is relatively small.

We note that additional lands may be added to the land supply through future Environmental Impact Studies; this occurs through the development application process and is not associated with the determination of land need for purposes of the LNA.

The *Community Area* LNA impact between Options 1, 2, 3A and Option 3C is relatively small at **37 hectares**.

Table 13 provides a comparison of developable land supply based on NES Options on the vacant and unplanned Designated Greenfield Area.

Table 13: Unplanned DGA Land Supply based on Natural Environment System Options

Developable Unplanned DGA Land Supply by Natural Environment System Option				
Municipality	NES Options 1,2, and 3A Dev Area (ha)	NES Option 3B Dev Area (ha)	NES Option 3C Dev Area (ha)	Difference from 1 to 3C (ha)
Fort Erie	60	59	59	-1
Grimsby	0	0	0	0
Lincoln	28	26	25	-3
Niagara Falls	207	201	197	-9
Niagara-on-the-Lake	77	75	74	-3
Pelham	26	25	25	-1
Port Colborne	260	258	251	-9
St. Catharines	61	59	59	-2
Thorold	258	256	250	-8
Welland	116	114	114	-2
West Lincoln	41	40	40	-1
Niagara Region	1,132	1,114	1,094	-37

Conclusion

This LNA Summary provides a draft assessment of how *Community Area* and *Employment Area* land need is calculated.

The *Growth Plan* requires that the Province approve the Region's final LNA. The Region has been consulting with the Province on the draft LNA and will continue to communicate until a final assessment is presented to Council for endorsement.

Prior to releasing this document, the Region provided local area municipalities with draft summary information related to land need, as well as population and employment allocations. The Region will continue to consult with local municipalities and refine the draft LNA based on inputs from local strategies where applicable.

This Report and related materials are available for the public and stakeholder consultation following the release of this Joint Report. Public consultation is planned for spring and summer 2021.

The Region will report back to Council in late summer with a final LNA after the above consultation is complete and refinements have been made based on direction from associated Strategies and consultation efforts.

Once Council has endorsed the LNA, substantive changes to the LNA should not occur for the remainder of the NOP process. Small refinements to the overall LNA, or distribution between municipalities may be required, however, overall LNA should remain static. This is to ensure consistent recommendations and decisions can be advanced for consideration based on the established Region-wide LNA.

Glossary of Terms

Community Area: Areas where most of the housing required to accommodate the forecasted population will be located, as well as most population-related jobs, most office jobs and some employment land employment jobs. Community areas include delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas (Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology).

Delineated Built-Up Area: The limits of the developed urban area as defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of measuring the minimum intensification target in the Growth Plan (Growth Plan).

Designated Greenfield Area: Lands within *settlement areas* (not including *rural settlements*) but outside of *delineated built-up areas* that have been designated in an official plan for development and are required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan. *Designated greenfield areas* do not include *excess lands* (Growth Plan).

Employment Area: Areas where most of the employment land employment jobs are (i.e. employment in industrial-type buildings), as well as some office jobs and some population-related jobs, particularly those providing services to the employment area. Employment areas may be located in both delineated built-up areas and designated greenfield areas (Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology).

Employment Land Employment: all employment in urban industrial-type employment areas, excluding major office. As well, large retail concentrations and major institutions that lie within employment areas are excluded from the Employment Land Employment category (2020 Growth Plan).

Excess lands: Vacant, unbuilt but developable lands within settlement areas but outside of delineated built-up areas that have been designated in an official plan for development but are in excess of what is needed to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan (Growth Plan).

Headship Rate: The headship rate is defined as the ratio of the number of household heads or household maintainers to the population 15 years of age and older (Government of Canada).

Intensification: The development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- a. *redevelopment*, including the reuse of *brownfield sites*;
- b. the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- c. infill development; and
- d. the expansion or conversion of existing buildings (PPS, 2020).

Major Office: Freestanding office buildings of approximately 4,000 square metres of floor space or greater, or with approximately 200 jobs or more (Growth Plan).

Population-Related Employment: Population-Related Employment is all employment within urban community areas, except major office, and is mainly commercial retail, institutional and urban work at home employment. Major concentrations of retail or large institutions excluded from Employment Land Employment are also part of Population-Related Employment (2051 Growth Update).

Rural Area: Rural Area, for the purposes of the Land Needs Assessment, refers to all lands outside of urban Settlement Area Boundaries. The Rural Area includes Rural Settlements, Prime Agricultural Lands and Rural Lands.

Rural Employment: all employment occurring within the rural geography with the few exceptions for major industrial uses or larger rural industrial areas. Work at home employment is typically a substantial proportion of the rural employment base (Hemson Consulting, Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051).



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MEMORANDUM

To: Greg Bowie, Community Planning & Development Services, Niagara Region
From: Russell Mathew, Hemson Consulting
Date: April 5, 2021
Re: Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051

Hemson Consulting has provided support to staff from the Region of Niagara in the preparation of various phases of the development of a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) originally designed to bring the Regional Official Plan into conformity with the *Growth Plan, 2006* with a 2041 planning horizon. Once the *Growth Plan, 2017* came into force with its new policies, the *Niagara 2041* MCR process shifted to the new planning regime including the preparation of population, housing and employment forecasts for the Region and constituent municipalities. Hemson provided this Phase 4 work to Regional staff in July 2018.

Regional staff then prepared a Land Needs Assessment in accordance with the *Land Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (LNA). Municipalities across the *Greater Golden Horseshoe* (GGH) are required to apply this methodology in assessing the need for lands to accommodate growth consistent with growth management policy and targets found in the *Growth Plan, 2017*. In May 2019, the Province released *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the *Growth Plan, 2019*) which amended a number of policy targets that affect the Region of Niagara's LNA work. Significant adjustments were made to the intensification target, for development within Delineated Built-Up Areas (BUA), as well as the density targets for new Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA) and for Employment Areas. The planning horizon remained at 2041.

In September 2019, Hemson Consulting provided an update to the forecast allocations for the MCR based on the policy changes in the *Growth Plan, 2019*, and the implications these changes could have to the LNA. This effort confirmed the population and housing allocations to 2041 and revised the employment forecast based on important findings arising from the Niagara Employment Inventory survey. More recently, Hemson Consulting has been retained by the Region of Niagara to update our previous work on the growth outlook for Niagara Region and extend the forecast horizon to 2051, to be consistent with the revised forecast schedule of the *Growth Plan, 2019*.

A. THE FORECAST HORIZON HAS BEEN EXTENDED TO 2051

In August 2020, the Province amended the *Growth Plan, 2019* by incorporating a new Schedule 3 growth forecast and extending the planning horizon to 2051. Additionally, the LNA Methodology has been revised requiring municipalities to address a market-

based supply of housing and its relationship to the planned housing mix that will be determined through an MCR. Upper and single-tier municipalities throughout the GGH have until mid-2022 to complete an MCR and incorporate the new Schedule 3 outlook for growth in their official plans. The Region of Niagara is well positioned to meet this deadline with the advance work completed to date for the 2041 MCR including the LNA. This memorandum represents an update to the current regional forecast and the allocation reflecting the principles of the *Niagara 2041* Strategic Growth Option population and employment allocation. This Preferred Growth Option population and employment allocation uses the new Schedule 3 forecasts with planning horizon extended to 2051.

For Niagara Region, the new Growth Plan Schedule 3 forecast means the Regional Official Plan must incorporate a population of 674,000 in 2051 (replacing the 2041 total of 611,000) and a total employment base of 272,000 jobs at 2051 (replacing the previous forecast of 267,000 jobs at 2041).

Summary tables in the remainder of this memorandum provide the household, housing by type, population and employment by type forecast and municipal allocation to 2051 by municipality and by *Growth Plan* policy area.

B. ADJUSTING THE FORECAST BASE YEAR TO 2021

Niagara Region must bring the official plan into conformity with the *Growth Plan*, 2019 by mid-2022. Much of the work done to date on Niagara 2041 has used 2016 as the base year for the forecast, LNA and policy analyses, aligning with the quinquennial Census. However, with 2021 being a Census year and the MCR completed by mid-2022 for submission to the Province, it is likely that most municipalities, including Niagara will shift to a new 2021 base year, resulting in an even 30-year planning period to 2051. To this end, all of the population housing and employment forecasts and allocations in this memorandum provide both a 2016 base and a 2021 (estimated) base year. Even though mid-2021 is in the (near) future, it is described as an estimate rather than a forecast because most associated statistics can be estimated with a much higher level of accuracy than a more distant forecast year. In housing, for example, all new housing units that will be added to the housing stock during the 2016 to 2021 period are completed or currently under construction as of late fall of 2020. Specifically, total occupied dwelling units from the 2016 Census are updated to 2021 by adding post-mid-2016 newly completed units and construction in-progress to estimate total occupied dwelling Units for 2021 along with Total Population for 2021, by municipality (Table 1). Total Population includes Census net undercoverage.

When adjusting the base for the forecast to 2021, it was noted that there has been an exceptional take up of housing in Thorold with the share of new units for the 2016-2021 period now estimated at 14.2% of Regional housing growth; this is up from the 11.3% share that had been applied in the 2018 update. These recent housing market shifts, the largest happens to be in Thorold, but occurring less dramatically in a number of other communities, are part of the basis for adjustments to the allocation of growth to the local municipalities; this is described in more detail below along with Table 5.

Table 1

2016 and 2021 Estimated Occupied Housing Units and Population by Local Municipality									
Municipality	Total Population (including Census Net Undercoverage)				Total Occupied Dwelling Units (Households)				
	2016	2021	2016 2021 Growth	Growth Rate	2016	2021	2016 2021 Growth	Growth Rate	Share of Growth
Fort Erie	31,490	33,910	2,420	1.5%	13,180	14,150	970	1.4%	7.8%
Grimsby	28,010	30,280	2,270	1.6%	10,380	11,470	1,090	2.0%	8.7%
Lincoln	24,390	26,700	2,310	1.8%	8,710	9,590	880	1.9%	7.1%
Niagara Falls	90,310	97,520	7,210	1.5%	35,760	38,520	2,760	1.5%	22.1%
Niagara-on the Lake	17,960	19,930	1,970	2.1%	7,090	7,910	820	2.2%	6.6%
Pelham	17,540	19,370	1,830	2.0%	6,475	7,150	675	2.0%	5.4%
Port Colborne	18,770	19,300	530	0.6%	8,015	8,210	195	0.5%	1.6%
St. Catharines	136,490	140,530	4,040	0.6%	56,880	58,550	1,670	0.6%	13.4%
Thorold	19,280	24,160	4,880	4.6%	7,460	9,230	1,770	4.4%	14.2%
Wainfleet	6,530	7,020	490	1.5%	2,415	2,580	165	1.3%	1.3%
Welland	53,620	56,450	2,830	1.0%	22,490	23,610	1,120	1.0%	9.0%
West Lincoln	14,870	15,980	1,110	1.5%	4,965	5,330	365	1.4%	2.9%
Niagara Region	459,260	491,150	31,890	1.4%	183,820	196,300	12,480	1.3%	100.0%

Source: Population and housing data to 2016 from Statistics Canada Census and housing growth based, in part, on CMHC Housing Information.

C. HOUSING FORECAST TO 2051 BEGINS WITH A “MARKET-BASED” DEMAND FOR HOUSING

In keeping with the policy changes introduced to the *Growth Plan* in 2019 and the *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS), 2020 the updated LNA now requires the Region to address a market-based housing mix and its relationship to the planned housing mix for long-term planning in Niagara Region. The Province’s intention in referencing market housing in the LNA and codifying it in the PPS is understood to be addressing a concern that municipalities may not be planning for a sufficient supply of ground-related housing to 2051. A perceived municipal rush to plan for higher levels of intensification and multiple higher-density mixed-use nodes and corridors, is seen by some as being at the expense of providing greenfield development lands. Intensification and mixed-use areas are typically mostly apartment housing, while the greenfield areas meet the demand for single, semi and row housing from (mostly) family households. At the same time, it is the *Growth Plan* that sets out the policies favouring intensification, more higher-density mixed-use development and reduced consumption of greenfield land.

Our approach to addressing the market-based demand requirement is to compare a regional market-based demand forecast to a policy-based housing allocation approach to determine how well the mix of housing types is aligned. The first forecast is prepared in accordance with the LNA. The second approach would typically involve undertaking the forecast and municipal allocation portion of the MCR, according to the policies for the Delineated Built-Up Area (BUA) and the Designated Greenfield Area (DGA). To implement the policies of the *Growth Plan* through the MCR, as well as comply with the LNA, both analyses use housing units by structure type. Once the market forecast and the policy-based allocation are completed, the two are compared and, if the housing mix in each are similar, in our view, nothing further need be done. If there were a wide difference, then, at minimum, Council would need to be clearly aware of how significant

a shift in housing market pattern is required to meet policy goals. Alternatively, policies or targets could be reconsidered to bring a better alignment between anticipated market demand and achieving *Growth Plan* policy. However, the analysis in Niagara Region did not require the approach just described. As is demonstrated later in this memorandum, the market-based forecast of housing mix, or a mix quite close to it, can be achieved while meeting intensification targets consistent with the *Growth Plan*.

The residential allocation starts with a market-based housing demand forecast, consistent with the housing forecast provided in Appendix B to the report *Greater Golden Horseshoe: Growth Forecasts to 2051*. This forecast is based on applying adjusted occupancy characteristics to reflect the current and anticipated market mix of housing. The result reflects the housing mix experienced over the past 10 to 20-year period, while considering anticipated shifts in the market arising from a changing age structure. We have endeavoured to incorporate as many of the key principles of the prior 2041 Strategic Growth Option as possible in this 2051 Preferred Growth Option.

The population forecasts, consistent with Schedule 3 of the *Growth Plan* are shown in Table 2. Table 3 shows how the age of household maintainer data (headship rates) are applied to the population age structure in order to yield the forecast of total households. For those 75 years of age and older there is a very high rate of growth in households to 2051. This high growth is the demonstrable aging of population. The fast growing elderly age group is the result of the aging of the baby boom generation moving through their senior years; those born in 1959, the peak birth year of the baby boom, who survive to 2051, will be 92 years of age. The large increase in elderly households is also the result of continuous increases in life expectancy.

Table 2

Region of Niagara Population Forecast				
Historic and Forecast Population, 1986 to 2051				
Year	Census Population	Total (including Census Net Undercoverage)		
		Total	Growth	Growth Rate
1986	370,100	380,600		
1991	393,900	406,000	25,400	1.3%
1996	403,500	414,700	8,700	0.4%
2001	410,600	426,800	12,100	0.6%
2006	427,400	442,500	15,700	0.7%
2011	431,400	442,900	400	0.0%
2016	447,800	459,300	16,400	0.7%
2021	478,800	491,100	31,800	1.3%
2026	507,500	520,500	29,400	1.2%
2031	536,100	549,500	29,000	1.1%
2036	565,900	579,800	30,300	1.1%
2041	596,200	610,600	30,800	1.0%
2046	621,000	642,200	31,600	1.0%
2051	658,200	674,000	31,800	1.0%

Source: Data to 2016 from Statistics Canada Census

Table 3

2016 and 2051 Occupied Households by Age of Household Maintainer					
Age	Headship Rate	Occupied Households			
		2016	2051	2016-2051 Growth	2016-2051 Growth %
15 - 19	1.7%	430	550	120	27.9%
20 - 24	14.5%	4,000	4,920	920	23.0%
25 - 29	35.2%	8,640	12,400	3,760	43.5%
30 - 34	48.7%	11,435	17,060	5,625	49.2%
35 - 39	52.9%	12,385	18,900	6,515	52.6%
40 - 44	54.1%	13,825	19,550	5,725	41.4%
45 - 49	57.4%	16,365	21,580	5,215	31.9%
50 - 54	57.7%	19,920	24,180	4,260	21.4%
55 - 59	58.6%	20,050	25,200	5,150	25.7%
60 - 64	58.9%	18,845	24,370	5,525	29.3%
65 - 69	61.2%	18,015	24,970	6,955	38.6%
70 - 74	61.7%	13,675	23,630	9,955	72.8%
75 - 79	65.3%	10,480	23,510	13,030	124.3%
80 - 84	66.5%	8,190	21,120	12,930	157.9%
84 - 89	60.7%	5,185	15,530	10,345	199.5%
90 +	46.3%	2,390	10,730	8,340	349.0%
Total	48.2% (2016) 50.8% (2051)	183,830	288,200	104,370	56.8%

Source: Data to 2016 from Statistics Canada Census

Table 4 then provides the forecast of housing units by type using a market-based approach. In this case, the growth from 2001 to 2021 is about 78% ground-related units and 22% apartments and the forecast going forward for the next 30 years is a similar 77% ground-related housing and 23% apartments. The result is that the market-based forecast is similar going forward as to the mix of housing in the recent past, though with a somewhat higher share in apartment units. A higher share of apartments is expected given the higher occupancy of apartments among elderly households and the rapid growth anticipated in elderly-led households.

Table 4

Region of Niagara Housing Forecast: Market Based Housing Mix					
Occupied Dwelling Units by Census Structure Type					
Note: This is an initial step in the analysis and is not the concluding housing mix information in this memorandum					
Total Units					
Year	Single	Semi	Row	Apt All Types	Total
2001	114,550	8,520	7,770	31,680	162,520
2021	130,100	10,330	17,220	38,650	196,300
2051	171,910	15,420	41,110	59,760	288,200
Housing Mix of Total Units					
Year	Single	Semi	Row	Apt All Types	Total
2001	70.5%	5.2%	4.8%	19.5%	100.0%
2021	66.3%	5.3%	8.8%	19.7%	100.0%
2051	59.6%	5.4%	14.3%	20.7%	100.0%
Unit Growth					
Period	Single	Semi	Row	Apt All Types	Total
2001-06	860	280	1,730	4,110	6,980
2006-11	4,740	50	960	(570)	5,180
2011-16	3,850	760	2,590	1,960	9,140
2016-21	6,110	580	3,900	1,880	12,480
2001-2021	15,560	1,660	9,170	7,380	33,780
2021-26	8,720	920	3,320	4,110	17,060
2026-31	7,800	820	3,520	3,710	15,840
2031-36	7,360	830	3,750	3,790	15,710
2036-41	7,020	890	4,130	3,710	15,750
2041-46	5,610	800	4,330	3,140	13,870
2046-51	5,320	840	4,860	2,680	13,690
2021-2051	41,810	5,090	23,890	21,110	91,900
Housing Growth Unit Type Mix					
Period	Single	Semi	Row	Apt All Types	Total
2001-2021	46.1%	4.9%	27.1%	21.8%	100.0%
2021-2051	45.5%	5.5%	26.0%	23.0%	100.0%

Source: Data to 2016 from Statistics Canada Census

Note: For the purposes of this allocation unit types are presented as the Census housing types grouped as apartments: apartments of five or more storeys, apartments under five storeys, flat or apartment in a duplex and other single attached units.

D. HOUSING GROWTH IS ALLOCATED BY MUNICIPALITY AND POLICY AREA TO 2051

In the previous iterations of the MCR growth management work, housing shares had been allocated to municipalities based on a share assumption of the total new households in the forecast. We have updated both the 2016 to 2021 estimated shares of growth based on housing that has recently completed plus projects currently under construction (based on the assumption that any unit occupied by Census Day 2021 is already under construction).

i. Housing Allocation Assumptions Require Small Adjustments for 2021 to 2051

The review of recent construction activity shows the high share of the market that Thorold is now experiencing. The allocation shares were originally established in keeping with planned intensification rates, in addition to the observed market conditions. Table 5 contrasts the assumptions from the 2018 update to the MCR allocation with suggested assumptions for the new forecast from 2021 to 2051. These share assumptions combine the previous assumptions used for 2016-2041, recent market activity and current development expectations as well a set of adjusted rates

Table 5

Housing Allocation Assumption by Area Municipality						
2018 Allocation for 2016 to 2041 and Suggested New Assumptions for 2021 to 2051						
Municipality	Share Assumptions from 2018 Update to MCR Municipal Allocation			Suggested Share Assumptions for new 2021 to 2051 MCR Municipal Allocation		Difference in Share between previous 2016-2041 shares and suggested 2021 to 2051 share
	Estimated Share of Regional Housing Unit Growth, 2016-2021	Assumed Share of Regional Housing Unit Growth, 2021-2041	Overall Share Assumption for Regional Housing Unit Growth, 2016-2041	Estimated Share of Regional Housing Unit Growth, 2016-2021	Updated Share Assumption of Regional Housing Unit Growth for 2021-2051	
Fort Erie	7.5%	8.1%	8.0%	7.9%	8.0%	0.0%
Grimsby	9.8%	6.4%	7.0%	8.9%	5.0%	-2.0%
Lincoln	4.3%	5.2%	5.0%	7.6%	5.0%	0.0%
Niagara Falls	27.7%	21.9%	23.0%	21.2%	22.0%	-1.0%
Niagara-on the Lake	8.0%	5.4%	6.0%	6.7%	5.0%	-1.0%
Pelham	6.2%	4.7%	5.0%	5.3%	4.5%	-0.5%
Port Colborne	1.6%	2.1%	2.0%	1.4%	2.5%	0.5%
St. Catharines	12.6%	24.3%	22.0%	13.0%	21.5%	-0.5%
Thorold	11.3%	4.2%	5.5%	14.7%	7.0%	1.5%
Wainfleet	0.2%	0.6%	0.5%	1.3%	0.5%	0.0%
Welland	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.2%	9.5%	1.5%
West Lincoln	2.9%	9.2%	8.0%	3.9%	9.5%	1.5%
Niagara Region	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0.0%

While keeping the principle of the share allocations from recent work, a few adjustments are warranted, as indicated in the last three columns in Table 5. The municipalities where the growth shares have been adjusted by more than $\pm 0.5\%$, have been adjusted for the following reasons:

- Grimsby is reduced from a 7.0% share allocation from 2016 to 2041 to a 5.0% allocation for the 2021 to 2051 period. About one-third of this change is from not including the high 8.9% 2016 to 2021 market share within the calculation. The remaining change is largely because of Grimsby's singular reliance on intensification for growth. Over the next 30 years, the "easy" intensification sites will be taken up leaving a slower long-term rate of growth as development increasingly requiring land assembly or new infrastructure slows the process.
- The rate of growth in Niagara Falls as well as its share of the Region has slowed over the past three years. As a result, Niagara Falls' share of forecast

Regional growth is marginally reduced by 1.0% to 22%, from 23%. This share still leaves the City of Niagara Falls with the largest share of new housing allocation in the Region.

- Niagara-on-the-Lake has been reduced by 1.0% from 6.0% for 2016-2041 to 5.0% for 2021-2051. Most of the change is the result of not including the higher-growth 2016-2021 period within the calculation, plus some further market change in the 2040s when the Town's available land supply will be in fewer locations and farther from Lake Ontario and Niagara River amenities.
- The share of growth allocated to St. Catharines has been changed little (reduced by a marginal 0.5%), but it is being noted here because it continues to be far short of the expected market share. The 21.5% share allocation to St. Catharines is based in large part on policies directing a significant amount of growth the City's intensification areas, particularly the Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre. The policy goal for growth is well above the City's current 13.0% share of the Niagara housing market.
- Thorold had previously been allocated a 5.5% overall share from 2016 to 2041 based mainly on its history of a relatively small share of the market despite its very large urban supply potential. In the 2018 allocation Thorold would have been allocated 11.3% of unit growth from 2016 to 2021, then decline to 4.2% for the 2021-2041 period, to end with an average share of 5.5% overall from 2016 to 2041. This appears quite unlikely from today's perspective, where Thorold is estimated to be at 14.7% of the regional market for the 2016-2021 period. We are suggesting the long-term assumption move up from 5.5% to 7.0%, the 7.0% applying to the 2021 to 2051 period.
- Welland's share of housing growth is adjusted upward from a previous 8.0% for the 2016-2041 period to 9.5% for the 2021 to 2051 period. Welland was already running ahead of 8.0% for the recent five-year period. Its share is expected to increase over time as part of the general increase in the shares to Thorold/Welland/Pelham; new greenfield lands coming on stream over the next decade; and a significant supply of intensification lands suitable for ground-related housing.
- West Lincoln appears to have a much higher share of growth, rising from 8.0% for the 2016 to 2021 period in the 2018 work to 9.5% in the 2021-2051 period. However, the difference is primarily about the 2016-2021 period not being included in the latter calculation. The 2018 analysis was based on 2.9% for 2016-2021 and then 9.2% for the 20 years from 2021 to 2041, working out to about 8.0% overall. The current allocation share does not include the low-growth 2016-2021 period, meaning the 9.5% 2021 to 2051 is very similar to the previous 9.2% for the first 20 years of the 30-year period. The growth share is low now because of new secondary plans and draft plans in the Smithville area not yet being fully approved and serviced. Once the plans and infrastructure are in place and, in the longer-term, additional lands are added to Smithville, it is very likely to achieve the high rates of growth it has in the past due to its strategic location relative to Hamilton and desire to build out as a complete community.

The share of housing growth to each of the local municipalities may vary from decade to decade over next 30 years, as shown in Table 6. Some of the shares in the table may give the appearance of a high level of precision. However, undue precision was not the intention; rather they are arithmetically required in order for the results to be the “even” figures that apply to the overall 30 year period from 2021 to 2051.

Table 6

Household Growth Share by Time Period to 2051 by Local Municipality Preferred Growth Option to 2051					
Municipality	Share 2016 to 2021	Share 2021 to 2031	Share 2031 to 2041	Share 2041 to 2051	Share 2021 to 2051
Fort Erie	7.8%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%
Grimsby	8.8%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Lincoln	7.1%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Niagara Falls	22.1%	23.0%	21.8%	21.0%	22.0%
Niagara-on the-Lake	6.6%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Pelham	5.4%	5.0%	4.4%	4.0%	4.5%
Port Colborne	1.5%	2.0%	2.6%	3.0%	2.5%
St. Catharines	13.4%	22.9%	21.8%	19.5%	21.5%
Thorold	14.2%	6.2%	7.0%	8.0%	7.0%
Wainfleet	1.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Welland	9.0%	8.7%	9.0%	11.0%	9.5%
West Lincoln	2.9%	8.7%	9.9%	10.0%	9.5%
Niagara Region	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Based on the total household counts in Tables 3 and 4 then applying the growth shares from Tables 5 and 6 results in the total households by municipality for each Census year and for the 35-year period from 2016 to 2051 and the 30-year period for 2021 to 2051 shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Total Households, 2016-2051 by Local Municipality Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Households (Dwelling Units Occupied by Usual Residents)								2021-2051		
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051	2016-2051 Growth	Unit Growth	Compound Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	13,180	14,150	15,510	16,780	18,030	19,300	20,380	21,510	8,330	7,350	1.4%
Grimsby	10,380	11,470	12,350	13,120	13,900	14,690	15,390	16,070	5,690	4,600	1.1%
Lincoln	8,710	9,590	10,430	11,230	12,010	12,810	13,500	14,190	5,480	4,600	1.3%
Niagara Falls	35,760	38,520	42,480	46,080	49,550	52,950	55,860	58,740	22,980	20,220	1.4%
Niagara-on the-Lake	7,090	7,910	8,780	9,560	10,350	11,130	11,820	12,500	5,410	4,600	1.5%
Pelham	6,480	7,150	8,000	8,790	9,480	10,180	10,730	11,280	4,810	4,140	1.5%
Port Colborne	8,020	8,210	8,550	8,870	9,270	9,680	10,090	10,500	2,490	2,300	0.8%
St. Catharines	56,880	58,550	62,450	66,090	69,530	72,940	75,710	78,320	21,440	19,760	1.0%
Thorold	7,460	9,230	10,290	11,260	12,370	13,460	14,560	15,660	8,200	6,440	1.8%
Wainfleet	2,420	2,580	2,670	2,740	2,820	2,900	2,970	3,040	620	460	0.5%
Welland	22,490	23,610	25,090	26,480	27,870	29,310	30,820	32,340	9,850	8,730	1.1%
West Lincoln	4,970	5,330	6,760	8,190	9,730	11,300	12,670	14,060	9,090	8,730	3.3%
Niagara Region	183,820	196,300	213,360	229,190	244,900	260,650	274,510	288,200	104,380	91,900	1.3%

ii. Shares of Housing Growth Are Allocated to Policy Areas to 2051

While the above shares of household growth apply to the total municipalities, the *Growth Plan* and the LNA also require an allocation to the policy areas. Those policy areas are the Built-Up Area, the Designated Greenfield Area and the Rural Area. Within each municipality, the Rural Area is allocated a minimal 0.5%. New rural residential development is not generally encouraged by the policies of the *Growth Plan* or the Region of Niagara. Though there are legacy approvals and lots of record where limited rural development will still occur. The exception is the Town of Wainfleet, which has no urban serviced residential communities. By definition, it is 100% rural development. During further work in the MCR, the rural shares can be adjusted, if necessary, to reflect a more precise expectation for rural unit growth. Any adjustment to rural allocation would simply add or deduct the units from the DGA to gain a better calculation of land need. Adjusting the rural share for LNA purposes, for example, would not affect any other matters contained in this memorandum respecting the population, housing mix or employment.

The share to the Built-Up Area, otherwise referred to as the intensification rate, is set at a minimum of 50% for most of the urban communities in the GGH, including the Region of Niagara. In two tier systems, the Growth Plan and the LNA require that Regions work with local municipalities to establish an appropriate intensification rates for each and results in at least the minimum 50% intensification. The intensification rate for each local municipality is shown in Table 8. The rates have been set at those agreed to by staff at the Region and the local municipalities through the MCR consultation process over the past year. These rates are the same or a little higher in each of the municipalities compared to those used in 2018 and, in large part, are based on the significant potential to accommodate ground-related housing within the Built-Up Area in most of the Region. In the period from 2015 to 2019, intensification units in Niagara Region were about 70% ground-related units and 30% apartments. Intensification is likely to be higher in places where intensification can provide a full range of housing types, compared to other jurisdictions where intensification units are nearly all apartments. Niagara Region is quite unlike Hamilton and the Regions of the GTAH in this respect.

The resulting overall intensification rate of 55.9% between 2021 and 2051 is very little higher than the 55% rate assumption for 2016 to 2041 in the previous MCR work in 2018. This level of intensification is not difficult for Niagara Region to achieve, given that in the five-year period from 2015 through 2019, intensification represented about 50% of new units. This growth occurred in a period when the intensification rate policy was only 40%. High levels of intensification should not be surprising, as we would expect a high rate in Niagara because about half of the Regional population and its growth is in communities where the greenbelt and the preservation of tender fruit lands limit the amount of urban land to accommodate housing growth.

Table 8

Shares of Household Growth by Policy Area Niagara Region by Local Municipality, 2021-2051				
Municipality	Built-Up Area	DGA	Rural	Total
Fort Erie	50.0%	49.5%	0.5%	100%
Grimsby	98.0%	1.5%	0.5%	100%
Lincoln	80.0%	19.5%	0.5%	100%
Niagara Falls	50.0%	49.5%	0.5%	100%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	25.0%	74.5%	0.5%	100%
Pelham	25.0%	74.5%	0.5%	100%
Port Colborne	30.0%	69.5%	0.5%	100%
St. Catharines	95.0%	4.5%	0.5%	100%
Thorold	25.0%	74.5%	0.5%	100%
Wainfleet	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100%
Welland	60.0%	39.5%	0.5%	100%
West Lincoln	13.0%	86.5%	0.5%	100%
Niagara Region	56.1%	42.9%	1.0%	100.0%

Applying these shares of housing growth to the forecast of occupied dwelling units required by 2051 yield a forecast growth in households by policy area for each municipality for the period 2021 to 2051, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Household Growth by Policy Area Niagara Region by Local Municipality, 2021-2051				
Municipality	Built Up Area	DGA	Rural	Total
Fort Erie	3,680	3,640	40	7,360
Grimsby	4,500	70	20	4,590
Lincoln	3,680	900	20	4,600
Niagara Falls	10,110	10,010	100	20,220
Niagara-on the Lake	1,150	3,420	20	4,590
Pelham	1,030	3,080	20	4,130
Port Colborne	690	1,600	10	2,300
St. Catharines	18,770	890	100	19,760
Thorold	1,610	4,790	30	6,430
Wainfleet	0	0	460	460
Welland	5,240	3,450	40	8,730
West Lincoln	1,130	7,550	40	8,720
Niagara Region	51,590	39,400	900	91,890

E. A HOUSING MIX CLOSE TO THE MARKET-BASED DEMAND IS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE PLANNED INTENSIFICATION RATE

As already noted, Niagara Region is unique among most of the GGH municipalities in that a high proportion of ground-related housing can be built within the current Delineated BUA. This capacity to address the market demand for detached, semi-detached and row housing while meeting planned intensification targets means that a housing mix could be provided at or close to the market-based demand housing mix. The market-based demand housing mix for 2021 to 2051 provided in Table 4 was 51% singles/semis, 26% rows and 23% apartments.

Recent development in the Region has been about 85% ground-related units and 15% apartment units. Within the policy areas, the Delineated BUA has been 71% ground-related units and 39% apartments and in the Designated Greenfield ground-related units are well over 95% of new construction. For this purpose, share to ground-related housing includes accessory units, since they are typically part of what would otherwise be a single or semi-detached unit.

i. Degree that Market-Based Housing Demand Aligns with Policy Is a Test of How Much Ground-Related Housing Can Be Supplied within the BUA

Within the two-tier system in Niagara, the local municipalities, not the Region, establish the housing mix through local planning. The purpose of considering housing mix at the Regional level is that housing mix is a key component of the LNA for which the Region is responsible. The Region will need a clear housing mix so it can appropriately calculate land need, which is based on the capacity of existing DGA to accommodate housing types compared to the forecast housing demand is by type. The purpose here is to demonstrate that there is (or is not) an ability to accommodate the unit growth by type within the policy areas at a mix that represents a market-based housing mix. Alternatively, the analysis would demonstrate the difference between market-based demand and what units can be accommodated when Growth Plan policies are applied.

In Niagara the starting point to look at housing by type is the market-based demand forecast already described which indicated 2021 to 2051 market-based demand for 23% apartment units and 77% ground-related units. At the same time units to be built within the BUA are to be almost 57% of all units built in the Region. These figures mean that an allocation of units to policy areas will result in well less than half of BUA units will be apartment form, the structure type that, in other jurisdictions, dominates intensification development. DGA development is currently and is forecast to be almost entirely ground-related units.

Put simply, in this section we are looking at a housing mix allocation to the BUA that is substantially ground-related units and want to answer the question of whether these units could reasonably “fit” into the BUA of each municipality. The starting point is in Tables 10 and 11 that provides an allocation by type to the BUA, using the market-based demand housing mix.

Table 10

Initial Allocation to Delineated Built Up Area by Housing Unit Type Using Market Based Demand Housing Unit Types				
Housing Units by Census Housing Types				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	1,520	1,620	540	3,680
Grimsby	110	1,330	3,060	4,500
Lincoln	1,490	990	1,190	3,680
Niagara Falls	4,300	3,070	2,740	10,110
Niagara-on-the-Lake	470	380	290	1,150
Pelham	350	500	180	1,030
Port Colborne	400	130	160	690
St. Catharines	4,030	4,370	10,380	18,770
Thorold	580	890	140	1,610
Wainfleet	0	0	0	0
Welland	3,290	1,080	870	5,240
West Lincoln	760	120	250	1,130
Niagara Region	17,300	14,490	19,800	51,590

Table 11

Initial Allocation to Delineated Built Up Area by Housing Unit Type Using Market Based Demand Housing Unit Types				
Housing Mix by Census Housing Type				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	41.3%	44.0%	14.6%	100.0%
Grimsby	2.5%	29.5%	68.0%	100.0%
Lincoln	40.5%	27.0%	32.5%	100.0%
Niagara Falls	42.5%	30.4%	27.1%	100.0%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	41.2%	33.3%	25.5%	100.0%
Pelham	34.3%	48.4%	17.3%	100.0%
Port Colborne	58.5%	18.6%	22.9%	100.0%
St. Catharines	21.5%	23.3%	55.3%	100.0%
Thorold	35.8%	55.6%	8.6%	100.0%
Wainfleet	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Welland	62.8%	20.7%	16.5%	100.0%
West Lincoln	66.6%	11.0%	22.4%	100.0%
Niagara Region	33.5%	28.1%	38.4%	100.0%

To consider how the housing mix by local municipality in Tables 10 and 11 might be accommodated, a rough land area calculation was undertaken. The land area was then compared to the identified vacant residential land inventory within the BUA. In Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Pelham, Port Colborne, Thorold and West Lincoln there was more than sufficient land to accommodate the intensification units with the housing mix shown. This conclusion did not even require consideration of redevelopment and infill potential beyond the identified vacant parcels, which would generally form a substantial proportion of intensification units.

In Grimsby and Lincoln there are some vacant lands, but most intensification potential is in two secondary plan areas in each municipality. The remainder of the Winston Plan and the GO Station Secondary Plan areas in Grimsby can accommodate all

apartments shown and most of the ground-related units. It is likely the rest of the ground-related could be accommodated through other infill in the community over the next 30 years. Similarly in Lincoln the Beamsville GO and the Prudhommes plans can accommodate all of the units overall but not likely all of the ground related units. Accommodating this growth may need some shift upwards in density type, particularly from singles up to Rows and, likely, to apartments, particularly given the development proposed at Prudhommes.

In Niagara Falls, there is identified vacant land sufficient to accommodate about 70% of the units shown in the chart. A small shift in unit type from singles and semis at typical densities to smaller lot singles or up to rows could raise the 70% figure significantly. As well, the Grand Niagara area, which is within the Built-Up Area, is planned for 1,400 units, mostly singles and semis. The Transit Station Secondary Plan area as well as other nodes and corridors provide enough development potential that the intensification figures for Niagara Falls likely could be accommodated.

In the City of Welland, the vacant residential lands within the Built-Up Area could accommodate about half of the intensification housing shown Table 14. The mix shown for Welland is very focussed on singles and semis and reduces the likelihood that there is reasonable development potential for these units. A shift in housing mix reducing the singles/semis and increasing the apartment would make the physical potential for these units more likely. The City of Welland has done some of this analysis and is expecting an overall housing mix for the City for 2016 to 2041 of 34% singles and semis and 33% each of rows and apartments. The portion of this housing in the BUA could certainly fit within the available supply potential.

Finally, the City of St. Catharines has a large amount development potential for higher density housing in the downtown UGC and other sites in the city. A mix of medium and high-density units in the GO Station Plan area and on the former General Motors Ontario Street sites will provide for a large unit potential. However, the amount of lower density housing shown in Table 14 for St. Catharines is likely just too much to accommodate reasonably within the BUA.

The conclusion to be drawn from all of this housing type analysis is that a housing mix in the Region that represented a market-based housing demand could mostly fit within the policy areas with growth as currently allocated. Lincoln, St. Catharines and Welland probably need fewer single and semi detached units and more rows and apartments for the intensification units to reasonably fit.

The housing mix for the BUA was then adjusted to account for conditions described above, plus providing a bit better balance of unit type within intensification in some of the other communities, relative to the initial housing mix.

ii. Housing Mix to Be Used by the Region for Land Needs Assessment Purposes Is Very Close to the Market-Based Housing Demand

The result of the adjustments to the housing mix to establish a reasonable fit between demand and supply in the BUA, is Region-wide change to the housing mix. From 2021 to 2051, growth would shift from a market-based demand of 51/26/23 singles/semis, rows and apartments to an adjusted mix to align with intensification policy of 46/27/27.

On the total housing stock the difference between the two is very small, a total mix in initial market-based forecast is 65/14/21 at 2051 and the adjusted mix results in a 63/15/22 mix.

These two housing mixes are sufficiently close to conclude that the housing mix arising from the intensification rate applied to Niagara municipalities for 2021 to 2051 is a housing mix that is a reasonable representation of a market-based demand in the context of Growth Plan policies representing a direction to plan for a high levels of intensification.

Table 12 provides the adjusted housing mix information for the overall region (this is the same as Table 4 except using the adjusted housing mix).

Table 12

Region of Niagara Housing Forecast: Policy Adjusted Housing Mix Preferred Growth Option to 2051 Occupied Dwelling Units by Census Structure Type					
Total Units					
Year	Single	Semi	Row	Apt-All Types	Total
2001	114,540	8,670	8,050	31,270	162,520
2021	130,100	10,330	17,220	38,650	196,300
2051	167,560	14,900	42,000	63,770	288,220
Housing Mix of Total Units					
Year	Single	Semi	Row	Apt-All Types	Total
2001	70.5%	5.3%	5.0%	19.2%	100.0%
2021	66.3%	5.3%	8.8%	19.7%	100.0%
2051	58.2%	5.2%	14.6%	22.0%	100.0%
Unit Growth					
Period	Single	Semi	Row	Apt-All Types	Total
2001-06	860	280	1,730	4,110	6,980
2006-11	4,740	50	960	(570)	5,180
2011-16	3,850	760	2,590	1,960	9,140
2016-21	6,110	580	3,900	1,880	12,480
2001-2021	15,560	1,660	9,170	7,380	33,780
2021-26	8,110	850	3,370	4,720	17,050
2026-31	7,140	740	3,600	4,350	15,840
2031-36	6,640	740	3,870	4,460	15,720
2036-41	6,250	790	4,290	4,410	15,750
2041-46	4,820	710	4,520	3,830	13,870
2046-51	4,500	720	5,110	3,350	13,690
2021-2051	37,460	4,570	24,780	25,120	91,920
Housing Growth Unit Type Mix					
Period	Single	Semi	Row	Apt-All Types	Total
2001-2021	46.1%	4.9%	27.1%	21.8%	100.0%
2021-2051	40.7%	5.0%	27.0%	27.3%	100.0%

Tables 13 through 18 present the resulting housing mixes for each of the municipalities for the BUA and the DGA + Rural and the total for each municipality. The housing mixes in the table are suitable for use by the Region for the LNA for growth in housing from 2021 to 2051 by local municipality.

Tables 13 and 14 show a housing mix for the Delineated Built-Up Areas in each municipality. As described above, the purpose here was to demonstrate a housing mix for intensification that could be accommodated within the BUA. These housing mixes are could reasonably fit within the BUA as established within each municipality.

Table 13

Delineated Built Up Area Housing Unit Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	1,520	1,620	540	3,680
Grimsby	110	1,330	3,060	4,500
Lincoln	1,430	920	1,320	3,670
Niagara Falls	4,220	3,050	2,830	10,100
Niagara-on the-Lake	240	350	560	1,150
Pelham	350	500	180	1,030
Port Colborne	400	130	160	690
St. Catharines	2,480	4,370	11,930	18,780
Thorold	580	890	140	1,610
Wainfleet	0	0	0	0
Welland	920	1,730	2,590	5,240
West Lincoln	760	120	250	1,130
Niagara Region	13,020	15,010	23,560	51,590

Table 14

Delineated Built Up Area Housing Mix of Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021 51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	41.3%	44.0%	14.6%	100.0%
Grimsby	2.5%	29.5%	68.0%	100.0%
Lincoln	39.0%	25.1%	35.9%	100.0%
Niagara Falls	41.8%	30.2%	28.0%	100.0%
Niagara-on the Lake	20.9%	30.4%	48.7%	100.0%
Pelham	34.3%	48.4%	17.2%	100.0%
Port Colborne	58.6%	18.6%	22.8%	100.0%
St. Catharines	13.2%	23.3%	63.5%	100.0%
Thorold	35.8%	55.6%	8.6%	100.0%
Wainfleet	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Welland	17.5%	33.0%	49.5%	100.0%
West Lincoln	67.2%	10.4%	22.4%	100.0%
Niagara Region	25.2%	29.1%	45.7%	100.0%

Tables 15 and 16 show housing growth from 2021 to 2051 by housing type, by municipality for the DGA and Rural area combined. There is nothing surprising in the DGA/Rural area. A very large proportion of units are expected to be ground-related housing and apartments, a small share of units in the market. The LNA will later show how this DGA demand may fit within the DGA areas.

Table 15

Designated Greenfield Area and Rural Housing Unit Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	2,540	1,080	60	3,680
Grimsby	10	20	60	90
Lincoln	160	610	150	920
Niagara Falls	7,760	2,040	310	10,110
Niagara on-the Lake	2,810	560	70	3,440
Pelham	2,030	570	500	3,100
Port Colborne	1,290	300	20	1,610
St. Catharines	560	130	300	990
Thorold	3,320	1,500	20	4,840
Wainfleet	450	0	10	460
Welland	2,670	720	100	3,490
West Lincoln	5,270	2,270	60	7,600
Niagara Region	28,850	9,790	1,660	40,300

Table 16

Designated Greenfield Area and Rural Housing Mix of Growth, 2021 to 2051				
Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	69.0%	29.4%	1.6%	100.0%
Grimsby	10.8%	21.2%	68.0%	100.0%
Lincoln	17.2%	66.8%	16.0%	101.0%
Niagara Falls	76.8%	20.1%	3.1%	100.0%
Niagara on-the-Lake	81.7%	16.3%	2.0%	100.0%
Pelham	65.5%	18.3%	16.2%	100.0%
Port Colborne	80.3%	18.6%	1.1%	100.0%
St. Catharines	56.5%	13.6%	30.0%	101.0%
Thorold	68.7%	31.0%	0.3%	100.0%
Wainfleet	97.2%	0.0%	2.8%	100.0%
Welland	76.5%	20.6%	2.9%	100.0%
West Lincoln	69.3%	29.9%	0.8%	100.0%
Niagara Region	71.6%	24.3%	4.1%	100.0%

Tables 17 and 18 show the housing growth from 2021 to 2051 by housing type for the total municipality. Table 17 is the simple addition of Tables 13 and 15.

Table 17

Housing Unit Growth by Unit Type, 2021 to 2051 by Municipality Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	4,060	2,700	600	7,360
Grimsby	120	1,350	3,130	4,600
Lincoln	1,590	1,540	1,470	4,600
Niagara Falls	11,980	5,090	3,150	20,220
Niagara-on-the-Lake	3,050	910	630	4,590
Pelham	2,390	1,070	680	4,140
Port Colborne	1,690	430	170	2,290
St. Catharines	3,040	4,500	12,230	19,770
Thorold	3,890	2,390	150	6,430
Wainfleet	450	0	10	460
Welland	3,590	2,450	2,690	8,730
West Lincoln	6,030	2,390	310	8,730
Niagara Region	41,880	24,800	25,220	91,900

Table 18

Designated Greenfield Area and Rural Housing Mix of Growth, 2021 to 2051 Preferred Growth Option to 2051				
2021-51	Single/Semi	Row	Apartment	Total
Fort Erie	55.2%	36.7%	8.1%	100.0%
Grimsby	2.7%	29.3%	68.0%	100.0%
Lincoln	34.7%	33.5%	31.9%	101.0%
Niagara Falls	59.3%	25.2%	15.6%	100.0%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	66.4%	19.8%	13.7%	100.0%
Pelham	57.7%	25.8%	16.5%	100.0%
Port Colborne	73.8%	18.6%	7.6%	100.0%
St. Catharines	15.4%	22.8%	61.9%	101.0%
Thorold	60.5%	37.1%	2.4%	100.0%
Wainfleet	97.2%	0.0%	2.8%	100.0%
Welland	41.1%	28.0%	30.8%	100.0%
West Lincoln	69.0%	27.4%	3.6%	100.0%
Niagara Region	45.6%	27.0%	27.4%	100.0%

F. TOTAL POPULATION AND TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS ARE FORECAST BY MUNICIPALITY FOR FIVE-YEAR CENSUS PERIODS TO 2051

Based on the all of the housing growth analysis presented above, Table 19 now provides the total population by municipality for each five-year Census period from 2016 to 2051.

Table 19

Total Population Forecast, 2016 to 2051 by Local Municipality Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Total Population Including Census Net Undercoverage								2016-2051 Growth	2021-2051	
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051		Net Change	Compound Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	31,490	33,930	36,320	38,640	40,910	43,240	45,460	48,050	16,560	14,120	1.17%
Grimsby	28,010	30,300	31,270	32,180	33,220	34,330	35,610	37,000	8,990	6,700	0.67%
Lincoln	24,390	26,860	28,290	29,710	31,090	32,540	34,040	35,660	11,270	8,800	0.95%
Niagara Falls	90,310	97,220	104,780	112,030	119,960	127,870	135,730	141,650	51,340	44,430	1.26%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	17,960	19,970	21,480	22,930	24,380	25,850	27,300	28,900	10,940	8,930	1.24%
Pelham	17,540	19,320	21,100	22,770	24,480	26,150	27,720	28,830	11,290	9,510	1.34%
Port Colborne	18,770	19,250	19,600	20,010	20,670	21,350	22,250	23,230	4,460	3,980	0.63%
St. Catharines	136,490	140,250	145,350	150,700	155,600	160,800	165,910	171,890	35,400	31,640	0.68%
Thorold	19,280	24,440	26,710	28,890	31,390	33,900	36,650	39,690	20,410	15,250	1.63%
Wainfleet	6,530	7,000	7,070	7,150	7,260	7,370	7,540	7,730	1,200	730	0.33%
Welland	53,620	56,210	58,560	60,920	63,420	65,960	69,290	73,000	19,380	16,790	0.88%
West Lincoln	14,870	16,370	20,010	23,530	27,420	31,240	34,730	38,370	23,500	22,000	2.88%
Niagara Region	459,260	491,120	520,540	549,460	579,800	610,600	642,230	674,000	214,740	182,880	1.06%

To conclude the residential element of this review, it appears that Niagara Region will be able to provide sufficient housing to meet the revised population forecast of 674,000 in 2051. The housing can be provided through a combination of intensification and greenfield development consistent with Growth Plan policies and the housing can be accommodated at a housing mix that is close to that representing market-based demand.

G. EMPLOYMENT FORECAST TO 2051

In 2019, in concert with Regional staff, Hemson undertook an analysis of the employment surveys conducted by the Region in 2016 and 2018; referred to as the Niagara Employment Inventory (NEI). This analysis revealed that enterprises categorized as manufacturing and warehousing are less concentrated in employment areas across the Region than is typical in other municipalities. A significant number of these businesses are located in the Community Areas and the rural area, largely related to the agricultural base and food and wine production. In our advisory memorandum of September 2019 Hemson undertook to revise the employment forecast to 2041. This partial re-categorization of employment within the land use based employment categories in Niagara was a large part of the basis for a further redefinition of the employment categories provided in the Appendix to the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Growth Forecasts to 2051.

Based on these updated definitions of the land use based employment categories, the 2016 base employment has been restated into the categories which are now more explicitly geographically based and less NAICS based than in the past. The Place of Work employment data by Dissemination area from the 2016 Census is the primary

data that allowed for the restatement of the base employment. The employment categories are:

- Major office employment is any employment in a freestanding office building of 20,000 sq. ft. or greater including public buildings such as City Halls and Police Stations. Major Office buildings can be within any of the geographic areas of the other categories.
- Population-Related Employment is all employment within urban community areas, except major office, and is mainly commercial retail, institutional and urban work at home employment. Major concentrations of retail or large institutions excluded from Employment Land Employment are also part of Population-Related Employment.
- Employment Land Employment is all employment in urban industrial-type employment areas, excluding major office. As well, large retail concentrations and major institutions that lie within employment areas are excluded from the Employment Land Employment category. In Niagara Region these exclusions were Brock University, Niagara Health St. Catharines Site Hospital and the nearby large retail concentration in west St. Catharines.

Rural industrial areas that are substantial are included in Employment Land Employment as are large freestanding non-agricultural industrial uses that are in the rural area or within the community area. These are quite few in number, with only the rural industrial at Allen's corners in West Lincoln being included within Employment Land Employment.

- Rural Employment is now all employment occurring within the rural geography with the few exceptions for major industrial uses or larger rural industrial areas. Work at home employment is typically a substantial proportion of the rural employment base. This new rural category is substantially larger than the old Rural-Based employment that was largely limited to agricultural and extraction uses. The new industry in cannabis production, which is quite labour intensive, may be located in greenhouses in the rural area, as in Pelham and Lincoln or in serviced urban facilities as one in Grimsby. The jobs are counted as either Rural or Employment Land Employment wherever the facility happens to be located.

The categorization of employment used in 2019 is shown in Table 20 in comparison to the updated 2020 categorizations used in the background work to Schedule 3. Notably, a more complete office data set from CoStar data allowed for a significant update to the space and employment, now showing nearly double the office employment. Similarly, the rural employment is significantly higher based on the new definition of Rural Employment and the use of the Dissemination Area data for much of the allocation.

In addition, we would also focus attention on the Employment Land Employment in Lincoln and West Lincoln, both of which were significantly overstated in 2019. In West Lincoln, this was partly related to counting the new Stanpac Plant in Smithville as if it had been completed in 2016, rather than 2018. In Lincoln, some the rural employment in the greenhouses had been mistakenly included within the Employment Land

Employment. Lastly, in Wainfleet the updated definition of employment means that all employment within the Township is classified as Rural Employment.

The forecast of total employment is based on the background work to Schedule 3 for the years prior to 2051, while 2051 is straight from Schedule 3. The total Regional employment at 2051 is 272,000, only 7,000 higher than the previous forecast figure of 265,000 for 2041. The total increment from 2016 is similar between both forecasts and the growth increment by category is quite similar. As a result, the growth from 2016 to 2051 by category for each of the municipalities is also quite similar to the 2019 forecast.

Table 20

2016 Employment Base Using Updated Land Use Based Employment Categories Compared to the 2019 Categorization Niagara Region by Local Municipality										
Municipality	2019 Niagara MCR Categorization					2020 Categorization as Defined in the Background Work to Schedule 3 to the Growth Plan				
	Major Office	Population Related	Employment Land	Rural	Total	Major Office	Population Related	Employment Land	Rural	Total
Fort Erie	0	6,520	3,160	670	10,350	0	5,390	3,100	1,860	10,350
Grimsby	0	6,210	3,260	310	9,780	230	5,700	3,220	600	9,760
Lincoln	0	3,970	3,590	3,520	11,080	120	2,350	3,110	5,510	11,080
Niagara Falls	0	32,420	8,340	1,210	41,970	3,120	28,910	8,340	1,620	41,990
Niagara-on the Lake	0	8,910	1,660	2,460	13,030	0	6,770	1,720	4,490	12,990
Pelham	0	3,310	40	1,160	4,510	260	2,440	0	1,820	4,520
Port Colborne	0	3,610	1,970	630	6,210	0	3,370	1,990	850	6,200
St. Catharines	8,950	37,590	14,030	1,550	62,120	9,690	37,060	14,170	1,220	62,140
Thorold	0	4,100	2,940	1,360	8,400	1,470	2,950	2,810	1,160	8,390
Wainfleet	0	450	440	520	1,410	0	0	0	1,460	1,460
Welland	0	15,020	2,610	110	17,740	480	14,280	2,660	340	17,760
West Lincoln	0	1,970	1,470	900	4,340	0	1,720	900	1,720	4,330
Niagara Region	8,950	124,080	43,510	14,400	190,940	15,360	110,940	42,020	22,640	190,960

Table 21 shows the total employment for each census year from 2016 through 2051. A decline in employment is shown in many municipalities because of COVID-19 related job losses. The decline is especially large in Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake due to the enormous effects the pandemic has had on the tourism related sectors of food and accommodation, and entertainment and recreation. The forecast assumes that all of these job losses will have fully recovered well before 2026. Tables 22, 23, 24 and 25 provide the total employment at Census years for the local municipalities, with one table for each of the four employment categories.

Table 21

Total Employment Forecast, 2016 to 2051, Niagara Region and Local Municipalities Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Total Place of Work Employment								2016-2051 Growth	2021-2051	
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051		Growth	Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	10,350	10,530	11,890	12,670	13,630	14,710	16,060	17,430	7,080	6,910	1.7%
Grimsby	9,760	10,690	11,980	12,280	12,720	13,320	13,920	14,670	4,910	3,980	1.1%
Lincoln	11,080	11,390	12,340	12,830	13,490	14,190	15,080	15,960	4,870	4,570	1.1%
Niagara Falls	41,990	37,780	45,160	46,780	49,200	52,080	55,270	58,110	16,120	20,330	1.4%
Niagara on the Lake	12,990	11,800	13,720	14,210	14,880	15,490	16,210	16,960	3,970	5,160	1.2%
Pelham	4,520	4,810	5,320	5,620	6,020	6,410	6,810	7,140	2,630	2,330	1.3%
Port Colborne	6,200	5,910	6,200	6,340	6,590	6,850	7,180	7,550	1,350	1,640	0.8%
St. Catharines	62,140	61,780	66,890	68,850	71,360	74,450	77,570	81,010	18,870	19,220	0.9%
Thorold	8,390	8,530	9,230	9,620	10,190	10,710	11,430	12,080	3,690	3,540	1.2%
Wainfleet	1,460	1,400	1,520	1,560	1,620	1,680	1,750	1,830	370	420	0.9%
Welland	17,760	18,030	20,820	21,750	23,110	24,640	26,550	28,790	11,030	10,760	1.6%
West Lincoln	4,330	4,460	5,550	6,260	7,250	8,280	9,340	10,480	6,140	6,020	2.9%
Niagara Region	190,960	187,110	210,610	218,780	230,050	242,810	257,170	272,000	81,040	84,890	1.3%

Table 22

Major Office Employment Forecast, 2016 to 2051, Niagara Region and Local Municipalities Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Major Office Employment								2016-2051 Growth	2021-2051	
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051		Growth	Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	0	0	0	50	50	50	140	140	140	140	0.0%
Grimsby	230	650	890	890	890	950	950	1,030	800	380	1.5%
Lincoln	120	120	130	130	130	130	220	220	100	100	2.0%
Niagara Falls	3,120	3,210	3,520	3,650	3,800	3,970	4,160	4,360	1,240	1,150	1.0%
Niagara on-the-Lake	0	0	0	80	170	170	260	350	350	350	0.0%
Pelham	260	260	270	270	270	270	270	270	10	10	0.1%
Port Colborne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
St. Catharines	9,690	9,810	10,320	11,050	11,870	12,860	13,790	14,780	5,090	4,970	1.4%
Thorold	1,470	1,470	1,610	1,630	1,630	1,630	1,720	1,720	250	250	0.5%
Wainfleet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Welland	480	480	660	660	740	740	740	850	360	360	1.9%
West Lincoln	0	0	0	0	0	80	80	160	160	160	0.0%
Niagara Region	15,360	15,990	17,400	18,410	19,550	20,850	22,330	23,870	8,510	7,880	1.3%

Table 23

Population Related Employment Forecast, 2016 to 2051, Niagara Region and Local Municipalities Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Population-Related Employment								2016-2051 Growth	2021-2051	
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051		Growth	Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	5,390	5,850	6,420	6,750	7,210	7,690	8,200	8,730	3,340	2,890	1.3%
Grimsby	5,700	6,400	7,130	7,280	7,520	7,820	8,120	8,470	2,760	2,070	0.9%
Lincoln	2,350	2,850	3,170	3,370	3,630	3,880	4,140	4,430	2,070	1,580	1.5%
Niagara Falls	28,910	24,880	31,340	32,480	34,260	36,390	38,630	40,430	11,520	15,550	1.6%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	6,770	5,730	7,260	7,480	7,820	8,140	8,450	8,760	1,990	3,040	1.4%
Pelham	2,440	2,770	3,110	3,340	3,640	3,920	4,180	4,370	1,940	1,600	1.5%
Port Colborne	3,370	3,110	3,220	3,280	3,410	3,540	3,690	3,860	490	750	0.7%
St. Catharines	37,060	37,510	41,120	42,020	43,290	44,930	46,530	48,290	11,230	10,780	0.8%
Thorold	2,950	3,210	3,630	3,930	4,390	4,790	5,280	5,750	2,800	2,540	2.0%
Wainfleet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Welland	14,280	15,060	16,690	17,030	17,530	18,160	18,890	19,680	5,400	4,610	0.9%
West Lincoln	1,720	1,980	2,610	3,090	3,770	4,390	5,000	5,560	3,840	3,580	3.5%
Niagara Region	110,940	109,330	125,700	130,050	136,470	143,650	151,110	158,330	47,380	48,990	1.2%

Table 24

Employment Land Employment Forecast, 2016 to 2051, Niagara Region and Local Municipalities Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Employment Land Employment								2016-2051 Growth	2021-2051	
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051		Growth	Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	3,100	2,880	3,530	3,920	4,380	4,910	5,570	6,310	3,210	3,430	2.6%
Grimsby	3,220	3,070	3,290	3,400	3,550	3,720	3,940	4,200	980	1,130	1.1%
Lincoln	3,110	3,040	3,310	3,450	3,630	3,840	4,120	4,430	1,330	1,390	1.3%
Niagara Falls	8,340	8,110	8,550	8,810	9,170	9,620	10,210	10,890	2,550	2,770	1.0%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	1,720	1,700	1,760	1,780	1,820	1,860	1,920	1,990	270	290	0.5%
Pelham	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Port Colborne	1,990	1,980	2,040	2,070	2,110	2,170	2,240	2,330	340	350	0.5%
St. Catharines	14,170	13,320	14,170	14,430	14,750	15,110	15,620	16,200	2,030	2,880	0.7%
Thorold	2,810	2,720	2,810	2,870	2,950	3,040	3,160	3,290	480	580	0.6%
Wainfleet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Welland	2,660	2,160	3,060	3,610	4,310	5,130	6,220	7,470	4,810	5,300	4.2%
West Lincoln	900	810	1,150	1,330	1,550	1,820	2,170	2,570	1,670	1,760	3.9%
Niagara Region	42,020	39,790	43,670	45,670	48,220	51,220	55,170	59,680	17,670	19,880	1.4%

Table 25

Rural Employment Forecast, 2016 to 2051, Niagara Region and Local Municipalities Preferred Growth Option to 2051											
Municipality	Rural Employment								2016-2051 Growth	2021-2051	
	2016	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051		Growth	Annual Growth Rate
Fort Erie	1,860	1,800	1,930	1,940	1,990	2,060	2,150	2,250	390	440	1.5%
Grimsby	600	580	670	710	770	830	900	970	370	390	1.7%
Lincoln	5,510	5,380	5,730	5,880	6,090	6,330	6,600	6,880	1,370	1,500	0.8%
Niagara Falls	1,620	1,580	1,750	1,840	1,970	2,110	2,270	2,430	810	850	1.4%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	4,490	4,380	4,710	4,860	5,070	5,310	5,580	5,860	1,370	1,480	1.0%
Pelham	1,820	1,780	1,940	2,010	2,110	2,220	2,360	2,500	670	710	1.1%
Port Colborne	850	820	940	990	1,070	1,150	1,250	1,360	510	540	1.7%
St. Catharines	1,220	1,150	1,270	1,350	1,450	1,550	1,640	1,740	520	590	1.4%
Thorold	1,160	1,140	1,180	1,200	1,220	1,250	1,280	1,310	160	170	0.5%
Wainfleet	1,460	1,400	1,520	1,560	1,620	1,680	1,750	1,830	370	420	0.9%
Welland	340	320	410	460	520	610	700	800	460	480	3.1%
West Lincoln	1,720	1,670	1,790	1,840	1,920	2,000	2,100	2,190	480	520	0.9%
Niagara Region	22,640	22,010	23,840	24,640	25,800	27,100	28,580	30,120	7,480	8,090	1.1%

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 – Section 2. REGIONAL STRUCTURE

SUMMARY

The Regional Structure is the basis for growth management in Niagara. It provides direction on critical factors needed to allocate population and employment forecasts within Urban Areas and Rural Settlements.

The Regional Structure will coordinate and support a range of land use considerations, including: investments in infrastructure and public service facilities; the protection of employment areas and agricultural lands; the creation of sustainable and resilient communities; and the preservation of key natural heritage and water resource systems.

- Schedule B identifies the land use components that comprise the Regional Structure, including Settlement Area boundaries. The Regional Structure is used to determine where forecasted growth will and will not be directed.
- Urban Areas will accommodate the majority of forecasted growth through strategic intensification and redevelopment opportunities. Growth will also be accommodated through development of Designated Greenfield Areas that support the creation of complete communities with a range of land uses and housing options.
- Intensification rates are provided for each area municipality. Local municipalities will be required to update or develop intensification strategies that support their applicable intensification target, identify priority areas for growth, and establish design and development standards for development in Built-Up Areas.
- Strategic Growth Areas are the focus for higher density, mixed-use development and major investments in transit infrastructure, public service facilities, and improvements to the public realm. For Niagara, Strategic Growth Areas include:
 - Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre;
 - Major Transit Station Areas, including the confirmed and future proposed GO Transit Stations;
 - Regional Growth Centres, including Downtown Welland; and
 - District Plan Areas, including the Brock and Glendale Niagara District Plans.
- Local municipalities, in consultation with the Region, will complete secondary plans for Strategic Growth Areas that support and refine identified density targets and implement the growth management objectives of the Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”).

- The limited amount of growth that occurs outside of Urban Areas will be accommodated in Rural Settlements. Rural Settlements will support existing residential, agricultural, commercial, and employment uses, and will continue to be serviced through private water and wastewater treatment systems.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SABR	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate Change

OVERVIEW

The *Growth Plan* requires municipalities to plan for forecasted growth in a manner that supports the achievement of complete communities.

Complete communities are defined as areas within a town or city that offer opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores and services, and a full range of housing and transportation options.

The Regional Structure accomplishes this by identifying land use components that manage the growth forecasted in the *Growth Plan* Schedule 3 and allocated through the Region's Land Needs Assessment.

Specifically, the Regional Structure strategically directs growth in alignment with *Growth Plan* Policy 2.2.2.1, which requires the majority of forecasted growth to be directed to Urban Areas that are serviced by existing or planned infrastructure.

This growth is to be focused in Built-Up Areas, Strategic Growth Areas, locations with existing or planned transit service, and areas with existing or planned public service facilities.

Only limited amount of growth can be directed to areas outside of Urban Area boundaries where development will be concentrated within Rural Settlements, including villages and hamlets.

Intensification rates for Built-Up Areas and density targets for Strategic Growth Areas and Designated Greenfield Areas are set to guide the location and form of future development.

Intensification refers to development or redevelopment within the Built-Up Area and can include a range of housing forms. The *Growth Plan* requires a minimum of 50% of new development across the Region occur within the Built-Up Area. Formerly, this minimum was 40%. The in-effect *Growth Plan* requires more intensification than in the current Official Plan.

Municipal intensification rates were determined based on significant consultation with local municipalities. The rates were determined based on thorough assessment of the capacity to accommodate growth within the Built-Up Area through intensification and infill opportunities and the geographic context of the municipality. Municipalities within the *Greenbelt Plan* area typically have a higher intensification rates due to the inability to expand its Urban Area boundary.

The result is a 56% overall intensification rate, higher than the 50% Growth Plan requirement.

Table 1 below sets out the intensification rates by municipality.

Table 1: Intensification Rates for Built-Up Areas by Local Municipality

Municipality	Intensification Rate
Fort Erie	50%
Grimsby	98%
Lincoln	80%
Niagara Falls	50%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	25%
Pelham	25%
Port Colborne	30%
St. Catharines	95%
Thorold	25%
Wainfleet	0%
Welland	60%
West Lincoln	13%
Niagara Region	56%

In addition to intensification rates, the Region sets density targets, as directed by the Growth Plan.

Density is a measure of the number people and jobs that are located within a specific area. Density targets can be achieved in a number of ways, and does not in of itself dictate the built form of a community.

The Province requires Designated Greenfield Areas to achieve a minimum density of 50 people and jobs per hectare. This minimum density target is to be measured over the entire Designated Greenfield Area of the Region, excluding certain take-outs (i.e. natural heritage features, areas and systems). Unlike the intensification rate, the Designated Greenfield Area density target is the same for all local municipalities.

Strategic Growth Areas (“SGAs”) are a new land use component introduced through the NOP, in line with the Growth Plan. SGAs are intended to accommodate significant intensification and higher-density, mixed use development over time.

Density targets for SGAs were established by undertaking the following background analysis:

- a jurisdictional scan and review of intensification and growth area targets within the Official Plans of comparable single-tier and upper-tier municipalities;
- a review of the land use designations, permissions, and design standards outlined within applicable secondary plans, district plans, and/or Official Plans and Zoning By-laws;
- calculating the minimum and maximum densities that could be implemented within the SGA as established by the aforementioned policy structure; and
- applying Provincial policy to the relationship between Niagara’s identified SGAs.

Table 2 provides draft SGA density targets.

Table 2: Density Targets for Strategic Growth Areas

Municipality	Minimum Density Target
Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre	150 people & jobs per hectare to 2031
GO Transit Station Areas in St. Catharines, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, and Grimsby	125 people & jobs per hectare to 2051
Downtown Welland Regional Growth Centre	125 people & jobs per hectare to 2051
Brock and Glendale Niagara District Plans	100 people & jobs per hectare to 2051

Regional Structure policies support the above-noted land use components and establish intensification and density targets. Related policies implement other Provincial growth management objectives, including:

- the efficient use of infrastructure, public service facilities, and the public realm that meet the needs of residents over time and sustain the financial well-being of municipalities;
- the development of affordable housing for low and moderate income households, including housing for specialized needs;
- support for a range and mix of residential, employment, institutional, recreation, park and open space uses that incorporate sustainable design and facilitate the use of public transit and active transportation;
- conservation of the region's biodiversity and protection of the region's natural heritage and water resource systems; and
- use of secondary planning to identify and address the challenges and opportunities specific to strategic and priority areas of growth, and provide detailed policies that guide future development and design of buildings, parks, and public spaces within these areas.

Regional Structure also includes policies for local municipalities to update or develop new intensification strategies as part of local Official Plan conformity. Intensification strategies and secondary plans can help direct growth and manage change within their communities.

Intensification strategies will also benefit from NOP urban design policies and local Official Plans. Urban design can assist with implementing or establishing community identity,

provide direction to address compatibility for infill and support complete communities and complete streets.

The policies and targets of the Regional Structure are informed by the results and recommendations of the various studies and matters of interest related to growth management, land use planning, and infrastructure and asset management, including the Niagara 2041: Preferred Growth Option Report (Hemson, 2019) and Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051 (**Appendix 3.3**); Niagara Region Housing Market Analysis and Growth Scenario Analysis (CANCEA, 2019); the Memorandum: Housing Affordability and Growth Plan 2051 (CANCEA) (**Appendix 5.2**); and the Employment Policy Paper (**Appendix 10.2**), and the Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan and Transportation Master Plan.

The policies are also informed by input from members of the public, local area municipalities, Regional Committee and Council, and other stakeholder groups. The feedback received through many engagement sessions identified growth management as the key challenge and opportunity for Niagara. Specifically, that strategic growth management is needed to accommodate incoming growth in a manner that creates thriving, complete, and resilient communities that mitigate and adapt to our changing climate and protect the Region's significant natural heritage and water resource systems.

Responsible, efficient use of land and infrastructure needs to be coordinated. This will be achieved through a monitoring program. Monitoring will play a critical role in tracking levels of new growth and development following implementation of the NOP. The ability to monitor growth will assist with decisions concerning allocations and targets set for the horizon of the planning period for all local municipalities.

Included in this section is the Regional Structure Policy Paper, **Appendix 4.2** and Regional Structure Draft Policies, **Appendix 4.3** and draft schedule mapping, **Appendix 4.4**.



NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

Regional Structure Policy Paper Growth Management for the Niagara Region

Niagara Region
May 2021

GROWING REGION



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
1.0 Introduction	4
2.0 Purpose	5
3.0 Background.....	6
3.1 Consultation for the Regional Structure	7
3.2 Growth Management Studies	8
3.2.1 Niagara 2041: Preferred Growth Option Report	9
3.2.2 Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051 and Land Needs Assessment.....	9
3.2.3 Master Servicing Plan and Transportation Master Plan	10
3.2.4 Niagara Region Growth Scenario Analysis Report (Housing Report)....	11
3.2.5 Employment Area Strategy	12
3.2.6 Settlement Area Boundary Review.....	13
4.0 Provincial Land Use Planning Framework	13
4.1 The Planning Act, 1990	14
4.1.1 Land Use Planning Tools	14
4.2 The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS).....	15
4.3 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 .	15
5.0 Key Planning Principles	16
5.1 Intensification of Urban Areas.....	16
5.2 Complete Communities	18
5.3 Compact Form and Transit-Supportive Development.....	18
5.4 Housing Mix and Affordability	21
6.0 Components of the Regional Structure	22
6.1 Settlement Areas	22
6.2 Built-Up Areas	22
6.3 Designated Greenfield Areas.....	25
6.4 Strategic Growth Areas.....	26

6.4.1	Urban Growth Centre: Downtown St. Catharines	26
6.4.2	Major Transit Station Areas	27
6.4.3	Regional Growth Centres	28
6.5	Employment Areas	29
6.6	Rural Settlements (Hamlets).....	30
6.7	Rural Lands	30
6.8	Agricultural Area	30
6.9	Natural Environment System (NES)	31
6.10	Excess Lands.....	31
7.0	Policy Direction for the Regional Structure	31
7.1	Intensification Rates and Density Targets for Area Municipalities	32
7.1.1	Minimum Density Targets within SGAs	32
7.2	Local Municipal Intensification Strategies and Local Growth Centres	33
7.3	Future Strategic Growth Areas	34
7.4	Settlement Area Boundary Review	35
7.4.1	Other Settlement Area Expansions and Adjustments.....	35
7.5	Phasing and Monitoring of Development.....	36
7.5.1	Development Phasing	37
7.5.2	Development Monitoring	37
8.0	Next Steps for the Regional Structure.....	38

Executive Summary

This Discussion Paper identifies the Regional Structure and outlines the direction of growth management policies and mapping for the new Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”).

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“Growth Plan”) sets out that Niagara Region will grow by 85,000 jobs and 182,000 people from 2021 to 2051. We are planning for this growth by identifying areas in the Region that can accommodate future jobs and residents.

The Regional Structure will ensure that the distribution of growth within local municipalities is directed appropriately and achieved in a manner that conforms to the *Growth Plan*.

The Region has undertaken numerous studies to understand the characteristics of our existing population and built infrastructure.

Updates to the Region’s Growth Allocations and Land Needs Assessment (“LNA”) identify over 91,000 dwelling units to be added to the Region’s housing stock by the year 2051. The form in which these dwelling units are developed depends on how the Region seeks to grow over time.

The Niagara Region Housing Affordability and Growth Plan Report (“2021 Housing Report”), concluded that meeting the Growth Plan’s population forecasts will better address rates of core housing need compared to the status quo or a slower growth scenario. In other words, the Region needs to grow at the minimum *Growth Plan* targets to maintain the same level of affordability.

Achieving the *Growth Plan* (targeted growth) forecasts can be accomplished by establishing policies as part of the Regional Structure that encourage the development of townhouses, apartments, and other higher-density dwelling units that provide more affordable housing choices.

The Regional Structure is informed through consultation, including meetings with local municipalities and the Planning Advisory Committee. Additionally, information regarding the Regional Structure was made available to members of the public as part of a series of Public Information Centre (“PIC”) meetings held in November 2019 and October 2020 for the NOP, as well as the release of a Growth Management Survey.

Engagement with the public identified the top priorities for managing growth strategically in Niagara. Our communities need to be planned in ways which offer more housing options, make use of existing infrastructure, improve existing transportation systems, including transit and cycling networks, and support jobs and economic prosperity.

The policies and mapping of the Regional Structure must be consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement* and must conform to the Provincial land use plans that apply to Niagara, including the *Growth Plan* and the *Greenbelt Plan*.

Provincial Policy directs municipalities to achieve the creation of complete communities that are well-designed, efficiently serviced, and protect and preserve key agricultural and natural heritage resources.

The achievement of complete communities is dependent on the location and development of the future population and jobs.

In recent years, the majority of the Region's growth has been directed to its Urban Areas. Specifically, the Region's:

- Built-Up Areas, which are characterized primarily by infill intensification and redevelopment. Intensification rates, which measure the amount of new development that occurs within the Built-Up Area, are assigned to the local municipalities with an overall minimum intensification rate of 50% Region-wide; and
- Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA), which are characterized primarily by larger scale community planning and development projects. Overall, the Region must meet a density target of 50 person and jobs per hectare in the DGA.

The Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre is the only Urban Growth Centre identified in Niagara in the *Growth Plan*. The Urban Growth Centre will be planned as a regional focal point for accommodating population and employment growth, with a higher density target of 150 persons and jobs per hectare. The Urban Growth Centre is also a Strategic Growth Area ("SGA"), as that term is used in the *Growth Plan*.

Through the Regional Structure, additional SGAs have been identified, including the Major Transit Station Areas (GO Station Areas), Downtown Welland and the District Plan areas. SGAs require higher density targets and have specific policy direction.

The Regional Structure includes the following:

1. A comprehensive set of policies that implement the relevant intensification and density targets and incorporate strategic infrastructure planning, climate change considerations, and urban design principles for the creation of complete communities. This is included as **Appendix 4.3**.
2. A new "Schedule B" that maps the Regional Structure and includes: Urban Areas and related land use components, such as Built-Up Areas, Designated Greenfield Areas, Major Transit Station Areas, Employment Areas, Regional Growth Centres, and other Strategic Growth Areas; Rural Settlement Areas (Hamlets); Agricultural Areas; Rural Lands, and Excess Lands. This is included as **Appendix 4.4**.

Monitoring will play a critical role in tracking performance of new growth and development following implementation of the NOP.

Further consultation on the Regional Structure, and other NOP items, is planned for the Summer and Fall 2021.

Staff ask that **comments be made by July 2, 2021 on the Regional Structure**, to allow sufficient time to review and report for August 2021.

Following this comment period, revisions to the draft Regional Structure will be made, as appropriate, and presented to Council for consideration.

1.0 Introduction

Niagara's Official Plan guides the short- and long-term development of the Region, including:

- where population and employment growth should and should not occur;
- the size and location of land uses within a municipality;
- the infrastructure and services needed to support planned land uses; and
- the regulatory framework used to implement its policies and objectives.

The policies and mapping of the new OP will be grouped into the five key components described in **Figure 1** below.

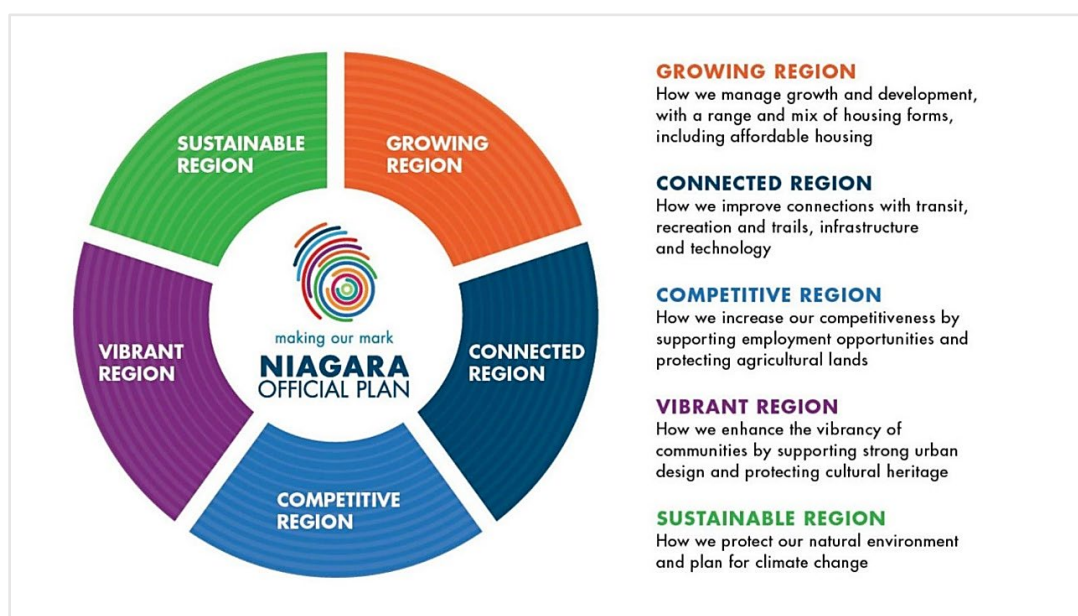


Figure 1: Key Components of the new Niagara Official Plan

An important component of the NOP is the development of the Regional Structure; a growth management framework that establishes land use components and policy tools to achieve the objectives, forecasts and targets of Provincial policy.

Planning for the Regional Structure is considered within the Growing Region component of the NOP; however, its recommendations are based on a range of land use considerations, including investments made in infrastructure and municipal servicing; the protection of employment lands, employment areas, and agricultural lands; and the preservation of key natural heritage and hydrologic systems. These matters are each informed by background studies or work programs and will be included in other sections of the NOP.

The Regional Structure includes:

1. A comprehensive set of policies that implement the relevant intensification and density targets and incorporate strategic infrastructure planning, climate change considerations, and urban design principles for the creation of complete communities. This is included as **Appendix 4.3**.
2. A new “Schedule B” that maps the Regional Structure and includes: Urban Areas and related land use components, such as Built-Up Areas, Designated Greenfield Areas, Major Transit Station Areas, Employment Areas, Regional Growth Centres, and other Strategic Growth Areas; Rural Settlement Areas (Hamlets); Agricultural Areas; Rural Lands. This is included as **Appendix 4.4**.

2.0 Purpose

This Regional Structure Policy Paper is a follow-up to the Regional Structure Background Report (Report No. PDS 28-2020) prepared in September 2020. That report was received by Council at its meeting on September 17, 2020.

Since the receipt of the Regional Structure Background Report, Staff have further consulted, including through virtual public information sessions in October 2020 and individual meetings with local planning staff in September-October 2020 and February-March 2021. Further consultation details are provided in **Subsection 2.1** below.

As a result of those consultation events, and further research and refinement, this Regional Structure Policy Paper was prepared.

This Regional Structure Policy Paper is appended to the Joint Report on the NOP (**Appendix 4.2**). This Paper should be read in conjunction with the Regional Structure Executive Overview, Regional Structure policies, and balance of the materials provided with Report No. PDS 17-2021.

This Report provides the following:

- recent background studies relevant to the development of the Regional Structure;
- pertinent growth management concepts and land use planning practices;
- recommended actions related to the identification of strategic growth areas, and proposed intensification rates and density targets; and
- additional matters that have informed policies.

The Regional Structure Policy Paper is one of several steps undertaken by the Region for the developing the Regional Structure.

The Region has consulted with local municipal planning staff, stakeholders and the public on the Regional Structure. Further consultation will be conducted prior to finalizing the draft policies and mapping outlined within this report. A consultation discussion is provided in **Subsection 2.1** below.

3.0 Background

The existing policy for Niagara's urban areas was initially established in the 1970s through the creation of its original Official Plan. Although there have been many amendments over the years, the Region's Official Plan structure is out-of-date with modern planning policies.

Over the past several decades, there have been significant changes to the planning system. Today's system is hierarchical and policy-lead, requiring the Region to be consistent with, conform to, or not conflict with the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (PPS), *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)*, the *Greenbelt Plan*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*.

A comprehensive review of the Official Plan and its urban area policies occurred in 2009 with the development of the Niagara 2031 Growth Management Strategy, as implemented by Regional Policy Plan Amendment 2-2009 ("RPPA 2-2009"). This amendment established a new vision for the long term growth and development of Niagara, which recognized the changes in economic drivers and infrastructure investments made in the Region since the Official Plan's inception.

RPPA 2-2009 was initiated to ensure conformity with the policies and growth forecasts in the 2006 Growth Plan. This exercise led to the creation of the existing "Regional Urban Structure" as mapped in Schedule A of the existing Official Plan.

RPPA 2-2009 also introduced new areas for residential and employment intensification, added policies and mapping that guide the development of the Niagara Economic Gateway and Centre, and established design, construction, and maintenance standards for Regional water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure.

Since the passing of RPPA 2-2009, there have been several significant changes to Provincial Policy that necessitate a reevaluation of Niagara's growth management policies and mapping. In 2014, the Province completed a comprehensive review of the PPS, which in turn, lead to extensive updates to the *Growth Plan*, the *Greenbelt Plan*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* in 2017.

Further revisions were made to the policies and mapping in the *Growth Plan* and *PPS* in 2019 and 2020, respectively, which emphasized the provision of affordable and market-based housing, the promotion of economic competitiveness, and efficiency in the development process.

In response, the Region initiated a new growth management strategy, known as Niagara 2041, which until recently, formed the basis for the MCR and numerous companion strategies, such the Water and Wastewater Master Servicing Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, the Housing Report, and the Employment Strategy. Further details on this background work are outlined in **Subsection 2.2**.

In August 2020, the Province approved Amendment 1 to the 2019 *Growth Plan* (Amendment 1), which, among other things, extended the horizon for land use planning from the year 2041 to the year 2051. Amendment 1 revised Schedule 3 of the *Growth Plan* in order to institute new regional population and employment forecasts, and revised the methodology for assessing land need.

As an upper-tier municipality, the Region is required to conform to the *Growth Plan* and revise its Regional Structure as part of its MCR to ensure that the distribution of growth to local municipalities can be achieved.

3.1 Consultation for the Regional Structure

Prior to the 2019 *Growth Plan* changes, the Region met on numerous occasions with the Planning Advisory Committee and, separately, with planning staff of local municipalities, to discuss the development of Niagara 2041 and the Regional Structure.

In September 2019, Regional staff provided a Growth Management Program Update to the Planning and Economic Development Committee (Report No. PDS 33-2019), which included preliminary information on the Regional Structure (at the time referred to as the “Urban Structure”). That same year, Public Information Centre (PIC) meetings were held at various locations across the Region in order to provide the public an opportunity to learn about and comment on the Regional Structure and other components of the NOP.

In 2020, Staff prepared the Regional Structure Background Report outlining recent changes and addressing key matters for the Regional Structure that would be determined through further study and consultation. Subsequently, Regional staff:

- engaged Hemson Consulting and the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) to update the previous data and analyses conducted for Niagara 2041 (as outlined in **Subsection 2.2**);

- prepared an online survey to assess the public's priorities for growth management in the NOP;
- met with local municipal planning staff on numerous occasions to discuss updated population and employment allocations, employment policies and mapping, and matters related to the Regional Structure; and
- hosted a series of virtual public information sessions in October 2020 and held additional meetings with key stakeholders on the components of the NOP, including discussions on the Regional Structure.

The feedback received through this engagement generally identified growth management as both the key challenge and opportunity for Niagara. Specifically, that strategic growth management is needed to accommodate growth in a manner that creates thriving, complete, and resilient communities that mitigate and adapt to our changing climate and protect the Region's significant natural heritage and water systems.

In addition, there was significant interest in ensuring that the NOP could facilitate an increase in affordable housing options; improve existing transportation systems, especially transit and cycling networks; and properly manage the Region's employment areas to support job creation and economic prosperity.

3.2 Growth Management Studies

The Regional Structure is informed by a number of considerations related to growth management, many of which are informed by their own respective studies. These studies collectively inform the current and future plan for growth and development in Niagara.

Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between the *Growth Plan*, the Regional Structure, and other key growth management studies completed as part of the NOP.



Figure 2: Relationship between the Plans and studies that inform the Regional Structure

3.2.1 Niagara 2041: Preferred Growth Option Report

A series of reports were completed by Hemson Consulting between 2014 and 2019 that provide detailed population and employment forecasts at a regional and local municipal level to 2041, in conformity with the in-effect Growth Plans at the time.

Following consultation with local municipalities and relevant stakeholders, population and employment allocations were further refined to identify a Preferred Growth Option, which was used to inform the Niagara Region Master Servicing Plan and Transportation Master Plan, and ultimately led to the forecasts used within the 2016 Development Charges Background Study. Associated housing forecasts were later revised through the development of the 2019 Housing Strategy.

This work is now outdated as it does not conform to the in-effect Growth Plan with a 2051 horizon.

3.2.2 Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review – Growth Allocation Update to 2051 and Land Needs Assessment

As noted, the Region has been working on the growth allocations and land needs assessment (“LNA”) for a number of years. The Niagara Region Municipal Comprehensive Review - Growth Allocation Update to 2051 (Hemson, 2021) builds off

the results of the Niagara 2041: Preferred Growth Option (Hemson, 2019) analysis to align regional forecasts with those established through the 2020 *Growth Plan*. Significant consultation has been ongoing with municipalities, stakeholders and the public since the release of the amended *Growth Plan*.

The allocations are used to directly inform the Region's LNA. The LNA is a Provincial requirement of the NOP – the Region must follow a Provincial methodology to determine the amount of land needed to accommodate forecasted population and employment growth to 2051.

Hemson Consulting provided the Region with updated municipal-level forecasts based on inputs from consultation and certain Official Plan background strategies. The Hemson, 2021 memo is included in the Joint Report as **Appendix 3.3**.

Accompanying the 2020 *Growth Plan* was a revised LNA methodology that requires municipalities to consider market-based housing demand as part of the LNA.

The updates provided in the Hemson, 2021 memo inform the corresponding updates to the Housing Report (described in **Subsection 2.2.4** below), and identified housing by type and location forecasts, by municipality, consistent with intensification rates and density targets identified within the Regional Structure.

The Draft Lands Needs Summary document is included with the Joint Report as **Appendix 3.2**. This provides details on how the Region has performed the LNA using the Provincial Methodology. Like the Regional Structure, the Draft LNA will be finalized following consultation.

3.2.3 Master Servicing Plan and Transportation Master Plan

The Master Servicing Plan ("MSP") and the Transportation Master Plan ("TMP") were completed in 2016 and 2017, respectively, to evaluate the capacity requirements of the Region's existing water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure. These studies inform where growth and development can be accommodated by Regional infrastructure, and how it can be designed and constructed to support the key planning principles outlined in **Section 5.0**.

The MSP and the TMP utilize growth forecasts to identify where and when infrastructure improvements will be made to meet the demands of future households and businesses. Both these studies currently align with the work of the previous *Growth Plan* and the Niagara 2041: Preferred Growth Option report (Hemson, 2019).

The full costs associated with maintaining and replacing infrastructure over its life-cycle often extend beyond established planning horizons. To ensure that public funds spent on physical assets are costed and planned over a predicted life cycle, it is important to ensure that growth planning is considered comprehensively with the MSP and TMP.

At this time, the MSP, TMP and the Development Charges By-law are all under review, with cooperative work underway between the Public Works, Corporate Services and Planning and Development Services. The updated forecasts provided in the Hemson, 2021 memo and the policy direction of the Regional Structure will be used to inform these reviews.

The Regional Structure supports alignment between infrastructure and land use planning, and uses available information to direct future growth and development to areas where infrastructure investments are or will be made, including those beyond the current planning horizon of 2051.

3.2.4 Niagara Region Growth Scenario Analysis Report (Housing Report)

In 2019, Niagara Region engaged CANCEA to prepare a regional housing database that aggregated existing sources of housing-related data to determine the region's current and future demand for affordable housing.

The results of this analysis found that as of 2016, over 20,000 households in Niagara were considered to be in “core housing need”, primarily driven by a lack of affordable housing options within the community.

Core housing need is a measure tracked through Statistics Canada as part of the national census. The term refers to households that are either in need of major repair; do not have enough bedrooms to suitably house its residents; or cost more than 30% of the household's annual income without more affordable housing alternatives available within the market area.

In Niagara, core housing need is primarily driven by affordability, and especially impacts single-person, rental, and low income households.

To determine how best to address growing rates of core housing need, CANCEA subsequently prepared a housing report title Niagara Region Housing Market Analysis, Trends, Current State and Forecasts, 1996-2041 (“2019 Housing Report”) that tested the impacts of several growth scenarios on the capacity of the Region's housing stock to accommodate future growth.

The 2019 Housing Report concluded that a targeted growth scenario, in which population growth in the region occurs at a rate that is targeted to achieve the population numbers forecasted by the 2019 Growth Plan, had the most positive impact in mitigating rates of core housing need and maintaining housing affordability. The 2019 Housing Report was received by Planning and Economic Development Committee as Report PDS 27-2019 on April 17, 2019 and Report PDS 37-2019 on November 6, 2019.

After the release of the 2020 *Growth Plan*, the Region reengaged CANCEA to test the impacts of the revised 2051 growth numbers. CANCEA produced a report, Niagara Region Housing Affordability and *Growth Plan* 2051 (“2021 Housing Report”), which is appended to the Joint Report as **Appendix 5.2**.

The 2021 Housing Report updated the housing database and growth scenario analysis based on the growth allocations and housing mix identified in the Hemson, 2021 memo. The 2021 Housing Report identified similar conclusions as the 2019 report.

Specifically, achieving the minimum population forecasts within the *Growth Plan* would maintain the current rate of core housing need in Niagara at 13% of households. This means that core housing need will not be improved, but will be kept the same, at 13%.

This is compared to status quo scenario of growth at a similar rate to what has occurred, which put core housing need at 16% to 2051. In a slow growth scenarios core housing need will reach 19% by 2051.

Core housing needs cannot be met unless a certain volume of population forecasts are achieved and that a range of housing types and densities are incorporated. Specifically, to address core housing need, more townhouses, apartment units, and other forms of housing are needed over what has traditionally been developed in Niagara.

To improve affordability in Niagara over time, other policy and financial tools will be required, in addition to more total housing and denser forms of housing noted above.

These are addressed, in part, through the Regional Structure, as outlined in **Subsection 5.4**, as well as through the NOP housing policies, set out in the Joint Report as **Appendix 5.3**.

3.2.5 Employment Area Strategy

The Employment Area Strategy and Policy Paper was prepared by the Region in 2020. It identifies and designates employment areas within the Region.

The employment areas identified by the Strategy are largely based on existing local land use designations, as well as the site characteristics, location characteristics and market impacts of individual parcels. The recommendations of the Strategy inform the employment area policies in the NOP, which is explored in detail through the Employment Policy Paper included as set out in the Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report as **Appendix 10.2**.

3.2.6 Settlement Area Boundary Review

As part of the NOP, the Region may also consider Settlement Area boundary changes. This includes possible boundary expansions, where it is demonstrated that the municipality has an identified land need that cannot be accommodated within its existing urban boundary.

This review is further discussed in **Subsection 7.4**.

4.0 Provincial Land Use Planning Framework

The Provincial government sets the direction for municipal planning through a framework of statutes, regulations, and policy plans. As an upper-tier municipality, the NOP will implement this and provide direction for conformity of local Official Plans and subsequent conformity of Zoning By-laws to the local Official Plan.

In Niagara, the applicable Provincial land use plans are the *PPS*, which provide policy direction on a range of Provincial interests; the *Growth Plan*, which dictates how and where employment and residential intensification is to be developed, amongst other things; and the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, which provide protection for a system of agricultural and rural lands (i.e. the Agricultural System) and ecological areas and features (i.e. the Natural Heritage System or “NHS”) located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and along the Niagara Escarpment.

The Regional Structure must comprehensively apply the principles of these land use plans. Beyond the identification of areas in which urban development will be restricted, the influence of the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Niagara Escarpment Plan* is limited in urban areas. As such, the discussion of the legislation and policy below is focused on the *Planning Act, 1990*, *PPS* and *Growth Plan*.

The requirements of the NOP are set out in the *Planning Act, 1990*. The NOP must be consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)*, conform with the *Growth Plan*, the *Greenbelt Plan* and not conflict with the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*. Decisions of

Council and planning advice and recommendations made by staff must adhere to these requirements.

4.1 The Planning Act, 1990

The *Planning Act, 1990* outlines the manner in which development and redevelopment can be controlled, and the role and responsibilities of the Province, municipalities, and other participants in implementing and managing these planning processes.

Section 2 of the *Planning Act, 1990* lists the areas of provincial interest that municipalities must have regard for when making land use decisions and creating new Official Plans. These include the appropriate location of growth and development; the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit, and pedestrian oriented; and the promotion of a built form that is well-designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for high quality, accessible and safe public spaces.

4.1.1 Land Use Planning Tools

To proactively plan for growth, the *Planning Act, 1990* provides municipalities with a range of land use tools and processes, including the use of **secondary plans** to help manage future growth and development.

A secondary plan is a land use plan for a particular area or neighbourhood within a municipality, whose implementing policies are adopted into an Official Plan. Secondary plans are usually prepared and approved by local municipalities, and completed through extensive public consultation.

These land use plans help to identify and address challenges and opportunities specific to the area, and provide detailed policies that guide the development and design of buildings, parks, and public spaces.

District plans are similar to secondary plans in that they provide land use guidance for defined locations within a municipality, with implementing policies that are adopted into the Region's Official Plan.

District Plans are Region-led initiatives. The areas selected for District Plans are typically high-growth areas that require collaboration between multiple municipalities or stakeholders, levels of government and/or private and public partnerships, or are areas that currently are, or have the potential to become, iconic in nature.

District plan policies provide a framework for land use, urban design and development that supports the key planning principles outlined in **Section 5.0**.

4.2 The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS)

The PPS provides direction for areas of provincial interest. Municipalities must plan and develop Official Plans that are consistent with PPS policies.

The PPS provides for appropriate development while protecting key municipal resources, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural and built environment. Development within a municipality is to be directed to Settlement Areas (see adjacent definition), and then more specifically, to designated areas of growth that can service and support residential and employment intensification.

The PPS defines **Settlement Areas** as “urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are:

(1) built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses;

(2) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies of [the PPS].

Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated.

The PPS is to be read in conjunction with the *Growth Plan*, the *Greenbelt Plan*, and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*.

4.3 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019

The *Growth Plan* provides additional policy direction for municipalities located in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“GGH”), which is planned to receive a significant share of the Province’s population and employment growth.

The *Growth Plan* promotes the efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure, increased housing density and choice, and land use patterns which balance pressures for growth and development with the protection of key agricultural and natural heritage resources.

Growth Plan Schedule 3 provides population and employment forecasts for all upper-tier and single-tier municipalities in the GGH. The Region is responsible for implementing these forecasts through its Official Plan by completing the LNA. Local Official Plans would then be updated through conformity exercises to implement this direction.

The Regional Structure directs forecasted growth to specific areas within local municipalities that will implement the density and intensification targets provided in the *Growth Plan*.

5.0 Key Planning Principles

5.1 Intensification of Urban Areas

The intensification of urban areas is a key part of Ontario’s planning documents.

Intensification refers to the redevelopment or repurposing of existing parcels, buildings, or other vacant lands at a higher density than what currently exists. Intensification is measured across a municipality’s Built-Up Area.

Intensification is intended to redirect new residential development away from the periphery of urban areas in order to avoid urban sprawl into agricultural lands and key natural heritage systems. It will also make more efficient use of serviced urban land.

Intensification is different from the concept of density. Intensification measures the number of new dwelling units that are accommodated within existing Built-Up Areas. Density reflects the number of people and jobs that are located within a specified area. Intensification is a measure used to direct forecasted growth; density is usually used to guide the scale and form of new development within identified neighbourhoods.

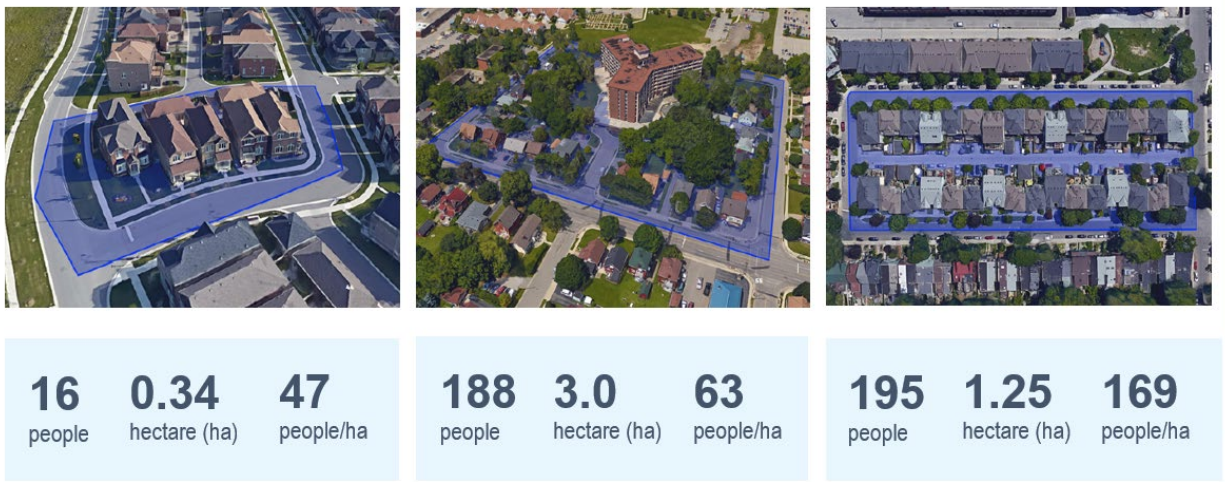


Figure 3: Demonstration of density. Source: MMAH

Many Built-Up Areas in Niagara have limited opportunities for large-scale, community planning, with the exception of larger **brownfield** and **greyfield** sites.

Brownfields refer to vacant or underutilized properties that were previously used for commercial or industrial activity, which often contain leftover soil contamination that can pose a risk to public health and safety.

Redevelopment of brownfield properties can require costly and lengthy soil remediation; however, these sites also provide significant opportunities for intensification, as they are often comprised of one or more large parcels of land within existing Built-Up Areas and have access to municipal water and wastewater infrastructure.

Greyfields offer a similar opportunity for community planning in built-up areas. Greyfield sites refer to stretches of paved areas, such as parking lots, or other large structures, such as shopping malls and commercial plazas, which are underutilized. The development of greyfield sites provide opportunities to provide a mix of commercial, higher-density residential, and employment uses within existing neighbourhoods, that often have existing connections to transit, pedestrian networks, and other community facilities.

As available, serviced land become more scarce or costly, brownfield and greyfield sites will become more attractive for redevelopment. Additional direction for brownfields and greyfields is contained in the Employment Policy Paper, included in the Joint Report as **Appendix 10.2**.

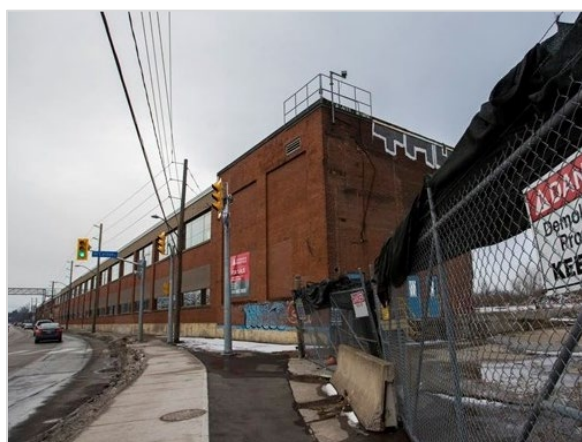


Figure 4: The former GM Lands in the City of St. Catharines is an example of a brownfield site.
Image Source: Julie Jocsak, *The St. Catharines Standard*.



Figure 5: Niagara Square in the City of Niagara Falls is an example of a greyfield site. **Image Source:** Julie Jocsak, *The Toronto Star*

5.2 Complete Communities

Achieving complete communities is how the Province anticipates lands to be developed, resources to be managed and protected, and investments to be made in public infrastructure.

Complete communities are defined in the *Growth Plan* as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within a town or city that offer opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores and services, and a full range of housing and transportation options.

Complete communities are to be designed in a way that reduces urban sprawl and supports the appropriate intensification of existing built-up areas. The *Growth Plan* accomplishes this by establishing minimum intensification and density targets for designated areas of growth within a municipality.

In meeting these targets and establishing policies which support the appropriate intensification of built-up areas, municipalities are able to make more effective use of investments in infrastructure and the public realm, and in turn provide a better quality of life for its residents.

Some of the benefits of complete communities include:

- Construction or adaptation of existing street networks to accommodate all modes of transportation, including walking, cycling, and running, which result in healthier communities;
- Use of existing infrastructure in built up areas, meaning that less public funds are spent on constructing and maintaining new municipal services;
- More efficient building design and land use patterns that help reduce our carbon footprint and mitigate the impacts of climate change; and
- A fostered sense of community through the provision of an adequate number of accessible, well-designed public spaces.

Creating complete communities is foundational to the NOP; it guides the policies and objectives of the Regional Structure. The successful implementation of these policies is predicated on ensuring that an appropriate scale and form of development takes place on individual land parcels.

5.3 Compact Form and Transit-Supportive Development

PPS Section 1.1.3.4 encourages municipalities and other planning authorities to establish appropriate development standards that facilitate “intensification, redevelopment and compact form, while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety.”

A compact built form is guided by massing, scale, and footprint of development and redevelopment by promoting land use patterns that allow residents to live, work, shop, and play within the same neighbourhood. The form of development should vary depending on local needs; they may include low-rise, detached housing on small lots, or larger, multi-storey developments with a mix of housing types and uses.

The layout and design of the street network is another key component of complete community, and is an important influence on the character, built form and quality of a neighbourhood. Modern principles suggest streets should be designed in ways that are easily accessible by active transportation (i.e. by walking, cycling, or running) and encourage the use of transit. This is closely related to the concept of “transit-supportive development”, which reflects the same principles of the compact built form, but with a higher concentration of employment and residential development to improve the viability, quality, and frequency of transit service.

Figure 4 and **Figure 5** are examples of planned complete communities. Mount Pleasant Village in the City of Brampton and the Glendale District Plan Area are characterized by their municipal transit presence and access, and proximity to higher-order transit corridors, the provision of well-designed public spaces, the mix of commercial, office, recreational, and residential uses within walkable distances, and the range of housing choices available at densities which support the investments made in infrastructure and servicing to these areas.

Figure 4 and **Figure 5** are examples only. The Regional Structure will identify appropriate densities within designated growth areas across Niagara, with careful consideration of locational context. Further, the Regional Structure will work in tandem with the Urban Design policies of the NOP to establish design and development standards for implementation within local municipal Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, and secondary plans.



Figure 4: Mount Pleasant Village in the City of Brampton, known as the "urban transit village", is an example of a transit-supportive, mixed-use community. Image Source: NAK Design Strategies.



Figure 5: The Conceptualized Main Street from the Glendale District Plan. The Plan demonstrates urban form in a contemporary example of a purpose-built complete community, which contains transit supportive density, a mix of housing types, land uses and an innovative, sustainable urban design. Image Source: Niagara Region.

5.4 Housing Mix and Affordability

Planning for forecasted growth means ensuring there is enough land, servicing, and housing available to accommodate the anticipated population and employment growth.

In terms of housing, Provincial policy requires the Region, as the upper-tier municipality, provide and identify a range and mix of housing options and densities that support identified intensification rates and density targets that meet the market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents.

Affordability, in the context of land use planning, refers to shelter costs that amount to less than 30% of annual household income for low and moderate income households.¹ This can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors, and all forms of housing tenure, including rental, ownership and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing.

Market-based housing as a concept was first introduced through the earlier changes to the *Growth Plan* and the *PPS*, and was incorporated into the land needs assessment methodology at the time of the 2020 *Growth Plan*. No formal definition was provided; however, it is understood that market-based housing requirements were included to help balance between the provision of ground-related housing, such as single-detached, semi-detached, and row housing, and the higher-density dwelling types, such as apartment buildings.

Local municipalities are responsible for establishing and planning for a local housing mix through its Official Plans. A housing mix is also established for the purpose of undertaking the LNA and addressing affordability. This is discussed in detail in the Draft Land Needs Assessment Summary document included as **Appendix 3.2**.

The Regional Structure plays a key role in establishing a housing mix. Municipal intensification rates, and density targets for Strategic Growth Areas and Designated Greenfield Areas all shape the housing mix that can be planned and accommodated within the Region.

Additionally, to support the conclusions of the Housing Report as outlined in Section 2.2.4, the housing policies of the NOP support and encourage alignment with the

¹ Low and moderate income households refer to households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of the income distribution for the regional market area. In Niagara, this includes households making \$84,000 per year or less.

outcomes and objectives of the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, which also target an increase in more dense forms of housing.

6.0 Components of the Regional Structure

The *PPS* and *Growth Plan* suggest that areas of growth will differ depending on their context and location. Provincial policy distinguishes areas designated for growth and development based on function and level of intensification. The NOP must direct growth to these components in different ways, while using the principles of complete communities, compact built form, and transit-supportive development.

The proposed Regional Structure policies and mapping are included in the Joint Report as **Appendix 4.2** and **4.3**.

The following section provides a description of each land use component to be identified in the NOP, and, if applicable, their specific policy requirements under the Growth Plan.

6.1 Settlement Areas

PPS Section 1.1 directs growth and development to occur within Settlement Areas. The Niagara Region is currently comprised of 58 distinct Settlement Areas; 27 of which are Urban and 31 of which are Rural (also referred to as Hamlets).

Urban Areas are the focus for future development and the provision of municipal infrastructure and public service facilities. The majority of growth will be accommodated within Urban Areas.

Provincial policy only directs limited growth and development to Rural Settlements. Rural Settlements often have a distinct rural character, provide rural commercial and employment opportunities and support the surrounding agricultural community.

All components described in **Subsection 6.2** to **Subsection 6.5** below are located within the boundaries of Urban Areas.

A very small amount of growth is permitted outside Rural Settlements and Urban Areas and thus are not described further below.

6.2 Built-Up Areas

The Built-Up Area was identified by the Province in 2008. It represents the general location of existing development within the Region's Urban Areas prior to 2006. The Built-Up Area is defined as:

“The limits of the developed urban area as defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of measuring the minimum intensification target in this Plan.”

Residential development occurring within the Built-Up Area is referred to as intensification. *Growth Plan* Section 2.2.2 requires a minimum intensification target be achieved across all Built-Up Areas within Niagara. Intensification refers to new development or redevelopment within the Built-Up Area and can include a range of housing forms.

The Growth Plan requires a minimum of 50% of new development across the Region occur within the Built-Up Area. Formerly, this minimum was 40%. In other words, the in-effect *Growth Plan* requires more intensification than in the current Official Plan.

Municipal intensification rates were determined based on thorough assessment of the capacity to accommodate growth within the Built-Up Area through intensification and infill opportunities. The geographic context of the municipality, size of the Urban Area, and existing constraints were also considered in evaluating the level of intensification that could be accommodated.

Table 1 sets out the intensification rate for each local municipality.

Table 1: Municipal Intensification Rates

Municipality	Built Up Area
Fort Erie	50.0%
Grimsby	98.0%
Lincoln	80.0%
Niagara Falls	50.0%
Niagara-on-the-Lake	25.0%
Pelham	25.0%
Port Colborne	30.0%
St. Catharines	95.0%
Thorold	25.0%
Wainfleet	0.0%
Welland	60.0%
West Lincoln	13.0%
Niagara Region	56.0%

Municipal intensification rates were determined based on significant consultation with local municipalities. This resulted in a higher overall intensification rate than the minimum 50% required by the Province.

The Region has established a 56% draft intensification rate to 2051 – exceeding the minimum requirement.

The rate is fluid and municipalities might exceed their target percentage in some years and fall short in others. The intent is that local municipalities encourage growth and development opportunities that will assist in meeting or exceeding their identified rate on average. The Region will use development monitoring, as discussed in **Subsection 7.5.2**, to track how the overall intensification rate is being met.

As seen in **Table 1**, some municipalities have a much higher intensification rates (i.e. Town of Grimsby and City of St. Catharines) than others. Municipalities within the Greenbelt Plan area typically have a higher intensification rates due to the inability to expand urban area boundaries that were tightly drawn around the affected Urban Areas when the Greenbelt Plan was first introduced in 2005. These municipalities will need to accommodate the majority of the allocated growth within their Built-Up Area as Designated Greenfield Areas are effectively built out.

In order to do so, local municipalities will be encouraged to update or undertake local intensification strategies that will assist in guiding intensification within their existing communities. Planning for intensification requires thoughtful, long term goals and objectives to consider how best to achieve the outcome of complete communities.

Secondary planning is another tool for proactively managing and directing growth. This process considers specific policies and land use for a certain area of the municipality. These plans are based on technical studies to inform and refine policy direction. They are also informed by landowners, stakeholders and the public through numerous engagement activities.

Both secondary planning and intensification strategies can be used to assist local municipalities in proactively directing growth management efforts. Both processes will engage residents and businesses to provide input in broader areas of local interest.

6.3 Designated Greenfield Areas

Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA) represent the remaining lands within the Urban Area that are outside the Built-Up Area (excluding Excess Lands), as they were at the time of Provincial mapping in 2006. Generally, DGAs are comprised of large, undeveloped parcels that have access to municipal servicing and are able to accommodate a significant amount of growth and development.

Growth Plan Section 2.2.7 a) requires DGAs to achieve **a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare**. This is consistent with the density target identified in Niagara's current Official Plan.

The minimum density target is to be measured over the entire Designated Greenfield Area of Niagara Region (excluding certain parts that are discounted such as natural heritage features, areas and systems, and other specified lands).

Unlike the intensification rate, each municipality is required to meet the same minimum 50 person and jobs per hectare within their urban boundaries.

A visualization of what this density may look like at a neighbourhood level is outlined in **Figure 6**. As discussed in **Subsection 5.1**, however, density targets in and of themselves do not determine the built form developed.



Figure 6: Visual representation of what a density target of 50 people and jobs per hectare may look like at the neighbourhood level. Image Source: MMAH.

Through the Settlement Area Boundary Review, the Region will determine which municipalities will require additional urban land to accommodate their allocated growth forecasts to 2051 (see **Subsection 7.4**). Any new urban lands added to the Urban Area boundary will become a DGA, subject to the requirements set out in this section. For new DGAs and existing, unplanned DGAs, secondary plans will be used to provide specific land use direction for accommodating growth within their boundaries. Additional direction is found within the District and Secondary Plan policies in **Subsection 6.1**.

6.4 Strategic Growth Areas

Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) are lands within Urban Areas that are the focus for more significant intensification and higher-density uses. Introduced as part of the recent updates to the Growth Plan, SGAs identified by Provincial policy include:

- Urban Growth Centres;
- Major Transit Station Areas; and
- Other Strategic Growth Areas, which in Niagara, include Regional Growth Centres and District Plan Areas.

The Region will plan for growth and development in SGAs through the preparation of Secondary Plans and will work with municipalities with SGAs to ensure minimum targets are being achieved in local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. Further discussion on the options related to identifying and planning for SGAs is outlined in **Section 7.0**.

6.4.1 Urban Growth Centre: Downtown St. Catharines

The *Growth Plan* maps one Urban Growth Centres in Niagara: Downtown St. Catharines. This designation is for areas of existing or emerging downtown that are to

be the focus of a substantial amount of growth and development, as well as focal area for investment in regional public service facilities, commercial uses, recreational uses, and major employment centres.

The *Growth Plan* requires that Downtown St. Catharines be planned to achieve a minimum density target of 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare by the year 2031. The existing density in the Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre is approximately 100 residents and jobs per hectare.

A visualization of what this density may look like is shown in **Figure 7**.



Figure 7: Visual representation of what a density target of 150 people and jobs per hectare may look like at the neighbourhood level. Image Source: MMAH.

As described further in the next section, the Region also considers the Downtown St. Catharines Bus Station as a Major Transit Station Area. The bus terminal is located within the Urban Growth Centre, supports the Downtown as a civic, commercial, and recreational destination, and will play a role in future planning within the Urban Growth Centre.

The City will be required to prepare a Secondary Plan for the Urban Growth Centre, which will demonstrate how it will achieve the minimum target to 2031, as well as how growth and intensification will continue to be accommodated beyond 2031 to the horizon of the NOP.

6.4.2 Major Transit Station Areas

Major Transit Station Areas are defined by the *Growth Plan* as the area including and around any existing or planned *higher order transit* station or stop within a *settlement area*; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. *Major transit*

station areas generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk.

Major Transit Station Areas encompass the lands around any existing or planned higher order transit station or stop within an Urban Area. For Niagara, these include the planned GO Transit Stations in the Town of Grimsby, City of St. Catharines, and City of Niagara Falls, and the future proposed GO Transit Station in the Town of Lincoln. Also included is the Downtown St. Catharines Bus Station, as noted above.

Growth Plan policies for Major Transit Station Areas only apply to areas located along an identified “priority transit corridor”. Currently, the Region’s GO Transit Stations are not identified along this corridor. As such, the *Growth Plan* has limited policy direction for Niagara’s MTSAs.

The Region, in partnership with its local municipalities, proactively approved Secondary Plans for each station area to position and plan for higher densities similar to those identified as being on a priority transit corridor.

Following the approval of the NOP, the Secondary Plans will be reviewed through local Official Plan conformity to ensure they are in line with the Regional Structure.

In all instances, a multi-modal approach should be applied in planning around MTSAs and will be supported through the transportation and urban design policies of the NOP.

6.4.3 Regional Growth Centres

The *Growth Plan* allows municipalities to determine the location and extent of other SGAs. Unlike the Urban Growth Centre and MTSAs, other SGAs do not have specific *Growth Plan* policy sections that guide the form, density, and land use types permitted. These are referred to as “Other SGAs” or “Regional Growth Centres” interchangeably.

Other SGAs should be proactively planned to evolve in manner that shares the same principles of other areas that anticipate more robust growth. The Region will direct a significant amount of Niagara’s population and employment forecast to these areas even where those SGAs do not have the highest order transit the same density thresholds as others.

Currently identified is the Regional Growth Centre of Downtown Welland. A minimum density target is assigned.

Further to the discussion on the MTSAs, the same consideration is needed for connection to the Downtown Welland Regional Growth Centre. The Regional Growth Centre needs to strengthen its public transit connections by extending or offering new transit services. This will be a critical link in providing access throughout the communities and the Region in general. Enhanced access to transit can improve opportunities for housing choice and access to employment opportunities, as well as Regional destinations of broader interest and reliance.

Secondary Plans will provide a vision to guide growth within these areas. The process can proactively support infill, growth and intensification opportunities, urban design to support compatibility and technical studies prepared in support of infrastructure and transportation capacity. This proactive process will ensure that the lands within the SGA are development-ready.

In addition to Downtown Welland, Other Strategic Growth Areas include in part the District Plan Areas of Brock and Glendale. Both these areas have been identified and planned through the District Plan process to provide specific direction for growth and development to transition into complete communities. Both areas will offer frequent transit service in the form of transit hubs to connect different routes and modes of transit. They will play an important role in connecting local, inter-municipal and inter-regional transit level services.

Through the District Planning exercise, ongoing monitoring and implementation has been identified to ensure success.

6.5 Employment Areas

The Growth Plan sets out four categories of forecasted employment:

- Major Office Employment
- Population-Related Employment
- Employment Land Employment
- Rural Area Employment

The majority of Major Office Employment and Population-Related Employment are anticipated to occur within Built-Up Areas, SGAs, and DGAs. These types of jobs support the development of mixed-use and complete communities, rely on transportation infrastructure, and are generally more compatible with sensitive land uses, such as residential, institutional and recreational uses.

Employment Areas are defined in the *PPS* as “areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities”. Employment Land Employment and some Major Office Employment, are planned within designated Employment Areas.

Employment Areas are mapped to help support existing businesses’ locations, offer a higher degree of protection from encroachment of more sensitive land uses such as residential (which are prohibited), and to secure a long-term future for the types of employment that often require separation from community use for compatibility purposes. Employment Areas provide a supply of jobs to those within the community.

Employment planning in Niagara has been carefully researched and analyzed as part of the NOP process since 2018. The location, type, characteristics, and density of Employment Areas are discussed in detail within the Employment Policy Paper, included with the Joint Report as **Appendix 10.2**.

The remaining employment category, Rural Area Employment, occurs outside of Urban Areas within Rural Lands and Agricultural Areas.

6.6 Rural Settlements (Hamlets)

Rural Settlements are non-serviced areas with clusters of rural residential and business uses that support surrounding agricultural lands. Rural Settlements generally contain a mix of low density residential, rural commercial and employment uses, and, in some cases, public service facilities.

Hamlet development relies on private water and wastewater systems. Rural Settlements are not areas of focused population or employment growth, and will develop in a manner consistent with the rural character of the local community.

6.7 Rural Lands

Rural Lands are areas located outside of Settlement Areas and Agricultural Areas. Rural Lands allow for a range of land uses that are compatible with the rural landscape and sustained by rural service levels.

Although limited development is permitted on Rural Lands, the Region’s planned population and employment growth is not directed to these lands.

6.8 Agricultural Area

Agricultural Areas are located outside of Settlement Areas and are lands that are suitable for agriculture and agricultural-related uses. Agriculture is a major component

of the Region's economy, and the protection and effective use of these lands are a priority of the NOP.

Niagara is subject to the policies of the *Greenbelt Plan*. The identification of the Agricultural System within the Niagara Region is an important component of the Regional Structure, in that it helps us determine where growth and development should *not* be directed, in order to preserve these lands for their intended agricultural use. Population and housing growth is generally not contemplated within agricultural lands.

The Region has reviewed its agricultural land base as part of the NOP process. Candidate areas analyzed in consultation with the local municipalities.

Draft agricultural policies are included for discussion in the Joint Report as **Appendix 9.2**.

6.9 Natural Environment System (NES)

The NES is comprised of core natural heritage and hydrological areas and features that support the natural environment. The NES is necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural function, and viable populations of indigenous species and ecosystems by restricting new development and limiting Settlement Area expansions within these identified areas and features. The Regional Structure does not contemplate development within the NES.

6.10 Excess Lands

Excess Lands refer to vacant, unbuilt but developable lands within Urban Areas, but outside of the Built-Up Area, that have been designated in an Official Plan for development but are in excess of what is needed to accommodate forecasted growth to 2051.

The Region will develop an approach for excess lands in the NOP and local Official Plans in consultation with applicable local municipalities.

7.0 Policy Direction for the Regional Structure

The Regional Structure establishes policies and mapping to manage forecasted growth to 2051. This is done in a manner that reflects recent changes in Provincial policy and the various land use plans and infrastructure projects undertaken in the Region since RPPA 2-2009, as set out earlier in this Policy Paper.

Regional Structure policies provide direction for complete communities, promotes the development of a compact built form, emphasizes the need to plan for the impacts of a

changing climate, and supports the efficient use of infrastructure and public service facilities and a diverse range and mix of housing to ensure housing in Niagara remains affordable.

A number of specific Provincial policy requirements must be included in the Regional Structure. Other policies are discretionary, and are included to aid decision-making by the Region or local municipalities.

The following section outlines key direction of the Regional Structure policies, which addresses Provincial policy requirements and the land use planning concepts and background studies described earlier in the report.

7.1 Intensification Rates and Density Targets for Area Municipalities

Subsection 6.2 describes the minimum 50% intensification rate for all Built-Up Areas, to achieve the densities and built form that support key planning principles.

As noted, local municipal rates are reflective of the local context and ability for redevelopment and infill opportunities. The intensification rate was confirmed through discussions with local municipal planners.

Subsection 6.3 sets out the minimum density of 50 people and jobs per hectare for development within the Designated Greenfield Area. This target is applied uniformly for all local municipalities.

7.1.1 Minimum Density Targets within SGAs

The Region carefully considered the plans detailed in **Subsection 6.4**, and the previous work and development activity within the St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre and elsewhere, to determine the appropriate density targets for the SGAs.

Staff reviewed potential build out over time in relation to envisioned land uses and permissions to set a proposed target that could reasonably be achieved.

Specifically, density targets for SGAs were established by undertaking the following background analysis:

- a jurisdictional scan and review of intensification and growth area targets within the Official Plans of comparable single-tier and upper-tier municipalities;
- a review of the land use designations, permissions, and design standards outlined within applicable secondary plans, district plans, and/or Official Plans and Zoning By-laws;

- calculation of the minimum and maximum densities that could be implemented within the SGAs, as established by the aforementioned policy structure; and
- applying Provincial policy to the relationship between Niagara's identified SGAs.

Table 2 provides the draft SGA density targets.

Table 2: Density Targets for Identified Strategic Growth Areas

Municipality	Minimum Density Target
Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre	150 people & jobs per hectare to 2031
GO Transit Station Areas in St. Catharines, Lincoln, Niagara Falls, and Grimsby	125 people & jobs per hectare to 2051
Downtown Welland Regional Growth Centre	125 people & jobs per hectare to 2051
Brock and Glendale Niagara District Plans	100 people & jobs per hectare to 2051

As noted, secondary plans will be prepared or updated to reflect these targets and provide supporting land use direction for the achievement of complete communities.

7.2 Local Municipal Intensification Strategies and Local Growth Centres

Many local municipalities have prepared intensification strategies to identify and provide direction for allocating growth within its Built-Up Area. An intensification strategy may be an effective way to protect stable residential neighbourhoods and direct development to those areas that can better accommodate increased population and jobs.

Regional Structure policies provide direction for local municipalities to update or develop new intensification strategies as part of local Official Plan conformity. Intensification strategies and secondary plans can help municipalities direct growth and manage change within their communities.

In line with the direction for Regional Growth Centres, local municipalities will be encouraged to identify **Local Growth Centres**, which refer to focus areas for growth and investment within the local municipality, and may include traditional downtowns and key mixed uses areas.

Local Centres may vary in size, nature and characteristic. They are envisioned as areas that will develop over the long term as compact, complete communities through the incorporation of higher density housing forms that support existing or planned transit routes and the expansion of the public realm.

Local Centres will not be mapped in the NOP. Instead, they will be identified in local Official Plans and will have broad policies for local municipalities to implement through conformity.

Intensification strategies will also benefit from the urban design direction of the NOP and local Official Plans. Urban design can assist with implementing or establishing community identity, provide direction to address compatibility for infill and support complete communities and complete streets.

Local municipalities will require planning documents to include development standards that permit and facilitate a compact built form, a vibrant public realm and all forms of intensification throughout the Built-Up Area.

7.3 Future Strategic Growth Areas

The purpose and components of Strategic Growth Areas are described in **Subsection 6.4**.

All SGAs have common elements, including proximity to major transportation infrastructure, major civic/institutional/public service facilities and existing or planned mixed use areas with a host of commercial uses.

SGAs are meant to contribute to or evolve into a complete community that offers a mix of uses, supports opportunities for people of all ages and abilities and where residents can meet their daily living needs.

The Region may identify new SGAs in the future. If a new SGA is identified, the Region will process an amendment to the NOP to map its boundary on the Regional Structure schedule. A Secondary Planning exercise will be required to provide the appropriate direction to manage growth and the development of this new SGA and provide the development standards to achieve a complete community.

7.4 Settlement Area Boundary Review

The Growth Plan prohibits municipalities from establishing new Settlement Areas; however, the Region may consider expansions to existing Settlement Areas, where a complex series of conditions are met through the NOP.

The Region has exclusive jurisdiction to determine Urban Area and Rural Settlement boundaries and any changes to them.

Managing growth requires balancing a broad array of interests from the environment, agriculture, servicing, transportation, community and industry. Decisions concerning one area of interest will have impacts on one or more of those remaining and therefore, there is no one single solution or consideration when considering boundaries.

The Region must follow explicit direction from Provincial Plans when considering Settlement Area boundary expansions. In particular, policies of the *PPS*, the *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan* may restrict or prohibit expansions.

As discussed in **Subsection 5.4**, new Provincial Policy directs municipalities to consider market-based housing demand as a component of the LNA and the accommodation of forecasted growth. In Niagara, market-demand includes the considerable market for low-density housing forms, such as single- and semi-detached dwellings. The need to provide single- and semi-detached housing types is one of the driving factors in Settlement Area expansions.

The LNA takes into account the location and density of Strategic Growth Areas, municipal intensification rates, and existing DGA land supply. The LNA output will provide an amount of land needs to determine the threshold question of whether an expansion is notionally needed. Detailed requirements are included in the *Growth Plan*.

Draft criteria for the Urban Settlement Area Boundary Review (SABR) can be found in the Joint Report as **Appendix 18.2**.

The Region is not making any boundary recommendations at this time. Recommendations will be made by Regional staff based on conclusions drawn from the SABR process in a future report.

7.4.1 Other Settlement Area Expansions and Adjustments

The NOP process is the primary means in which expansion should be considered; however, the *Growth Plan* provides two other tools to consider expansions or adjustments to Urban Area boundaries.

First, *Growth Plan* policy 2.2.8.4 outlines the process and criteria for considering **adjustments** to Settlement Area boundaries.

A municipality may consider boundary adjustments where the result is no net increase in land within settlement areas. Any consideration given to this option still requires NOP-related expansion policies of the Growth Plan being addressed and support a municipality's ability to meet with its established intensification and density targets.

The settlement area to which the lands are to be added is serviced and has sufficient reserve infrastructure capacity.

This option would not be permitted in the Greenbelt or for rural settlements.

The second way in which expansions may be considered is through permissions set out in *Growth Plan* policy 2.2.8.5 and 2.2.8.6 that allows for consideration of **an expansion of up to 40 hectares to occur in advance of a municipal comprehensive review** (which, for Niagara, is the NOP).

This option requires a significant amount of study work that meets the criteria listed in Policy 2.2.8.3.

The municipality must also ensure that growth allocated within the expansion area will be fully accounted for in the *next* LNA conducted by the Region.

This option may be used where a municipal comprehensive review is not underway, when it is apparent a municipality has outperformed its projected growth rate, and the municipality is in need of additional land to maintain its ability to accommodate growth.

Policies related to the process and criteria for allowing the expansion and adjustments to Settlement Areas, as listed above, will be included in Regional Structure policies.

7.5 Phasing and Monitoring of Development

Phasing and monitoring policies will be included in the Implementation Chapter of the NOP and required to be added to local Official Plans during conformity. The Region will work collaboratively with local municipalities to ensure minimum standards are being met or exceeded.

7.5.1 Development Phasing

Development phasing within the DGA, including any expansions or excess lands provided through the NOP, will play a critical role in ensuring growth is occurring in a balanced manner as intended by the Growth Plan.

District or secondary planning will be required to manage how expansion lands develop. The Region, in conjunction with local municipalities, will implement a monitoring program that will track and measure the achieved local intensification rates and new DGA development. The program will provide timely and accurate results to ensure growth is being managed as efficiently as possible.

Responsible, efficient use of land and infrastructure need to be optimized to maintain appropriate expectation of capital planning and works. Phasing of development will play a critical role in achieving the needed controls on growth to avoid sprawl.

7.5.2 Development Monitoring

The Region will carefully track new development following NOP implementation. Growth monitoring will help make future decisions on allocations and targets.

The Region will monitor how municipalities are achieving growth beyond or less than forecasted. Forecasts associated with the *Growth Plan* are minimums, and therefore, monitoring development will allow the Region to request alternative forecasts or revise allocations between municipalities, if warranted, through future Official Plan changes.

Monitoring development within municipalities with excess lands will allow for revisions to excess lands and related policies, if necessary.

Data collection will provide the factual evidence needed to determine if infrastructure investment is being outpaced or underutilized. It will also inform whether reevaluation on timing of infrastructure may be warranted when Master Plans are reviewed.

The Region will have minimum standards for the types of data and frequency of reporting. Leveraging technology to aid in performance monitoring is expected and will better provide for real-time (or as close to real-time) analysis that can be used across all departments and jurisdictions that would benefit from “up-to-date” measures.

Furthermore, performance monitoring will provide more accurate and frequent reporting to support decisions concerning phasing strategies as a means of ensuring balanced growth (intensification and Greenfield) is occurring and if needed, curtailing sprawl.

Phasing and Monitoring policies will be developed and made available for the next draft release of the NOP.

8.0 Next Steps for the Regional Structure

Following this report release, and the balance of the Niagara Official Plan Consolidated Policy Report in May 2021, the Region will undertake a series of planned Public Information Centres in Spring/Summer of 2021, and other focused consultation. Regional staff can provide additional details on this draft material, as needed, and provide the public with opportunities to pose questions, seek clarification and offer comments.

Regional staff will compile a comprehensive record of feedback received on all components of the NOP, including Regional Structure. Moving forward, consultation is expected to include all components of the NOP to maintain a complete appreciation of interconnectedness of the NOP policies.

Staff ask that comments on the Regional Structure, and the balance of the NOP materials provided, be circulated **by July 2, 2021**. This is to allow staff sufficient time to review and comment in advance of its next report in late summer 2021.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 2 – Section 3. HOUSING

SUMMARY

A range and mix of housing options and densities are needed in Niagara to safely, affordably, and adequately house Niagara's current and future residents at all stages of life.

Housing policies set out land use planning tools to facilitate a diverse housing supply that meets affordable and market-based housing needs. Affordable housing options supports important regional economic sectors such as hospitality and tourism.

- The Region must ensure there is an adequate amount of designated land and residential units available to meet long-term housing needs.
- Consultant work from CANCEA concluded that Niagara needs to diversify its housing stock, particularly higher density housing forms, to address rates of core housing need.
- The rate of core housing need is inversely related to how much housing is built. The Region can address core housing need by building more of all forms of housing, and particularly, those of higher density.
- The Region will monitor and maintain a regional housing database that describes the demographic and economic factors used to determine the demand for and supply of housing in Niagara.
- The Region will support the action items and objectives identified in the Council approved Housing and Homelessness Action Plan ("HHAP"), including movement towards the targeted housing mix identified in the plan.
- The Region will work with Niagara Regional Housing and other departments and agencies to support the development of community housing and specialized housing needs.
- An annual target for the development of affordable ownership and rental housing is identified and included.
- Local municipalities are encouraged to use the regional housing database to develop local housing strategies that identify land use planning tools, financial incentives, and other initiatives that support the Region's affordable housing target and the HHAP's targeted housing mix.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

OVERVIEW

The responsibility to provide affordable, accessible, and adequate housing is governed by a complex set of policy and legislation that requires coordination between land use planning, infrastructure planning, economic development, public health, community services, housing service providers, and the development industry.

In 2019, Niagara Region engaged the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (“CANCEA”) to prepare a regional housing database that aggregated existing sources of housing, demographic, and economic data to determine the region’s current and future demand for affordable housing.

The resulting database found that, as of 2016, over 20,000 households in Niagara were in core housing need, primarily driven by a lack of affordable housing options within the community. Additional results of this work were reported to the year 2041 (the Growth Plan horizon at the time) through the Region’s Affordable Housing and Growth Scenario Analysis reports in PDS 27-2019 on April 17, 2019 and PDS 37-2019 on November 6, 2019.

Since 2019, the Province released amendments to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and Amendment 1 to *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (“Growth Plan”), which, among other things:

- extended the *Growth Plan* population and employment forecasts to the year 2051; and
- required planning authorities to support an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet both affordable and market-based housing needs.

Market-based housing needs, though not formally defined, refers to the balance between the medium and higher-density dwelling types generally encouraged by the

Growth Plan and the established housing markets. Niagara's housing market has traditionally been comprised of ground-related housing, such as single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and townhouses.

The Region's draft Land Needs Assessment ("LNA"), further described in **Appendix 3**, identifies population and housing to 2051, and includes the consideration of market-based housing need.

To assess the housing affordability impacts of the revised 2051 Growth Plan period, the Region reengaged CANCEA.

CANCEA updated the Region's Affordable Housing and Growth Scenario Analysis, which is attached as **Appendix 5.2**.

The CANCEA report provided the following conclusions (consistent with their previous work):

1. The rate of core housing needs – at 13% – can be maintained if the Region achieves the *Growth Plan*'s population forecasts and associated housing allocations. If the Region's housing grows at a slower rate, consistent with its historic rate (defined as the "status quo"), core housing need would increase to 16%. Worse is if the Region's housing supply grows at a slow growth scenario, which leads to a core housing need rate of 19%.
2. Achieving the *Growth Plan* population forecasts will require diversification of the Region's housing stock. This means building a higher portion of medium and high-density housing forms to better address core housing need.
3. Housing affordability is directly tied to economic development in the region, as a lack of housing options can impact the ability to attract and retain the labour force necessary to support key sectors of Niagara's economy, including the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The CANCEA report also concludes that, in addition to building more housing, improvements to core housing need will require other policy, financial, and infrastructure supports that holistically address economic development and affordability pressure in the Region.

In addition to the core housing need work, the Region's Housing program includes work on the HHAP. The HHAP provides a comprehensive strategy for addressing homelessness and access to affordable housing in Niagara. Accordingly, the housing

policies in the Niagara Official Plan (NOP) will align with the goals, action items, and outcomes of this plan.

Affordability, in the context of land use planning, refers to shelter costs, such as mortgage and rent payments, property taxes, and utility costs, that amount to less than 30 per cent of the annual household income for low and moderate income households. In Niagara, low and moderate income households refer to household incomes equal to or below \$84,000 per year.

Affordable housing can include temporary and permanent housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors and all forms of housing tenure, including rental, ownership, and co-ownership housing.

Goal 3 of the HHAP outlines objectives and action items related to the provision of permanent, affordable housing, including:

- identifying a targeted mix of housing that increase the supply of higher-density housing forms, including townhouse and apartments units;
- increasing the number of new community housing units developed, and the proportion of new community housing units that are one-bedroom units or four or more bedroom units; and
- preventing the loss of current community housing stock.

In addition to establishing a minimum target for the provision of affordable housing, the NOP supports HHAP objectives by directing local municipalities to permit and facilitate a range of housing types, densities, and tenures that support the targeted housing mix.

The NOP also encourages local municipalities to consider implementing the following strategies:

- flexible as-of-right permissions related to the form and scale of housing that would reduce inefficiencies in the development approvals process;
- as-of right permissions for secondary suites/additional residential units to encourage gentle intensification within existing neighbourhoods and increase the availability of rental tenure in Niagara;
- development and site standards, such as reduced lot setbacks and road allowances, narrower lot sizes, cash-in-lieu of parking, and reduced parking standards, that facilitate the development of secondary suites/additional residential units;

- demolition control and residential replacement by-laws that would prohibit the demolition of existing rental units without replacement of the same or higher number of rental units within the municipality; and
- development of local housing strategies that identify land use planning tools, financial incentives, and other housing initiatives and programs that support the housing needs within the Area Municipality.

Finally, the NOP will coordinate with the Region's Incentive Review to support potential future programs, such as grants, development charge deferrals, property tax reductions, or other programs that promote residential intensification, brownfield redevelopment, and affordable housing options, including community housing and purpose-built rental units.

Housing policies are based on recent consultation for the HHAP Five-Year-Review, as well as engagement undertaken specifically for the Growing Region chapter of the NOP.

To date, feedback from the public and stakeholders suggests a strong interest in ensuring the NOP facilitates an increase in affordable housing options. Concerns have also been raised regarding increased densities and residential intensification in established neighbourhoods.

This is addressed in part through the identification of Strategic Growth Areas, which are expected to accommodate a significant portion of a municipality's growth and high density, mixed use development. The use of intensification strategies, secondary plans, and urban design can assist to identify strategic locations for allowing, or not allowing, certain densities and housing forms within neighbourhoods.

Included in this Appendix is the CANCEA Report as **Appendix 5.2** and draft housing policy as **Appendix 5.3**.

Niagara Region Housing Affordability and Growth Plan 2051

April 2021



CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

About the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis

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CANCEA uses modern techniques in data science, including agent-based modelling, for econometric analysis, risk management assessments, demographic forecasts and epidemiology. CANCEA's work includes market analysis, policy evaluation and risk management, business model optimization, cost-effectiveness and rate of return analysis, macroeconomic analysis, insurance risk evaluation, land use and infrastructure planning, logistics, and labour market analysis. CANCEA also provides comprehensive Canadian data services.

At the centre of CANCEA's analytical capabilities is an agent-based platform called Prosperity at Risk® that is an extensive, data-driven model of 56,000 locations across Canada. Given the systems focus behind all of CANCEA's work, CANCEA has a one model approach to its analysis which allows various disciplines and stakeholders to be incorporated into a single analysis.

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About the Report

CANCEA does not accept any research funding or client engagements that require a pre-determined result or policy stance, or otherwise inhibits its independence.

In keeping with CANCEA's guidelines for funded research, the design and method of research, as well as the content of this study, were determined solely by CANCEA.

This information is not intended as specific investment, accounting, legal or tax advice.

Citation: Niagara Region Housing Affordability and Growth Plan 2051. April 2021.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	3
List of Figures	4
List of Tables	4
1.0 Introduction	5
1.1 Background	5
1.2 Objectives.....	5
1.3 Summary of Results	5
2.0 Methodology.....	7
2.1 Overview	7
2.2 Updated Data	7
3.0 Growth Scenario Analysis	8
3.1 Current Housing Stock	8
3.2 Growth Scenarios.....	10
4.0 Conclusions	17

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Average and Market Rents, 2016-2020	9
Figure 2	Number of Households in Different Growth Scenarios, 2021-2051	10
Figure 3	Single-Detached Dwellings Under Growth Scenarios	11
Figure 4	Apartments, Row Houses, and Semi-Detached Dwellings Under Growth Scenarios	12
Figure 5	Labour Force Breakdown in 2016 (on left) and 2051 (on right)	13
Figure 6	Niagara Region Employment Over Time	13
Figure 7	Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Growth Scenario	14
Figure 8	Households in Core Housing Need to 2051	15

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Estimated Housing Stock by Dwelling Type, 2021	8
Table 2	Recent Market Average Home Prices, 2016-2020	9
Table 3	Affordable Housing, December 2019	9
Table 4	Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Income	15

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In 2019, the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis examined the trends, current state and forecasts for housing for the Niagara Region up to 2041¹. In August 2020, the Ontario Government released updated population and employment targets for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in *A Place to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (the *Growth Plan*) up to 2051. The *Growth Plan* outlines obligations for upper- and single-tier municipalities, which must plan for housing to meet population targets, as well as meet intensification and density targets. Furthermore, per the *Growth Plan*, an adequate mix of housing options must be ensured, and municipalities must set targets for affordable housing.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

As a follow up to the *Niagara Region Housing Market Analysis and Growth Scenario Analysis, 2018-2041*, this study examines Niagara Region's future housing stock up to the year 2051 under different scenarios. These scenarios are designed to present the implications of pursuing differing growth trends over the coming three decades for the population, housing stock and local economic development.

Growth scenarios are used to project the characteristics of Niagara Region's population and housing stock up to a defined planning horizon under different construction rates, including a baseline that represents the Region's status quo growth to determine the risks, benefits and potential pressures the Region could face under alternative growth paths. The results are intended to support evidence-based policy-making that considers the consequences of these different paths.

1.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The trends identified in *Niagara Region Housing Market Analysis and Growth Scenario Analysis, 2018-2041*, are expected to continue under the new *Growth Plan* to 2051. Meeting core housing need will continue to be an issue. To meet the growth targets, the rate of construction of new units would have to increase significantly, particularly for higher-density building forms. By 2051, the status quo rate of construction could result in just over 24,000 fewer households in the region than required in the *Growth Plan*. In that case, the Region risks not only falling short of the 2051 population targets set out by the Provincial government, but also increasing the percentage of the population in core housing need.

To reach the population growth targets to 2051 in the *Growth Plan* and to minimize overall levels of core housing need, Niagara Region can continue to consider adopting policies that incentivize the development of a mix of housing to accommodate the future population. This could include a variety of housing densities, tenures and affordability levels, as well as right-sizing and maximizing the

¹ Niagara Region Housing Market Analysis, CANCEA. June, 2019; Niagara Region Growth Scenario Analysis 2018-2041, CANCEA. October 2019

the productivity of Niagara Region's existing housing stock. By providing a wider range of options to households, a more diversified housing stock can help mitigate some of the demographic trends identified in this report and the previous report, and make it easier for people of all ages and income levels to live in the Niagara Region.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 OVERVIEW

The analysis was completed using CANCEA's statistical analysis and data simulation platform. The new population targets, along with life expectancies and birth rates, were used to determine the number of households under different conditions and over time, and the dwelling sizes that would be required. Information about the current housing stock, the way in which the current population is housed (i.e. affordability, suitability, and adequacy), and dwelling formation rates (both market and non-market) are used to assess the supply of housing over time and the corresponding population housed in a given scenario.

This study draws primarily from Statistics Canada census datasets and CMHC tables. Additional data was provided by Niagara Region, including population targets and community housing data.

The growth scenarios considered were created by relying on CMHC construction completion rates at the municipal level. The three growth scenarios are as follows:

- Status Quo Growth: maintains the average construction rates seen in Niagara Region over the last five years.
- Slow Growth: the average construction rate over the last five years less two standard deviations, with a minimum threshold equal to half the average.
- Target Growth: the growth required to achieve the number of dwellings needed to house the 2051 population targets set out by the Provincial government in *the Growth Plan*.

For a complete description of the methodology, please refer to the 2019 reports.

2.2 UPDATED DATA

While the same analysis was completed as in the earlier report, it was updated with the most recent data available. In addition to the *Growth Plan* 2051 population and household targets, updated data included:

- Population, birth, death, and migration rates
- Household numbers,
- Employment rates,
- Community housing stock;
- Average market rents;
- Average market housing sales data; and
- Housing starts and completions.

3.0 GROWTH SCENARIO ANALYSIS

3.1 CURRENT HOUSING STOCK

Niagara Region's current housing stock consists primarily of low-density dwelling types like single-detached and semi-detached homes. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of the estimated housing stock in the region by dwelling type based on census data and CMHC completions. Single-detached homes are by far the most common dwelling type, followed by low-rise apartments and row houses.

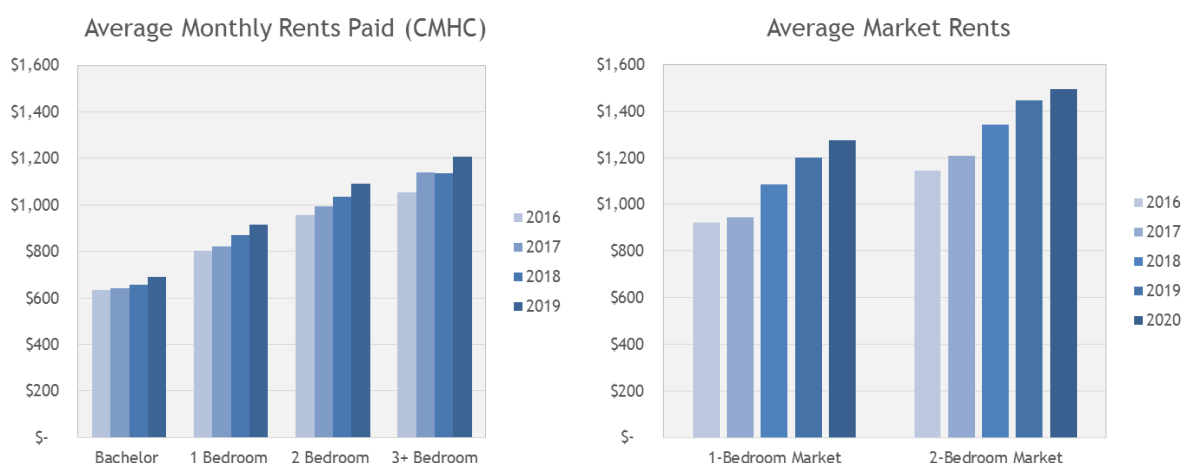
Table 1 Estimated Housing Stock by Dwelling Type, 2021

Dwelling Type	Number of Dwellings	Percentage of Total Stock
Single-detached	138,900	68%
Semi-detached	10,600	5%
Duplex Apartment	6,600	3%
Row house	14,900	7%
Apartment 5 stories or less	21,800	11%
Apartment over 5 stories	10,600	5%
Other	540	0%
Total	203,000	100%

As an update to CANCEA's previous analysis of the Region's housing market, recent market prices for homes and recent market rents are shown below. Table 2 shows the average market price for newly built and newly sold homes from 2016 to 2020. Prices have increased 42% in this time, including a 6% increase in 2020. CMHC average rents and average market rents are shown in Figure 1. As a result of Ontario's rent control system, which combines rent increase limits for sitting tenants and vacancy decontrol, average rents are considerably less than market rents that must be paid by households looking for a new home. For example, average rent paid for a one bedroom apartment was just over \$900 in 2019, whereas average market rent for a one bedroom was \$1200 that year. Both rents and house prices are increasing at rates considerably greater than wages resulting in increased affordability pressures across the region.

Table 2 Recent Market Average Home Prices, 2016-2020

Year	All Dwelling Types	Change from previous year	Change from 2016
2016	\$333,030	—	—
2017	\$403,099	21%	21%
2018	\$405,063	0.5%	22%
2019	\$444,571	10%	33%
2020	\$473,045	6.4%	42%

Figure 1 Average and Market Rents, 2016-2020


An update to the community housing stock is shown in Table 3. The 8,510 units of community housing (as of December 31, 2019) represents an increase of more than 100 units from the data included in our previous report. The most common type of community housing is not-for-profit/co-op buildings, and senior housing makes up a third of all community housing units. This housing stock is concentrated largely in St. Catharines (3,804 units), Niagara Falls (2,091 units), and Welland (1,180 units), which together account for over 83% of community housing.

Table 3 Community Housing, December 2019

Mandate	NFP / Co-op	NRH Owned	Rent Supplement	New Development	Total
Family	2,158	888	0	20	3,066
Senior	918	1,642	0	315	2,875
None	371	0	1,433	0	1,804
Adult	0	154	0	356	510
Aboriginal	128	0	0	0	128
Alternative	84	0	0	43	127
Total	3,659	2,684	1,433	734	8,510

3.2 GROWTH SCENARIOS

The growth scenario analysis conducted allows one to understand the implications of different rates of housing construction for Niagara Region. Three different forward looking scenarios were analyzed:

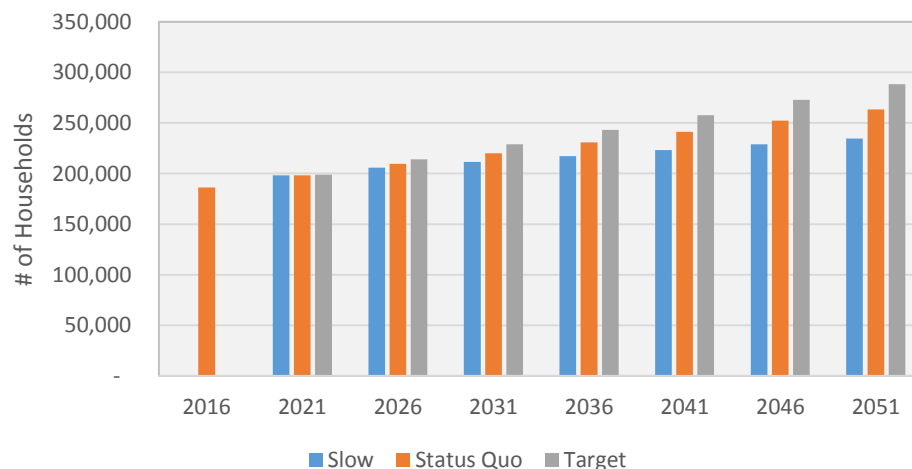
1. Status Quo Growth: maintaining current construction rates, or the average construction rates seen in Niagara Region over the last five years.
2. Slow Growth: growing at a slower pace, or the average construction rate over the last five years less two standard deviations, with a minimum threshold equal to half the average.
3. Target Growth: increasing the pace of housing construction to achieve the number of dwellings needed for municipalities set out in the *Growth Plan*.

The population and housing targets for each municipality to year 2051 used in this analysis align with those presented in Niagara Region's Draft Land Needs Assessment.

Accommodating the target population would mean accommodating approximately 91,900 additional households, with the number of households varying slightly for the same target population depending on the average household size by 2051. It is important to note that the housing mix that is constructed can significantly alter the population housed. For example, 1,000 units of 1 bedroom apartments could suitably house at most 2,000 people (but would likely be less in practice.) However, 1,000 units of 3 bedroom row-houses could provide housing for over twice that population.

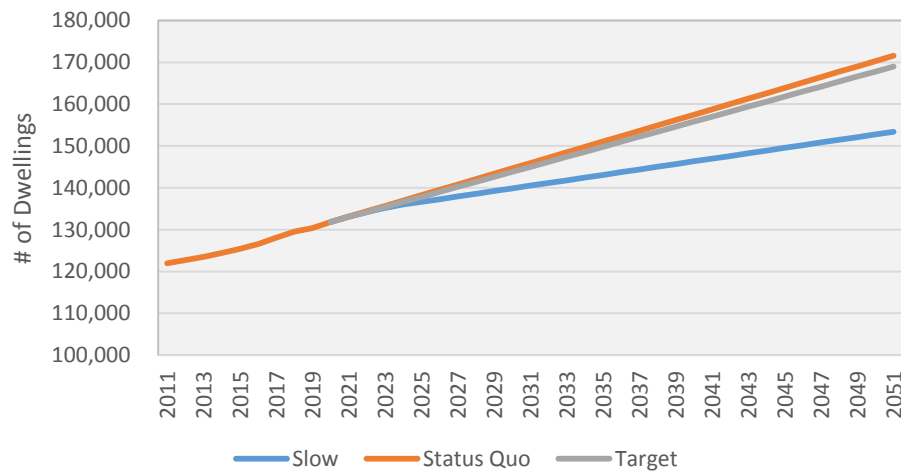
As we can see below, in Figure 2, if the status quo rate of construction is maintained, there will be insufficient dwellings to house the region's target population. By 2051, the status quo growth rate of construction could result in just over 24,000 fewer households in the region than in the target growth scenario. If housing construction rates decrease so as to be in line with the slow growth scenario, this shortfall could reach nearly 53,000 households by 2051. Aside from the ability to adequately house its target population, status quo growth or slow growth could result in increased affordability pressures in the region and the displacement of lower income families.

Figure 2 Number of Households in Different Growth Scenarios, 2021-2051



Housing Niagara’s target population while also meeting the Regions housing mix targets will require increasing construction rates for higher density housing types, like apartments and row houses. This can be seen by examining the results of the growth scenario analysis by different dwelling types. Maintaining current construction rates would not only result in the region falling short of its growth targets, but would also result in an over-supply of single-detached homes, as we can see in Figure 3. Under the status quo scenario, over 2,500 more single-detached dwellings would be completed than in the target growth scenario in which the target population is housed and the Region’s housing mix targets achieved.

Figure 3 Single-Detached Dwellings Under Growth Scenarios



Meanwhile, the status quo growth scenario would result in an under-supply of row houses, semi-detached homes, and, most significantly, apartments, relative to the growth plan targets. Figure 4 shows the supply of apartments, row houses, and semi-detached homes in the different growth scenarios. The gap between the target scenario and the status quo scenario is over 18,000 units in the case of apartments, over 4,500 in the case of row houses, and over 3,000 in the case of semi-detached homes, by 2051. As we can see, this gap only widens when the target growth scenario is compared to the slow growth scenario.

Figure 4 Apartments, Row Houses, and Semi-Detached Dwellings Under Growth Scenarios



The Region will thus need to see both an increase in construction and a shift from single-detached homes to apartments and other dwelling types if it is to achieve its *Growth Plan* targets.

3.2.1 LABOUR FORCE TRENDS

Figure 5 shows the estimated labour force participation resulting from the expected demographic shifts in the region under the *Growth Plan*. Note that these statistics reflect the population residing in Niagara rather than the jobs located in Niagara. While there is considerable overlap with many people both living and working in Niagara, for housing-related issues, it is the resident population that is of interest. If labour force participation patterns and industry mix of employment, with its relatively high concentration of tourism and agricultural industries, remain similar, the fraction of the population not participating in the work force will increase over time, while the reliance on seasonal employment will remain steady. These

trends could continue to exacerbate housing affordability issues, due to lower incomes in these two groups. As we can see below, in Figure 6, by 2051 if the regional industry mix and employment trends continue, there would be around 250,000 people in Niagara Region not participating the labour force and nearly 150,000 employed seasonally. The large number of seasonal employees, with generally lower incomes compared to full-time employees, will continue to create added pressure on housing affordability. This could also negatively impact the ability of employers to find and retain employees.

Figure 5 Labour Force Breakdown in 2016 (on left) and 2051 (on right)

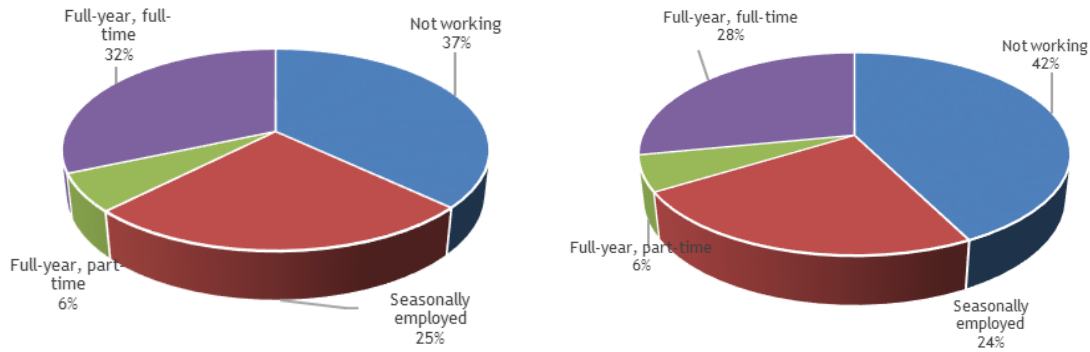
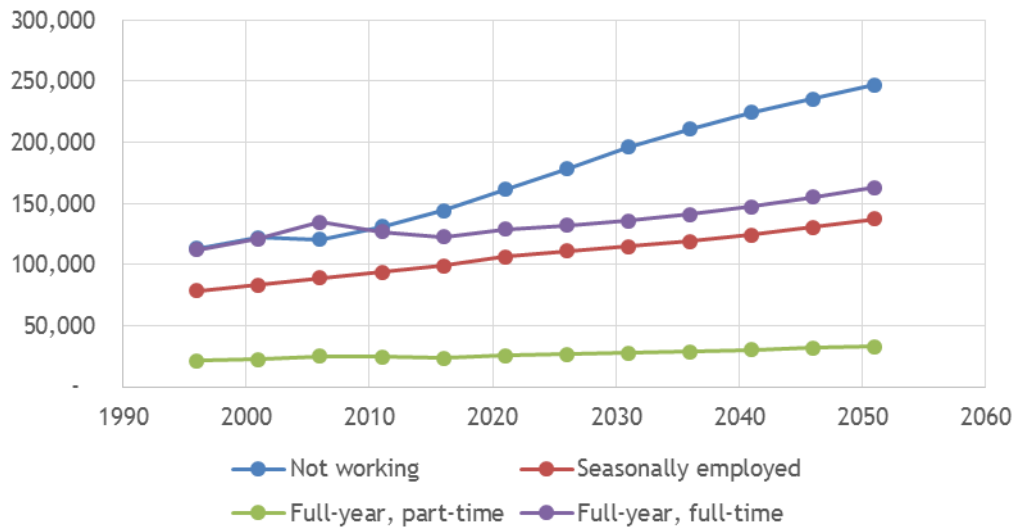


Figure 6 Niagara Region Employment Over Time

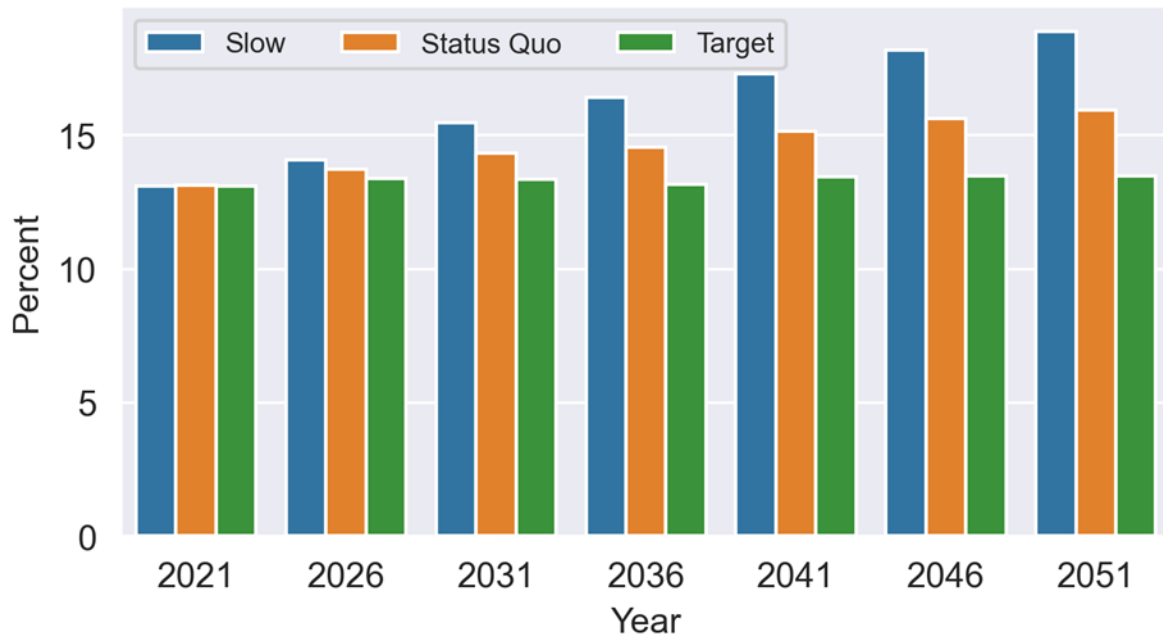


3.2.2 CORE HOUSING NEED

A household is considered to be in core housing need if its dwelling is too expensive given its budget, if its dwelling does not meet its needs, or is in major state of disrepair and there is no alternative housing that would be within its budget. A dwelling is considered to be within budget if shelter costs are less than 30% of total household income.

Both the slow growth and status quo growth scenarios would result in an increase in the percentage of households in core housing need in the region. As shown in Figure 7, 16% of households could be in core housing need by 2051 if construction rates remain stable, and 19% of households could be in core housing need by 2051 in the slow growth scenario. In the target growth scenario, core housing need would remain at around 13% of households. Thus, by simply meeting target growth, core housing pressures could be maintained, but the percentage of households in core housing need is not expected to decrease without additional housing or supports.

Figure 7 Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Growth Scenario



Maintaining the fraction of households in core housing need would mean the number of households in core need will increase as the region's population increases towards its growth targets. Figure 8 shows how the number of families in core housing need may increase over time in the target growth scenario. Shown are the number of households in core need spending 30% to 50% of household income on shelter and households spending more than 50%, sorted by tenure type.

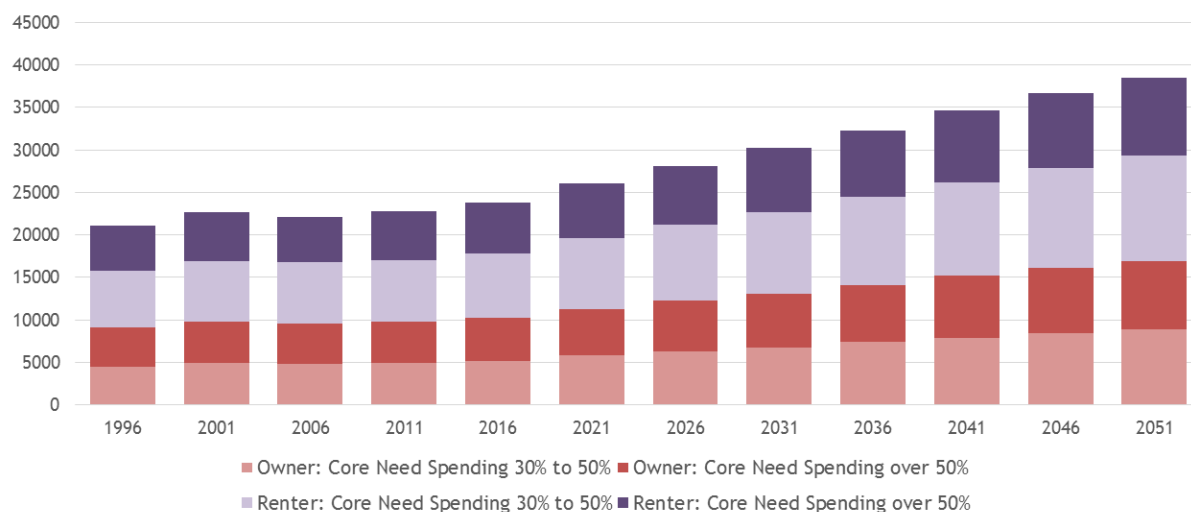
Figure 8 Households in Core Housing Need to 2051

Table 4 shows the percentage of households in core housing need in each growth scenario by 2051, broken down by income bracket. As noted, the status quo growth and slow growth scenarios would result in a larger percentage of households being in core housing need, as compared to the target growth scenario. In the slow growth and status quo growth scenarios, a larger share of households are in core housing need across income brackets. For example, in the target growth scenario, 7% of households in the \$50,000 to \$59,999 bracket are in core housing need, but this more than doubles to 15% of such households in the slow growth scenario.

Table 4 Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Income

Income	Slow Growth	Status Quo Growth	Target Growth
Under \$10,000	96%	94%	93%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	70%	63%	54%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	44%	35%	27%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	27%	20%	15%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	19%	14%	9%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	15%	10%	7%
All incomes	19%	16%	13%

Lower income households, in particular, are at risk of spending over 30% or 50% of their income on shelter. Across growth scenarios, at least 93% of households with incomes under \$10,000 are in core housing need, and at least 54% of households in the \$10,000 to \$19,999 bracket are in core housing need. While the share of families in core housing need is lowest in the target growth scenario, these families are concentrated in the lower income brackets. Of the approximately 38,700 households in core housing need in the target scenario, over 28,500 of these (or almost three-quarters) have household incomes below \$30,000.

3.2.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING TARGETS

The number of households in deep core housing need (spending more than 50% of their income on shelter) could grow to over 15,000 households by 2051 under the target growth scenario while the total number of households in core need (spending more than 30% of their income on shelter) could increase to 38,000 households (or about 13% of all households.) This is an increase of 12,500 above the 2021 estimates of households in core need. The majority of households in core need are renters in apartments and over 70% of households in deep core need residing in apartments.

The number of households potentially in core housing need provides a natural target for affordable housing in Niagara Region. At a minimum, in order to prevent an increase in the number of households in core need, an additional 12,500 affordable units would be needed over the next 30 years. This corresponds to about 14% of all new dwelling construction. However, in order to actually reduce core housing need, a greater rate of affordable construction is required. To reduce the number of households in core need by 50% compared to the number in 2021, 28% of all new dwellings would need to be affordable. Therefore, it would be reasonable to target at least 25% of new dwellings to be affordable in order to significantly reduce core housing need in Niagara Region.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the updated growth targets indicates that the conclusions presented in the earlier analysis remain relevant under the updated 2051 targets. Maintaining the region's current housing growth rate could result in the region falling short of the updated population targets set out by the provincial government. In addition, the rate at which Niagara Region builds new housing does not only impact the future population the region can accommodate, but also the affordability of housing. If current growth rates are maintained, the percentage of the population in core housing need may increase from around 13% to 16%, by 2051. However, even if sufficient housing is built to house the 2051 population targets, core housing need will remain a considerable challenge.

Achieving its population and housing mix targets will require to continue the shift from a focus on single-detached homes to increased construction of higher density dwellings, including row houses and, particularly, apartments. In doing so, Niagara Region may not only ensure adequate housing to accommodate its target population, but do so in a way that ensures households of varying sizes find dwellings that are more likely able meet their housing needs. However, the ongoing shift to higher-density should not come at the expense of being able to house a wide variety of household type and sizes, or the Region may fall short of its growth targets.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 3 – Section 1. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

SUMMARY

The natural environment work program (“NEWP”) is a critical part of the Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”). The NEWP is focused on establishing a regional-scale **natural heritage system** (NHS) and **water resource system** (WRS), including policies and mapping. The NHS and WRS are ecologically linked, rely on and support each other, and have many overlapping components. **Together these systems collectively form the integrated Natural Environment System (“NES”).**

A range of options for the NES were identified, consulted on, and evaluated. From these, Option 3B (NHS Option 3B + the single WRS option) is the recommended NES option.

Consultation on the NEWP has included 2 major points of engagement totaling nearly **130 individual points** of engagement to date, with many future engagement sessions planned. A 3rd POE has been planned after the complete set of draft policies and mapping is prepared.

The attached ‘*Natural Environment Work Program Status Update & Recommendations Report*’ (April 2021) [Appendix 6.2] provides a detailed overview of the work completed to date, including an overview and discussion of the revised NES options, an overview of the preliminary policy intent for the NES, the recommendation for the preferred option, next steps, implications, and timelines.

Regardless of the NES option selected and implemented, environmental planning will change for the better: in terms of the total coverage of the NES in the Region and the level of protection provided to some features in the system. These changes are required to meet provincial conformity.

Further, regardless of the NES option selected by Regional Council, there will be a range of improvements in environmental planning in the Region to address known gaps, including significantly improved final mapping and better alignment with the regulations and land use policies of the NPCA.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watershed Planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate Change

OVERVIEW

On July 15, 2020, PDS 26-2020 was presented to the Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC). This report presented options for the NHS and WRS. It also directed staff to initiate the 2nd Point of Engagement (POE) for the NEWP with the public and other stakeholders.

Through the 2nd POE it became clear that Regional Council, local municipalities, and other stakeholders wanted additional details on each of the NES options, including the spatial extent of each NES option, to assist with making a decision on the preferred option.

Regional Planning staff, with the support of the consultant team, have worked hard to be in a position where **all of the additional mapping requested by members of Regional Council and other stakeholders has been prepared**. This information includes 135 new maps and 81 new tables of data, representing all 27 urban areas in the Region. The mapping and supporting data has been shared with the local municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders to allow options to be more easily compared. The mapping for a selected option will be refined for accuracy in accordance with the system methodology and in consultation with local municipalities.

To meet the 2022 Provincial deadline for conformity of the NOP, it is critical that Regional Council make a decision on the preferred NES option. Planning Staff, with the support of the consultant team, need sufficient time to complete the detailed mapping process based on the selected option, and to undertake the 3rd POE.

Growth is coming to the Region, the sooner the new NES and NOP can be approved and implemented, the sooner growth can be better managed, known limitations of the existing Core NHS can be addressed, and important natural features and areas can be better protected.

NES option 3B (NHS option 3B + the single WRS option) is recommended as the preferred NES option. In making this recommendation it should be noted that all options are in conformance with Provincial requirements, and could be fully designed and implemented by Regional Planning Staff through the NOP. NES option 3B:

- **Exceeds the required provincial standards** for the identification of features and systems which in the long-term will support a more resilient and biodiverse NES.
- **Ensures that there is not a reduction in the area of treed vegetation communities** included within the Region's NES.
- **Support other objectives, such as helping mitigate the impacts of climate change.**
- Provides a balanced approach for the protection of the natural environment by **increasing the number of components and features outside of settlement areas** and limiting additional constraints to development in settlement areas. This option works from both an ecological and land-use planning perspective.
- Provides **flexibility for local municipalities to plan for local needs** and priorities in their communities. Local municipalities would not be prevented from going beyond the Regional system, either through their Local Official Plans or Secondary Plans. Regional Planning Staff are available to provide support for those exercises should they be desired by local municipalities.
- Option 3B **considers the significant public input received** through the 1st and 2nd Points of Engagement. Through the 2nd Point of Engagement, **it was clear that there was no consensus** on which NES Option was most desirable. This speaks to the **need for a balance between the Options.**



NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

Status Update & Recommendation Report Natural Environment Work Program

Niagara Region
May 2021

SUSTAINABLE REGION



Table of Contents

1.0	Purpose	4
2.0	Introduction.....	4
2.1.	Relationship between Environmental Protection and Growth and Development	5
2.2.	Provincial Direction	5
3.0	Natural Environment Work Program (NEWP) and Work Completed to Date.....	6
3.1.	Phasing of the NEWP and Reporting to Committee and Council.....	6
3.2.	Background Reports	8
3.3.	Consultation and Engagement.....	9
4.0	Natural Environment System (NES) Options.....	9
4.1.	NHS Options	9
4.2.	WRS Options	10
4.3.	Integrated Natural Environment System (NES) Options	10
4.4.	Introducing ‘Other Wetlands’	12
4.5.	Overview of Integrated NES Options	14
4.5.1.	NES Option 1 and 2.....	14
4.5.2.	NES Option 3A	16
4.5.3.	NES Option 3B	16
4.5.4.	NES Option 3C	17
4.6.	Summary of the Differences between the NES Options.....	17
5.0	Mapping and Data in Urban Areas	18
5.1.	Mapping and Data for the Comparison of NES Options.....	18
5.2.	Understanding and Using NES Mapping.....	20
6.0	Preliminary Policy Intent.....	21
6.1.	Inside of Settlement Areas (i.e. urban).....	22
6.1.1.	Natural Heritage Features and Areas	22
6.1.2.	Water Resource Features and Areas	23
6.2.	Outside of Settlement Areas (i.e. rural)	24
7.0	Analysis and Implications	25
7.1.	Summary of Additional Mapping and Data.....	25
7.2.	Discussion and Implications.....	27

8.0	Recommendation for Preferred NES Option	29
8.1.	Importance of Selecting a Preferred Option	29
8.2	Recommendation	29
9.0	Takeaway and Key Message	30
10.0	Next Steps and Timeline	31

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Status Update and Recommendations Report is to: provide a summary of the work completed to date on the Natural Environment Work Program (NEWP), provide an overview of the new mapping and analysis of the options that has been completed in the urban areas of the Region, outline the importance of selecting a preferred option, provide a recommendation for the preferred option, and communicate the next steps.

2.0 Introduction

Niagara Region is in the process of preparing a new Niagara Official Plan (NOP). As part of this project, a NEWP is being undertaken. The NEWP is focused on establishing a regional-scale **natural heritage system (NHS)** and **water resource system (WRS)**, including policies and mapping, which will be implemented through the NOP. The NHS and WRS are ecologically linked, rely on and support each other, and have many overlapping components, **together these systems collectively form the integrated Natural Environment System (NES).**

On July 15, 2020, PDS 26-2020 was presented to the Region's Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC). This report presented options for the NHS and WRS. It also directed staff to initiate the 2nd Point of Engagement (POE) for the NEWP with the public and other stakeholders. The results of the 2nd POE were presented to PEDC through PDS 1-2021 (February 17, 2020).

Through the 2nd POE it became clear that Regional Council, local municipalities, and other stakeholders wanted additional details on each of the NES options, including the spatial extent of each option, to assist with making a decision on the preferred option. The request for additional information was focused on the urban areas in the Region. It was generally well understood through the 2nd POE that there will be a range of exemptions in the NES policies for agricultural uses, and therefore there is less likely a conflict between land uses outside of urban areas.

All of the additional information requested by members of Regional Council and other stakeholders has been prepared and distributed. This information was communicated through CWCD 2021-70 (March 19, 2021). Posted on the Region's website there is now 135 new maps and 81 new tables of data, representing all urban areas in the Region. This additional Information has also been shared with local Planning Departments, local Councils, the public, and other stakeholders.

Based on all the information previously presented and the additional information included in this Status Update & Recommendations Report **a decision is now being requested from Regional Council on the preferred NES option**. Once an option is selected, the mapping for the system will be refined in accordance with the system methodology and in close consultation with local municipalities.

2.1. Relationship between Environmental Protection and Growth and Development

Natural environment planning supports the identification of appropriate areas for growth and development and is therefore a crucial component of managing growth through the NOP. For example:

- At a regional level, it helps us understand what features, areas, and systems need to be protected and this helps to inform us where new growth areas should be. It is important that this exercise is done in a proactive, thoughtful, and comprehensive manner in advance of growth and development occurring;
- At a neighborhood level, through Local Official Plans and Secondary Plans, it allows us to plan how the human and natural environments will interact; and
- At a site-specific level, it allows us to identify all features that need to be protected, any management or mitigation that is required, and ultimately what are the developable areas of an individual property or site.

2.2. Provincial Direction

Natural environment planning is a complex and evolving science. There is a wide range of Provincial requirements, guidance, and direction; scientific and technical requirements; industry best practices; and local context that must be taken into consideration.

In preparing and implementing the NES and NOP there is Provincial policy that must be implemented by the Region for the NOP to be considered ‘in conformance’ with Provincial requirements. The Province is the approval authority for the NOP, and cannot approve the NOP if it is not in conformance.

- Provincial direction starts with the *Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)*. The *PPS* identifies the types of natural features, areas, functions, and systems that must be identified and protected. There is a Provincial requirement for the Region to have a NHS and WRS. The requirement for a comprehensive WRS is new, includes surface and groundwater features and systems, and is being developed and implemented in the Region for the first time.

- Through the *PPS* there is now a requirement for a ‘systems-based’ approach to natural environmental planning. The current Core NHS in the Region is more reflective of a ‘features-based’ approach which was common in the late ’90 and early 2000s. A ‘system-based’ approach requires the protection of areas adjacent to, and connecting natural features in addition to the features themselves.
- In Niagara, the Region is also responsible for implementing the Provincial Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (NHS) and the Provincial Growth Plan NHS. Both of these systems apply outside of urban areas. The Greenbelt NHS has been in place since 2005 and is generally well reflected in existing Regional policies. The Growth Plan NHS was introduced in 2017, and is being implemented in a Regional Official Plan for the first time. The policies of the Growth Plan NHS and Greenbelt Plan NHS are very prescriptive. They include considerable detail on what features, systems, and connecting areas must be protected, how this is to be done, and what exemptions for a range of other land uses must be included. The mapped Growth Plan NHS and Greenbelt Plan NHS provided by the Province must also be included in the NOP.

3.0 Natural Environment Work Program (NEWP) and Work Completed to Date

The direction for the NEWP endorsed by Regional Council through PDS 18-2018 was to take an incremental approach to developing the policies and mapping for the new NOP, including a number of decision points of Council and several formal opportunities for engagement with the public and other stakeholders. In practice this means that Planning Staff would be reporting to Committee and Council at several interim points in the project, both to provide information and to request decisions.

There are several incremental steps that need to be taken before the mapping and policy development phases. Draft policies and mapping are not prepared until Phase 7 of the NEWP. Similarly, the 1st and 2nd Points of Engagement (POE) (which are now complete) were at interim points in the project. It is through the 3rd POE that a complete set of draft policies and mapping for the NES will be presented to Regional Council, local municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders. This report is one of several interim point of the project. **A decision is being requested on an interim step of the project; a decision is not being requested on the final NES, policies, or mapping.** Assuming a decision is made on the preferred NES option – the 3rd POE is scheduled to occur in late-2021/early-2022.

3.1. Phasing of the NEWP and Reporting to Committee and Council

Table 1 below present the key phases of the approved NEWP as well as a summary of the formal reporting to Committee and Council to date. In addition to the formal PDS reports, there has also been several Council Weekly Correspondence Distribution (CWCD) memos prepared to provide informal updates on the NEWP or to respond to Councilor requests for additional information.

Phase 4 and Phase 5 of the work program are now complete. Phase 4 was the incremental step in the work program between the background reports and the mapping and policy development. Phase 5 was the 2nd Point of Engagement. The intent of Phase 4 was to identify and evaluate the NES options at a conceptual level. The goal being to set the direction for the NES. **It is fundamental that Planning Staff has the direction and general intent of the NES established and supported by Regional Council before the detailed mapping and policy development phases can occur.**

As discussed in more detail throughout this report, the mapping of the NES is a significant undertaking. The identification of a preferred NES option is the mechanism to establish the intent of the NES, and to provide direction for how the mapping and policy develop phase will be undertaken. **The NEWP cannot advance without the selection of a preferred option.**

Table 1: Phasing of the NEWP and Reporting to Committee and Council

Project Phase	Description	Reporting to Committee and Council
1	Project Initiation and Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDS 6-2018 • PDS 18-2018
2	Background Study and Discussion Papers for Mapping and Watershed Planning Priority Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDS 10-2019 • PDS 32-2019
3	1 st Point of Engagement: Inform on Background Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDS 32-2019
4	Develop and Evaluate Options for Natural System(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDS 26-2020
5	2 nd Point of Engagement: Consultation on Options for the Natural System(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDS 1-2021
6	Develop Regional Natural System(s)	<i>to be completed</i>
7	Develop OP Policies & Finalize Mapping	<i>to be completed</i>

Project Phase	Description	Reporting to Committee and Council
8	3 rd Point of Engagement: Draft OP Policies and Schedules	<i>to be completed</i>

3.2. Background Reports

The following reports have been completed to date to inform the NEWP. Additional reports will be prepared as the project proceeds through the next phases.

- Mapping Discussion Paper (September 2019)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/natural-environment-mapping-discussion.pdf>
- Watershed Planning Discussion Paper (October 2019)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/natural-environment-watershed-planning.pdf>
- Technical Report #1 – Natural Environment Background Study (September 2019)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/natural-environment-work-program-study.pdf>
- Consultation Summary Report #1 (September 2019)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/natural-environment-consultation-summary-report.pdf>
- Technical Report #2 – Identification and Evaluation of Options (June 2020)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/technical-report-identification-evaluation.pdf>
- Niagara Watershed Plan – Goals and Objectives Discussion Paper (October 2020)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/niagara-watershed-plan-discussion-paper.pdf>
- Consultation Summary Report #2 (January 2021)
<https://pub-niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=14363>
- Technical Memorandum – Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment Systems in the Region's Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications (April 2021) [Attached]

3.3. Consultation and Engagement

Consultation of the NEWP has included 2 major points of engagement **totaling nearly 130 individual points of engagement to date**. The input received during these POEs is documented and summarized in Consultation Summary Report #1 and Consultation Summary Report #2 respectively. A summary of the activities undertaken includes:

- 6 reports and presentation to Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) and numerous CWCD memos to Regional Council
- 3 series of Public Information Centres (PICs)
- 2 series of stakeholder workshops (Agricultural Community, Environmental Stakeholder Groups, Development Community)
- Several presentations to the Region's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC)
- Presentations to Local Councils and numerous meetings with Local Planning Directors and Planning Staff (including one-on-one meetings)
- Several meetings and discussions with NPCA Staff and presentations to the NPCA Board and the NPCA Public Advisory Committee (PAC)
- Meetings with, and presentations to staff at Provincial Ministries, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and Niagara Parks Commission
- Ongoing meetings with Indigenous Groups
- Significant input received directly from the public by e-mail and through the Region's website
- **With More to Come** – A 3rd POE is planned once the preferred option has been selected by Regional Council and the complete set of draft policies and mapping is prepared.

4.0 Natural Environment System (NES) Options

The options for the Region's NHS and WRS were first presented in PDS 26-2020 (July 15, 2020) as follows:

4.1. NHS Options

Three main options for the NHS were identified for consideration:

- Option 1 – Required Standards – Overlay

- Option 2 – Required Standards – Designation
- Option 3 – Going Beyond the Required Standards

Option 1 implements Provincial Policy in a manner that achieves Provincial standards. This option treats the entire system throughout the Region as an overlay.

Option 2 is similar to Option 1, but designates some natural heritage features and areas in an exclusive land use designation.

Option 3 exceeds the required Provincial standards (as permitted by the *PPS*) by including an increasing number of optional components, linkages, and buffers. Option 3 includes sub-options (3A, 3B, and 3C).

4.2. WRS Options

Two main options for the WRS were identified for consideration:

- WRS Option 1 – required standards.
- WRS Option 2 – going beyond required standards including an increasing number of components and potential connections.
 - WRS Option 2 was further subdivided into Option 2A and 2B. Option 2A introduced additional features outside of settlement areas only. Option 2B introduced additional features across the entire Region.

4.3. Integrated Natural Environment System (NES) Options

As work on NEWP progressed, the required standards for the WRS was further informed by the ongoing work of the Niagara Watershed Plan (NWP) project. The *Growth Plan* requires that the WRS be informed by watershed planning. The attached technical memorandum ‘Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment Systems in the Region’s Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications’ (Meridian Planning & North-South Environmental, April 2020) has analyzed the requirements of the WRS and come to the conclusion that in fact there are no ‘optional’ components. There is only one option for the WRS. This WRS option includes all of the required water resource features, areas, and systems as informed from provincial direction and the NWP project. Refinements and additions to the WRS would be informed by watershed planning or equivalent at subsequent stages in the planning process (e.g. a subwatershed study completed to inform a Secondary Plan, etc.).

Further, as Planning Staff and the consultant team began the process of completing additional mapping and analysis of the options it became clear that **within the**

Provincial definitions and requirements of the NHS and WRS, there is significant overlap. If this overlap is left unaddressed there would be ongoing confusion, low confidence in the NES, and barriers to implementation.

To respond to this overlap, to better recognize the ecological interconnectedness of the NHS and WRS, and to support a more fulsome systems based approach to natural environmental planning in the Region, **the NHS and WRS are now collectively referred to as the integrated Natural Environment System (NES).** This approach to integrating the two natural systems is supported by the ongoing work of the Niagara Watershed Plan (NWP) project and by input received from NPCA Staff. The integration of the systems is simplified by the fact that there is now only one option for the WRS. The options for the integrated NES are as follows. It should be made clear that these NES options are not a fundamental change to the options that were previously presented through the 2nd Point of Engagement, rather this is the result of an iterative approach to planning that was envisioned for the NEWP.

- NES Option 1 = NHS Option 1 + the WRS
- NES Option 2 = NHS Option 2 + the WRS
- NES Option 3A = NHS Option 3A + the WRS
- NES Option 3B = NHS Option 3B + the WRS
- NES Option 3C = NHS Option 3C + the WRS

Additionally, based on the ongoing work of the NEWP, information from the NWP, and the input received from the local municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders during the 2nd Point of Engagement, the following other refinements have been made to the NES options:

- One of the components which was identified as 'optional' for the NHS was 'other wetlands' (i.e., non-PSWs). However, 'wetlands' (i.e., both PSWs and non-PSWs) are a required component of the WRS. Many wetlands are also features that are regulated by the NPCA. To more accurately reflect the required standards of the NES, 'other wetlands' are no longer included as an 'optional' component. They are a required component of the WRS and therefore a required component for all options of the integrated NES.
- Similarly, several other components that are required to be included in the WRS but were identified as optional components of the NHS (e.g., permanent and intermittent streams, seepage areas and springs, and inland lakes and their littoral zones) are no longer discussed as optional components of the NHS. They

are a required component of the WRS and therefore a required component for all options of the integrated NES.

- Following an additional review of the required standards of a WRS as directed by the *PPS* and the *Growth Plan*, and based on stakeholder feedback, headwater drainage features (HDF) that would be classified as “protection” and “conservation” are included as a required component of the NES.
- The definition of ‘woodlands’ was updated. The result of this update is that a smaller subset of woodlands are identified as ‘significant’ (many of the woodlands previously identified as significant woodlands are also PSWs or ‘other wetlands’. Wetlands have a higher-level of protection than what is currently afforded to significant woodlands – see detailed discussion in the attached technical memorandum). The analysis in the memorandum concludes **“The change in definitions would not result in reduction in the area of treed vegetation communities included within the Region’s NES [if Option 3B or 3C is selected] ...”**
- Due to a smaller subset of woodlands being captured by the criteria for significant woodlands, the inclusion of ‘other woodlands’ was moved up from Option 3C to 3B in settlement areas, and moved up from Option 3B to 3A outside of settlement areas.
- One of the most common pieces of specific feedback from both the 1st and 2nd points of engagement was the need to ensure that there was consistency and alignment between the Region’s natural systems and the regulation and land use planning policies of the NPCA. Refinements have been made to the options to reflect this feedback. Firstly several features which were described as optional NHS features, but regulated by the NPCA, and required by the WRS (e.g. other wetlands, watercourses, etc.) are now described as required components of the integrated NES. Secondly, the NPCA regulates a setback or buffers from features. Where there is a regulated buffer or setback this is described as a required component of the integrated NES to reflect the fact that it is a required component of the environmental planning regime in the Region.

The intent of this change is not to duplicate the role of the NPCA, rather to provide greater certainty and transparency to the public and other stakeholders in the Region. There will be policies in place, and the MOU/environmental planning protocol will be clear on who has the responsibility for implementing policies for regulated features.

4.4. Introducing ‘Other Wetlands’

With the introduction and development of the water resource system (WRS) in the Region there will need to be a shift in how wetlands are understood. Currently in the Region, wetlands are generally understood to be ‘provincially significant wetlands (PSWs)’ and ‘locally significant wetlands’, both of which are natural heritage features and regulated by the NPCA.

The *PPS* and *Growth Plan* both include the requirement for a WRS. Both require ‘wetlands’ to be included; the policies of the *PPS* allow for more flexibility regarding the identification of non-PSWs in settlement areas, while the policies of the *Growth Plan* require all wetlands (under the definition of key hydrologic feature) to be included in the WRS outside of settlement areas. This new Provincial direction requires wetlands beyond PSW’s and ‘other wetlands’ which are regulated by Conservation Authorities to be included in a municipality’s natural environment system (NES). The implication of this change is that wetlands which are regulated and protected by the NPCA will continue to be, however there may be other wetlands on the landscape which may warrant a different manner of protection than regulated wetlands. This reflects a growing understanding that wetlands are important features of the WRS, and the NES as a whole, and have both an ecological and hydrological role.

Take for example a non-PSWs in a settlement area that does not meet the definition of ‘other wetland’ (which includes regulated non-PSWs) and to which the NPCA policies would not apply, but does meet the more general definition of ‘wetland’ as defined by Province in regards to the WRS. The Region and/or the NPCA may require that an appropriate study (e.g., E.I.S., hydrologic evaluation, etc.) be undertaken to determine if the wetland should be protected in situ with appropriate buffers/setbacks or if the hydrologic function provided by wetland should be maintained or managed as part of the design of the development.

For the purpose of the 135 new maps and 81 new tables of data that were prepared to compare the options, as this information was prepared at an interim phase in the project, a methodology was required to demonstrate the extent to which ‘other wetlands’ existed on the landscape. The ELC methodology was chosen because it is the industry accepted methodology and 2020 data existed. The ELC methodology however does not differentiate between ‘other wetlands’ which may be regulated by the NPCA and wetlands which are part of the WRS. **It should not be interpreted that all ‘other wetlands’ identified on the mapping would be treated the same through policy.**

Through the consultation and engagement that was completed on the mapping to compare the NES in late March and early-April 2021, one of the most discussed items was ‘other wetlands’. There was concern that “new” wetlands were being identified. This concern is understood; the requirement for a WRS is new, as is the requirement for

wetlands to be protected as part of this WRS, and this represents a fairly significant change.

Based on the input that we have received to date, there may be a need to adjust the methodology for how these features are mapped. For example it may only be appropriate to map 'other wetlands' that are of a minimum size (e.g., 0.5 ha, which is the minimum size for isolated wetlands evaluated through the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System) that are not within 30m of another natural heritage feature and area or key hydrologic feature. It should be noted that this change in mapping methodology would not mean that wetlands smaller than 0.5 ha wouldn't be regulated according NPCA policies or dealt with through another policy that may require a study be completed.

4.5. Overview of Integrated NES Options

The attached memorandum entitled 'Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment Systems in the Region's Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications' (Meridian Planning & North-South Environmental, April 2021) provides a detailed discussion of the NES options for consideration. The included features, areas, and systems for each options is summarized as follows:

4.5.1. NES Option 1 and 2

There is no difference between the features, areas, and systems with Option 1 and 2. The difference is that in Option 1 the NES is an 'overlay'. In Option 2 some features and areas are a 'designation'. The implications of this difference is discussed in more detail in the attached memorandum.

The following are the required standards to be included in the integrated NES. It is important to note that not all features, areas, and systems will be mapped or have the same type of policy attached to them.

- Provincial Natural Heritage Systems (NHS)
 - Growth Plan NHS
 - Greenbelt Plan NHS
- Natural heritage features and areas
 - Provincially significant wetlands (PSW)
 - Significant coastal wetlands
 - Habitat of endangered species and threatened species

- Fish habitat
 - Significant areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI)
 - Significant valleylands
 - Significant woodlands
 - Significant wildlife habitat (SWH)
- Key hydrologic features
 - Permanent streams and intermittent streams
 - Inland lakes and their littoral zones
 - Seepage areas and springs
 - Wetlands (both PSW non-PSW)
- Key hydrologic areas
 - Significant groundwater recharge areas (SGRA)
 - Highly vulnerable aquifers (HVA)
 - Significant surface water contribution areas
- Shoreline areas
- Hydrologic functions
 - floodplains, flooding hazards, floodways
- Vegetation Protection Zones (VPZs) to:
 - Natural heritage features and areas in the Growth Plan NHS and Greenbelt Plan NHS
 - All key hydrologic features outside of settlement areas
- Buffers/Setbacks on features regulated by the NPCA

The following features and areas would also be included as required components of the integrated NES. However, they are not appropriately identified or managed until more detailed watershed planning or equivalent is completed at a subsequent stage of the planning process (e.g. a subwatershed study completed in support of a secondary plan, etc.).

- Ground water features (as informed by watershed planning or equivalent)
 - Recharge/discharge areas
 - Water tables

- Aquifers and unsaturated zones
- Surface water features (as informed by watershed planning or equivalent)
 - Headwater drainage features (HDF)
 - Recharge/discharge areas
 - Associated riparian lands that can be defined by their soil moisture, soil type, vegetation or topographic characteristics.
- Other hydrologic functions (as informed by watershed planning or equivalent)

4.5.2. NES Option 3A

Option 3A includes all of the required components identified in Option 1/2 plus the following:

Within settlement areas:

- No additional components

Outside of settlement areas:

- Other woodlands
- Large linkages
- Mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers to natural heritage features and other woodlands outside of Provincial NHSs

4.5.3. NES Option 3B

Option 3B includes all of the components identified in Option 1/2/3A plus the following:

Within settlement areas:

- Other woodlands

Outside of settlement areas:

- Supporting features and areas (including enhancement areas)
- Medium linkages
- Minimum (prescribed) buffers to natural heritage features and other woodlands outside of Provincial NHSs

4.5.4. NES Option 3C

Option 3C includes all of the components identified in Option 1/2/3A/3B plus the following:

Within settlement areas:

- Supporting features and areas (including enhancement areas)
- Small linkages
- Mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers to natural heritage features and other woodlands

Outside of settlement areas:

- Small linkages

4.6. Summary of the Differences between the NES Options

A summary of the differences between the features, areas, and systems in the NES options is as follows. The differences in policy are discussed in a subsequent section of this report.

- Addition of 'other woodlands' in NES Option 3A (outside of settlement areas) and 3B (within settlement areas)
- Addition of 'supporting features and areas' (including enhancement areas) in NES Option 3B (outside of settlement areas) and 3C (within settlement areas)
- Addition of large linkages outside of settlement areas in NES Option 3A
- Addition of medium linkages outside of settlement areas in NES Option 3B
- Addition of small linkages inside and outside of settlement areas in NES Option 3C
- Requirement for *mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers on 'natural features and areas' and 'other woodlands' outside of settlement areas in NES Option 3A. Buffers/setbacks to features that are regulated by the NPCA are a 'required standard' in all NES options. VPZs required by the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* NHS (outside of settlement areas) are also a 'required standard' in all NES options.
- Requirement for *minimum (prescribed) buffers on 'natural features and areas' and 'other woodlands' outside of settlement areas in NES Option 3B & 3C. Buffers/setbacks to features that are regulated by the NPCA are a 'required

standard' in all options. VPZs required by the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan NHS (outside of settlement areas) are also a 'required standard' in all NES options.

- Requirement for mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers on 'natural features and areas' and 'other woodlands' within settlement areas in NES Option 3C. Buffers/setbacks to features that are regulated by the NPCA are a 'required standard' in all options.

* The difference between mandatory (non-prescribed) and minimum (prescribed) buffers is that for mandatory buffers, the policy would state that a buffer is required to the feature but would not state any minimum for the buffer width, that determination would be made through a site-specific study. For a minimum buffer, the policy would state what minimum buffer width would be required. As the term implies, the buffer width cannot be less than the required minimum, but may be larger as determined through a site-specific study. A minimum buffer does not provide any flexibility for a site-specific study to recommend a lesser width based on an analysis of the sensitivity of the feature and potential impacts to the feature and the ecological functions resulting from the proposed change in adjacent land use; this is generally considered more restrictive to development. A minimum buffer is generally considered more restrictive to development.

5.0 Mapping and Data in Urban Areas

The mapping of the natural systems is a significant undertaking that requires dozens of sources of data to be compiled and vetted; a detailed methodology to be determined, communicated, and documented; technical criteria for each feature-type in each geography of the Region to be established; and tens of thousands of individual features/polygons on the landscape to be analysed. There is also a range in ownership for the data used to map the NES. The Region is responsible for producing and maintaining the data for some features. For other features, the Region is reliant on datasets maintained by others (e.g. the Province, NPCA, etc).

The mapping of the natural systems in Niagara has long been a contentious issue, and is an important tool for many stakeholders in the Region. It is important to ensure that any information produced in map form is accurate, transparent, and defensible both in terms of methodology and criteria.

5.1. Mapping and Data for the Comparison of NES Options

Region Planning staff, with the support of the consultant team, have worked extremely hard to be in a position where **all of the additional mapping requested by members**

of Regional Council and other stakeholders has been prepared. This information includes 135 new maps and 81 new tables of data, representing all urban areas in the Region.

Specifically, 5 maps have been prepared for each of the 27 urban areas, as follows:

- A. A map showing NHS Options 1, 2, and 3A and key hydrologic features
- B. A map showing NHS Option 3B and key hydrologic features
- C. A map showing NHS Option 3C and key hydrologic features
- D. A map showing key hydrologic areas, shoreline areas, and areas that support hydrologic functions
- E. A map showing the existing Regional Core NHS

To support the understanding of the mapping, for each of the 27 urban areas in the Region the following 3 tables have been prepared:

- A. A table providing details of the spatial coverage of features and comparing the NHS options and key hydrologic features
- B. A table providing details of the spatial coverage of key hydrologic areas, shorelines areas, and areas that support hydrologic functions
- C. A table providing details of the spatial coverage of the existing Regional Core NHS

The maps and data tables can be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/natural-environment-options.aspx>

As discussed extensively throughout this report, the NHS and WRS are inherently linked and have significant overlap (i.e. the use of the term integrated NES moving forward). Given this interrelationship, it was necessary to show “NHS options and key hydrologic features” on the same map (recall that key hydrologic features are a component of the WRS and a required standard for all options).

Key hydrologic areas, shoreline areas, and areas that support hydrologic functions are shown on a different map because the policies type associated with these components of the NES are different, and spatially their coverage should not be analyzed in the same way.

As discussed in previous sections of this report, within urban area, Options 1, 2, and 3A include the same features and areas, and can therefore be depicted using the same map.

The Core NHS from the existing Regional Official Plan was also mapped in each of the 27 urban area with accompanying data. This mapping is being provided for information purposes only, and is not, and should not be compared to mapping and data provided for the Options. This would not be a direct or appropriate comparison because the current Core NHS mapping contains a different set of components (e.g., valleylands are not proposed to be a mapped feature in the new NES, etc), and the existing Core NHS is not reflective of current required standards for the identification and protection of the NES. Additionally, the current Core NHS does not include all of the key hydrological features (most notably non-PSWs) that are required components of the NES, and some of which are regulated by the NPCA.

Mapping of the NES for the entirety of the Region will be prepared based on the selected NES option through Phase 7 of the NEWP, and will be presented to Regional Council, Local Municipalities the public, and other stakeholders in draft form as part of the 3rd POE in Phase 8 of the NEWP.

5.2. Understanding and Using NES Mapping

When reviewing the NES mapping that was requested to facilitate a comparison of the options, or any subsequent NES mapping that is prepared for the NOP, it is important to fully understand the purpose and intent of the mapping, and any limitations that are inherent with mapping natural systems. The following must be taken into consideration:

- Mapping only tells part of the story: mapping alone is not the NHS, WRS, or NES for the Region. The mapping needs to be considered together with policy, as well as the criteria, methodology, and definitions that were used to identify, protect, and implement the system.
- Mapping is intended to be used as a tool to screen for features and areas, and to trigger the need for a review as part of an application for a proposed change in land use. It should not be interpreted as the exact delineation for all natural features that do, or do not exist on the landscape.
- Generally, the NES is a ‘policy’ or ‘text’ based system. This means that a feature is protected by the policies of the system, if it exists on the landscape, whether or not it is mapped.
- Not all NES features can or will be mapped. At a Regional-level, some features are protected through policy and are more appropriately identified through site-specific study. This is typical for municipalities across the Province.
- The NES is dynamic. The mapping of features represents a snap-shot in time. For example one of the primary sources of data for the NES mapping will be the

2020 Ecological Land Classification (ELC) mapping. The 2020 ELC data is based on aerial imagery taken in 2018. In the context of mapping a Regional NES this is considered highly accurate mapping, but changes will occur between the time that the aerial imagery is taken and the NOP is approved.

- A fundamental principal of natural environment planning is that the system can, and will be better understood through more detailed site-specific studies. This is a principal that will be reflected in policy and in any guidelines that are prepared to support the implementation of the system (e.g. EIS guidelines, hydrologic study guidelines, etc.). For example is typical to allow refinements to mapped features based on site-specific analysis, staking and surveying of features, etc. Refinement of features is typically done by the landowner/applicant at the time there is a proposed change in land use.

6.0 Preliminary Policy Intent

As noted above, to fully understand the implications of the NES options there needs to be a consideration of what is the policy intent, in addition to the mapping. The policy intent inside of settlement areas (i.e. urban) needs to be considered separately from the policy outside of settlement area (i.e. rural). The reason for this is that the policies of the *Growth Plan* NHS and *Greenbelt Plan* NHS do not extend into settlement areas. The Province is more prescriptive with the NES policies that apply in rural areas, with municipalities being provided somewhat more discretion for the policies that will apply to the NES in urban areas.

Throughout this report the interconnectedness of the NHS and WRS has been stressed, as has the need to consider these two systems as an integrated NES. However, when considering the policy intent there is still a need to provide some differentiation. This is generally for two reasons. Firstly, the *PPS* and Provincial Plans still differentiate between the systems, and Regional policies need to be in conformance. Secondly is the difference between certain components of the NES, take for example the difference between a groundwater system and a significant woodland. The woodland is a well defined feature of the landscape and is generally protected in a way that restricts development. Groundwater systems are vast and cover significant portions of the Region, and are protected in ways that do not necessarily restrict development. The policies used to identify and protect these features will need to be different.

The discussion below is intended to provide an overview of the policy intent for the NES. This policy intent is being provided to support the understanding of the NES options, and the selection of a preferred option. **What is being presented below**

should not be interpreted as being final, or a fulsome set of draft policies. A full set of draft NES policies will be prepared once a NES option is selected.

6.1. Inside of Settlement Areas (i.e. urban)

The attached memorandum entitled ‘Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment Systems in the Region’s Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications’ (Meridian Planning & North-South Environmental, April 2021) provides a detailed discussion and analysis of the preliminary policy intent within the Region’s settlement areas. That discussion and analysis is summarized as follows.

As noted above, the policies of the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* NHS do not apply within settlement areas. The primary source of Provincial direction is the *PPS*. Natural heritage policies are S. 2.1 of the *PPS*, water resource policies are S. 2.2 of the *PPS*.

6.1.1. Natural Heritage Features and Areas

Based on the direction from the *PPS*, policies for natural heritage features and areas within settlement areas generally fall into 4 main categories:

- Protection of Features and Areas
 - In accordance with S. 2.1.4 development and site alteration is not permitted.

This would apply to PSWs in all options, and is proposed to apply to significant woodlands in options 3A, 3B, and 3C. Modifications to confirmed feature boundaries will be restricted.

- Protection of the Health and Integrity of Features and Ecological Functions
 - In accordance with S. 2.1.5 development and site alteration is also not permitted, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts.
 - This would apply to significant valleylands, significant wildlife habitat, and ANSIs in all options. It would apply to significant woodlands in Options 1 & 2. It would also apply to ‘other woodlands’ which are introduced in settlement areas in Option 3B and 3C.
- Opportunities to Enhance Features and Areas
 - Features and areas in this category would require additional study as part of a more detailed study to be identified, appropriately protected and managed, and included as part of the NES.

- This would apply to the optional components that are introduced in settlement areas in Option 3C: supporting features and areas (including enhancement areas), linkages, and buffers to non-regulated features. Buffers/setbacks to regulated features would be protected in accordance with the regulations and land use policies of the NPCA.
- Protection of Features and Areas Determined by the Federal or Provincial Governments
 - Development and site alteration is not permitted except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
 - In accordance with S. 2.1.6 and 2.1.7 of the *PPS* this would include fish habitat and habitat of endangered species and threatened species.

For each of the 4 categories described above there would be certain limitations and exemptions similar to those outlined in Provincial Plans. See the attached technical memorandum for additional details.

6.1.2 Water Resource Features and Areas

The requirement to identify a WRS is relatively new in natural environment planning; as such, there is little direction in Provincial plans or other guidance documents to inform policy approaches to protect the WRS. Within settlement areas, the policy intent is informed by the direction of the *PPS* and *Growth Plan*, and a stated desire from many stakeholders to see alignment between Regional policies, and the regulations and land-use policies of the NPCA.

- For PSWs and other wetlands which are regulated by the NPCA there would be a prohibition to development and the need to provide a 30m buffer. This aligns with the *PPS* which requires a prohibition to development on PSWs and the NPCA which regulates both PSWs and other wetlands. It is also noted that NPCA policies allow for offsetting for 'other wetlands'. Offsetting is not being considered in Regional policy in accordance with the stated desire of Regional Council and many stakeholders.
- For 'wetlands' which are required as part of the WRS, but are not considered regulated features by the NPCA additional study will be required (e.g. through an EIS, or hydrologic evaluation). *PPS* section 2.2.1. d) refers to the "ecological and hydrological integrity of the

watershed”. There are various types of protection and management that can be used to achieve this test.

- Similarly, for watercourse, Regional policy would align with the policies of the NPCA which generally prohibit development.
- There are a number of other key hydrologic features and key hydrologic areas that also require protection in accordance with Provincial policy. These include seepage areas and springs within settlement areas, significant groundwater recharge (and discharge) areas, highly vulnerable aquifers and significant surface water contribution areas (which include headwater drainage features), all of which are key hydrological areas. For each of the above components of the WRS, there will be a need for policies in the NOP that require the submission of appropriate studies that evaluate the impacts of the proposed development and which identify how the quality and quantity of water can be protected, enhanced or restored. To inform the completion of studies considered acceptable to the Region, WRS guidelines could be developed, similar to Environmental Impact Study (EIS) guidelines.

6.2 Outside of Settlement Areas (i.e. rural)

Outside of settlement areas the Province provides very prescriptive NES policies that must be implemented by municipalities. These new policies have been in place since the new *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* were implemented in 2017, and are being formally integrated into the natural environment planning regime in the Region through the NES and NOP. To date, the Provincial requirement to implement the new Provincial policies along with the policies of the existing Regional Official Plan has caused significant confusion. One of the objectives of the NOP is to eliminate this confusion. The Provincial policies to be incorporated into the NES are summarized as follows. For a complete list of the Provincial policies refer to the text of the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan*.

- For key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features within the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* NHS there is a prohibition to development and the need to provide a 30m vegetation protection zone (VPZ) (subject to certain criteria and a range of exemptions for agricultural uses).
- For key hydrologic features, the prohibition to development and need to provide a 30m VPZ extends beyond the mapped Provincial NHSs to all areas of the Region outside of settlement areas.

- Within the *Greenbelt Plan* there is a Niagara-specific policies that reduces the required VPZ to 15m for certain permanent and intermittent streams when the proposed adjacent land use will be for agricultural purpose (subject to certain tests being met).
- For lands within the required VPZs of the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* there are detailed policies of what is, and what is not permitted. These policies are proposed to be implemented as provided by the Province.
- The *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* NHS both include policies for the 'system'. These policies apply to the lands between the natural features (whether they exist in a natural state or not) and can be thought of as 'linkages' (although that terminology is not used by the Provincial Plans). Within these areas, not occupied by a key feature, there is a broad range of exemptions for agricultural uses. For most other forms of development and site alteration there are restrictions to the amount of development permitted and the need to demonstrate no negative impacts (subject to certain exemptions and conditions as described by the Provincial Plans).
- For components of the NES outside of settlement areas that are not addressed specifically by the policies of the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* (i.e. natural heritage features and areas outside of the Provincial NHSs, supporting features and areas, other woodlands). The policy intent would align with what is proposed within settlement areas as described above.

7.0 Analysis and Implications

7.1. Summary of Additional Mapping and Data

As discussed throughout this report, 135 new maps and 81 new tables of data, representing all urban areas in the Region have been prepared to allow for a more fulsome analysis and comparison of the NES options. As these maps were being prepared at an interim phase of the project several assumptions needed to be made. Each map that was prepared included a number of notes, as follows:

- This map has been prepared for discussion. **It was prepared to compare natural environment options in urban areas and should not be used for any other purpose. This map is draft and not the final Natural Heritage System (NHS) or Water Resource System (WRS) map.**
- Not all features of the NHS and WRS have been mapped. Certain components of the NHS and WRS are more appropriately and accurately identified through

detailed or site-specific studies, outside the scope of this work. Additionally, **development approvals on specific sites may not be reflected on the maps. Site-specific approvals and mapping must be considered, as applicable.**

- Buffers will not be mapped as part of Official Plan schedules. Where shown, buffers have been included to demonstrate their coverage based on modelling assumptions. Mandatory buffers (i.e. setbacks from features regulated by the NPCA) and optional buffers introduced through Option 3C will be identified through policy.

Table 2 below provides a summation of the NES options across all urban areas of the Region.

The tables for each individual urban area in the Region can be accessed here:

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/natural-environment-options.aspx>

Table 2: Summation of NES Options across all Urban Areas of the Region

	Option 1, 2, & 3A		Option 3B		Option 3C	
Feature	Hectare	% of UA	Hectare	% of UA	Hectare	% of UA
Significant Wetland	1592.6	4.6%	1592.6	4.6%	1592.6	4.6%
Significant Wetland	1486.2	4.3%	1486.2	4.3%	1486.2	4.3%
Life Science ANSI	28.4	0.1%	28.4	0.1%	28.4	0.1%
Earth Science ANSI	45.7	0.1%	45.7	0.1%	45.7	0.1%
Other Wetlands	1309.1	3.8%	1309.1	3.8%	1309.1	3.8%
Permanent and Intermittent Stream (metres)	302446.3	N/A	302446.3	N/A	302446.3	N/A
Permanent and Intermittent Stream (poly)	773.0	2.2%	773.0	2.2%	773.0	2.2%
Other Woodlands	N/A	N/A	548.2	1.6%	548.2	1.6%
Linkages	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	34.2	0.1%
Buffers	2192.2	6.3%	2101.3	6.1%	2587.0	7.5%
Total	7250.7	21.0%	7677.7	22.2%	8194.7	23.7%

Table 2 Notes:

1. There is some overlap between features. The "total" presented is the total coverage of the listed features as opposed to a summation of the individual components.
2. Buffers in 1/2/3A & 3B are setbacks to regulated features as required by the NPCA. In Option 3C buffers are also applied to non-regulated features (i.e. significant woodlands and other woodlands). Buffers would not be mapped as part of the new Regional Official Plan and buffer widths for non-regulated features would be determined through site-specific study. For the purpose of the comparison of options only in the exercise a buffer of 10m to significant woodlands and 5m to other woodlands was used. The buffer is calculated as the buffer area where there is no overlap with any features. Buffers on features outside of the UA boundaries (where the buffer extends into the UA) are not captured in these calculations.
3. "Permanent and Intermittent Streams (polygon features)" are watercourses, such as rivers, that are wider and represented by a polygon in GIS mapping datasets.

7.2. Discussion and Implications

To support the understanding of this additional information, and to consider the impacts of preliminary policy intent, the consultant team for the project was tasked with analysing and discussing the implications within the urban settlement areas in the Region. The complete discussion of implications can be reviewed in the attached memorandum entitled 'Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment Systems in the Region's Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications' (Meridian Planning & North-South Environmental, April 2021). Several key highlights include:

- The change in spatial coverage, impact of the NES options, and changes in the amount of land available for new development differs across the 27 urban areas in the Region for several factors including:
 - The extent to which the urban area is already developed and the size of the urban area. For example, urban areas that are fully developed the change between the options will be less. For urban areas which have greenfield and other undeveloped areas, the change between the options will be greater.
 - The topography of the urban area. For example urban area with large area of lowland vegetation communities trends towards being PSWs with more marginal areas being 'other wetlands', as both types of wetlands are

required components of the NES there is no change in spatial coverage. However urban areas with more upland communities trend towards being Significant Woodlands with more marginal areas being 'other woodlands'. Since 'other woodlands' are considered optional components and not introduced in settlement areas until Option 3B, there tends a greater difference in spatial coverage between the options in urban areas with more upland vegetation communities.

- Although mandatory buffers to significant woodlands and 'other woodlands' are considered an optional component introduced in 3C, in practice a buffer of some type is often required to satisfy the no negative impact test in accordance with the *PPS*. In practice and implementation this will minimize the impacts to developable area in adding buffers to significant woodlands and 'other woodlands' in Option 3C.
- Similarly, while other supporting features and areas (including enhancement areas) are introduced in Option 3C, in practice they can often be used to meet the test of no negative impact.
- The addition of 'other woodlands' has the most potential to impact developable land within urban areas, resulting in an addition of 548.2 ha of land to the NES or a 1.3% increase to the required standards. While having a policy that requires buffers to be identified will result in a slightly larger increase in the mapping of the NES than 'other woodlands', they are required in many cases to meet the test of no negative impact and are not expected to add a significant additional constraint to development.
- Hydrologic areas of the WRS (as shown in Map D for each urban area) comprise a large proportion of some of the urban areas. These features are required components of WRS/integrated NES according to Provincial policy and therefore impact each NES option equally. In most case, hydrologic areas are managed and protected in other ways and typically do not represent a strict prohibition to development.
- There are a number of 'natural heritage features and areas' that have not been mapped including significant wildlife habitat and habitat of endangered and threatened species. Their identification may also have an impact on the amount of potentially developable land within urban areas. That said, within settlement areas the majority of natural features where significant wildlife habitat and habitat of endangered and threatened species would be located is largely contained within natural features already included within the NES (e.g., woodlands and

wetlands, etc.), so the impact on the amount of potentially developable land would likely be marginal.

8.0 Recommendation for Preferred NES Option

8.1. Importance of Selecting a Preferred Option

The NEWP was initiated in early 2018, and the project is entering its 4th year. **As described throughout this report, significant research, analysis, and consultation has been already been undertaken, with additional phases still to come before the NES is approved and implemented.** Work to date has included 8 major background reports, 6 reports and presentations to Committee and Council, and 2 major points of consultation with the public and full range of other stakeholders. Through the completion of the 2nd POE additional mapping and analysis of the options was requested by Regional Council. **All of the requested additional mapping and analysis has been prepared, communicated, and summarized in this report.** The preparation of this additional information was a significant undertaking.

To meet the Provincial deadline for conformity of the NOP, it is critical that Regional Council make a decision on the preferred NES option. Planning Staff, with the support of the consultant team, need sufficient time to complete the detailed and mapping process based on the selected option, and to undertake the 3rd POE. **Growth is coming to the Region, the sooner the new NES and NOP can be approved and implemented, the sooner growth can be better managed, known limitations of the existing Core NHS can be addressed, and important natural features and areas can be better protected.**

The detailed mapping and policy development process is a significant and labour-intensive process that will take several months to complete. Given the time and resources required to complete this task it is not practical to move forward beyond this point without the selection of a preferred option.

In addition, as is explored in further detail in PDS 17-2021, the NES is interrelated with many of sections of the NOP. Without a decision on the NES option many other work programs will become stalled or not able to be finalized.

8.2 Recommendation

NES Option 3B (NHS Option 3B + the single WRS option) is recommended as the preferred NES option. In making this recommendation it should be noted that all options are in conformance with Provincial requirements, and could be fully designed and implemented by Regional Planning Staff through the NOP. NES Option 3B:

- **Exceeds the required provincial standards** for the identification of features and systems which in the long-term will support a more resilient and biodiverse NES.
- **Ensures that there is not a reduction in the area of treed vegetation communities** included within the Region's NES.
- **Supports other objectives, such as helping mitigate the impacts of climate change.**
- Provides a **balanced approach** for the protection of the natural environment **by increasing the number of components and features outside of settlement areas and limiting additional constraints to development in settlement areas.** This option works from both an ecological and land-use planning perspective.
- Provides **flexibility for local municipalities to plan for local needs** and priorities in their communities. Local municipalities would not be prevented from going beyond the Regional system, either through their Local Official Plans or Secondary Plans. Regional Planning Staff are available to provide support for those exercises should they be desired by local municipalities.
- Option 3B considers the **significant public input received** through the 1st and 2nd Points of Engagement. Through the 2nd Point of Engagement, it was clear that **there was no consensus** on which NES Option was most desirable. This speaks to the **need for a balance between the Options.**

9.0 Takeaway and Key Message

A key takeaway from the NEWP is that regardless of the NES option selected and implemented through the NOP. There will be changes in environmental planning in the Region, both in terms of the spatial extent of the NES and the level of protection provided to some features in the system. These changes are required to meet provincial conformity and are primarily being driven by:

- The need for a systems based approach to natural environment planning as required by the *PPS*;
- The need for a comprehensive WRS as required by the *PPS* and *Growth Plan*; and
- The identification of the *Growth Plan* NHS and associated policies by the Province, and the requirement for it to be implemented by Municipalities.

Further, regardless of the NES option selected by Regional Council the following improvements in environmental planning in the Region should also be anticipated:

- Significantly improved mapping of the NES as a result of new data from the 2020 Ecological Land Classification (ELC) Mapping project, the Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses (CMW) project, and other updated Provincial sources;
- Improved and more easily understood policies;
- Modernized definitions, criteria, and methodology for the identification of environmental features; and
- Better alignment with the regulations and land use policies of the NPCA as requested by a range of stakeholders.

10.0 Next Steps and Timeline

Once a preferred NES option has been selected, work can begin on Phase 6 and 7 of the NEWP including:

- Preparing Technical Report #3 (Phase 6) which will:
 - Expand on the preferred option to fully develop definitions, criteria, system components, sources of information, direction for preparing final mapping schedules.
 - Develop detailed recommendations for Official Plan policies to support implementation of the system building on the recommendations that were prepared in the earlier phases of the work program.
 - Prepare an 'Implementation Framework '(e.g. how will local municipalities incorporate this into their Official Plans, what are the responsibilities of landowners and local municipalities at the time of development, refinement policies, process for boundary interpretations, etc) to be reflected in the Official Plan policies.
 - Provide recommendations for implementation tools that will need to be recognized in the NOP (e.g. Environmental Impact Study (EIS) guidelines, stewardship policies, etc.)
 - Review of current Regional EIS guidelines and preliminary recommendations for updating.
- Draft Official Plan policies (Phase 7)
- Final NES mapping/NOP schedules (Phase 7)

Once Phases 6 & 7 are complete the 3rd Point of Engagement (Phase 8) will be undertaken. The goal of the 3rd POE is to provide Regional Council, Local Municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders a sufficient opportunity to review, understand, and provide comments on the draft policies and mapping. **The final recommendation and decision on NES mapping and policies will not occur until the 3rd POE has been completed.**

Technical Memorandum

To: Sean Norman, Senior Planner, Niagara Region

From: North-South Environmental Inc. and Meridian Planning Consultants

Date: April 12, 2021

File: Niagara Region Natural Environment Work Program

Re: Preliminary Policy Intent for the Natural Environment System in the Region's Settlement Areas & Discussion on Implications

Introduction

As part of the new Niagara Official Plan (N.O.P.) the Region will be developing new policies and mapping for the Region's natural environment systems (N.E.S.). The N.E.S. is made up of the natural heritage system (N.H.S.) and the water resource system (W.R.S.); these systems rely on and support each other and have overlapping components (e.g., provincially significant wetlands) that collectively form the integrated N.E.S. The N.E.S. provides a holistic systems-based approach to natural environment planning and protection of environmental features and areas.

In order to inform the development of options for the policies and mapping of the N.E.S., two discussion papers and two technical reports were completed in Phases 2 and 4 of the Natural Environment Work Program:

- Mapping Discussion Paper – September 2019
- Watershed Planning Discussion Paper– September 2019
- Technical Report #1: Natural Environment Background Study – September 2019
- Technical Report #2: Identification and Evaluation of Options for Regional Natural Environment Systems(s) – June 2020.

Through consultation with stakeholders and members of the public as part of the 1st and 2nd Point of Engagement, completed in Phase 3 and 5 respectively, the topics reviewed in these documents and the options developed for the N.E.S. were discussed. The identification and

review of options prepared as part of Technical Report #2 was intended to allow for an evaluation of the options at a conceptual-level in order to engage with stakeholders and the public through the 2nd Point of Engagement and received feedback and direction on a preferred option. Technical Report #2 and the 2nd Point of Engagement were intended to set the direction for the N.H.S. and W.R.S. This is a fundamental step to ensure staff have the direction and general intent of the N.H.S. and W.R.S. established and supported by Council before the detailed mapping and policy development occurs.

However, after the 2nd Point of Engagement it became clear that Council and other stakeholders were seeking additional details on each of the options to assist with making a decision on which option should be selected, as it relates to settlement areas, which is where Provincial policy also directs the majority of expected growth to occur.

To satisfy this request, the Region has engaged the consultant team to assist in completing additional analysis on each of the options for the N.H.S. and W.R.S. This additional work includes identifying a policy intent for the options of the N.H.S. and W.R.S., establishing a preliminary methodology and criteria for to identify each feature-type (Appendix A) and providing mapping and detailed statistics for comparison of each option as they apply to urban areas.

The policy intent of each option is intended to further inform Council on the differences between the options. It is intended that the results of the more detailed mapping, statistics and policy intent for each option will be presented to the Planning and Economic Development Committee (P.E.D.C.) in early 2021 to support the selection of the preferred N.H.S. and W.R.S. options.

The purpose of this Technical Memorandum is to review a number of policy approaches to protecting 'natural heritage features and areas' of the N.H.S. and components of the W.R.S. in the Region's settlement areas (which includes the Urban Areas) for consideration as part of the policy framework for the new Niagara Official Plan (N.O.P.).

In developing these options, guidance is provided in Provincial policy documents including the Provincial Policy Statement (P.P.S.), the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan. The policies in these documents establish direction for the identification and protection of 'required' components and the identification of 'optional' components; based on this direction Technical Report #2: Identification and Evaluation of Options for Regional Natural Environment System(s), identified options for the N.H.S. and W.R.S. with a general policy framework. This Technical Memorandum provides more specific policy intent for the protection of components of the N.H.S. and the W.R.S. within each of the options identified in Technical Report #2 for the Region's settlement areas.

Natural Heritage System Policy Intent

Technical Report #2 identified three main options for the N.H.S. across the Region:

- Option 1 – Required Standards – Overlay
- Option 2 – Required Standards – Designation
- Option 3 – Going Beyond the Required Standards

Option 1 implements Provincial Policy in a manner that achieves Provincial standards. This option treats 'natural heritage features and areas' throughout the Region as an overlay. Linkages would not extend beyond the two Provincial N.H.S.s.

Option 2 is similar to Option 1, but designates the same 'natural heritage features and areas' in an exclusive land use designation.

Option 3 exceeds Provincial standards (per the P.P.S.) by including sub-options (3A, 3B and 3C) which provide greater protections for significant woodlands and which includes an increasing number of optional components, linkages, and enhancements.

One of the optional components in some of the N.H.S. options identified in Technical Report #2 was 'other wetlands' (i.e., evaluated non-provincially significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands). All wetlands (i.e., Provincially Significant Wetlands, evaluated non-provincially significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands) are identified as key hydrologic features in the Growth Plan and a required component of the W.R.S. The N.H.S. and W.R.S. collectively make up the N.E.S., as such, the required component of one system cannot be considered an optional component to another system; when taken together, the required components of the N.E.S. should reflect the required components of both systems as a minimum standard. Therefore, to more accurately reflect minimum requirements of the N.E.S., 'other wetlands' are no longer included as an 'optional' component of the N.H.S. since they are a required component of the W.R.S. It is noted however that there is more flexibility in how evaluated non-provincially significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands are dealt with from a development and site alteration perspective within settlement areas than outside settlement areas, where development and site alteration is prohibited in all wetlands by the Growth Plan. This is reflected in the policy discussion related to 'other wetlands'.

Common Base Assumptions for N.H.S. Options 1, 2, 3A, 3B and 3C in Settlement Areas

1. Growth Plan N.H.S. policy framework and mapping does not apply.
2. Greenbelt Plan N.H.S. policy framework and mapping does not apply.

3. Key hydrological features policies in Growth Plan do not apply.
4. Development and site alteration policies of the P.P.S. apply to identified 'natural heritage features and areas' and apply in settlement areas.
5. Development and site alteration within fish habitat and the habitat of endangered and threatened species would be in accordance with provincial and federal requirements.
6. Provincially Significant Wetlands (P.S.W.s), which are a natural heritage feature and areas as defined by the P.P.S., and key hydrologic features as defined by the Growth Plan, are also regulated by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (N.P.C.A.) and protected from development.
7. N.P.C.A. policies currently restrict most forms of development within 30 metres of P.S.W.s; however, exceptions can be considered and reliance will be placed on the N.P.C.A. policy framework (with the exception of the off-setting permissions) to determine buffer requirements.
8. Buffers could be required to demonstrate no negative impact and there would still be a need to determine 'adjacent lands' width to satisfy P.P.S. no negative impact policy on adjacent lands as it relates to all 'natural heritage features and areas' that are subject to the P.P.S.

Common Base Policy Intents for N.H.S. Options 1, 2, 3A, 3B and 3C

1. To ensure that 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in P.P.S. are protected.
2. To ensure that P.P.S. policies on where development and site alteration is not permitted is implemented in the new N.O.P.
3. To ensure that N.O.P. policies on development and site alteration within and adjacent to all wetlands are aligned with N.P.C.A. policies and regulations (with the exception of offsetting, which will not be permitted in the new N.O.P.).

N.H.S. Option 1 - Required Standards – Overlay in Settlement Areas

Assumptions

1. Identifies 'natural heritage features and areas' as an "overlay" to a land use designation. The "overlay" would prohibit development affecting certain features and would require the 'no negative impact test' be satisfied for certain other features and areas.

Policy Intent

1. To protect significant features and areas where development is restricted in accordance with the P.P.S.

2. To ensure consistency with P.P.S. policies on where development and site alteration is permitted (feature and adjacent lands) subject to the no negative impact test.
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an overlay designation to provide flexibility on study requirements and to recognize the underlying land use designation.

Components of the N.H.S. within Settlement Areas

The following features would be considered 'natural heritage features and areas':

- Significant wetlands;
- Significant coastal wetlands;
- Habitat of endangered species and threatened species;
- Fish habitat;
- Significant areas of natural and scientific interest;
- Significant valleylands;
- Significant woodlands; and
- Significant wildlife habitat.

Development and site alteration within fish habitat and the habitat of endangered and threatened species would be in accordance with provincial and federal requirements. There is a small area of Niagara Escarpment Plan (N.E.P.) Escarpment Natural Area that is located on the escarpment in St. Catharines. Within the Escarpment Natural Area and Escarpment Protection Area designations, Habitat of Special Concern Species would also be considered a natural heritage feature and area. In addition, wetlands (including Provincially significant wetlands and non-Provincially significant wetlands), life and earth science areas of natural and scientific interest (A.N.S.I.s) and significant woodlands would be identified on lands subject to the N.E.P.

Buffers of any kind adjacent to 'natural heritage features and areas' in settlement areas would not be mapped, since there are no standard buffer requirements in the P.P.S. nor the N.E.P. Instead, it is anticipated that through the completion of an impact study, buffers may be required to demonstrate no negative impact in accordance with the P.P.S. In addition, it is also recognized that the N.P.C.A. may require setbacks from Provincially significant wetlands (among other regulated features and areas included in the W.R.S.) in accordance with their policies.

N.H.S. Option 2 – Required Standards - Designation in Settlement Areas

Assumptions

1. Include features and areas in an exclusive land use designation. The designation would prohibit development within certain features and would require the 'no negative impact test' be satisfied for other features and areas.

Policy Intent

1. To protect significant features and areas where development is restricted in accordance with the P.P.S.
2. To ensure consistency with P.P.S. policies on where development and site alteration is permitted (feature and adjacent lands) subject to the no negative impact test.
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an exclusive land use designation.

Components of the N.H.S. within Settlement Areas

This option would include the same natural features and areas as Option 1. The only difference between Options 1 and 2 is that the natural features and areas within Option 1 would be included within an overlay designation whereas they would be included in an exclusive land use designation in Option 2.

Natural Heritage System Options 3A, 3B and 3C in Settlement Areas

N.H.S. Option 3 builds on N.H.S. Option 2 by establishing three scenarios that progressively exceed standard provincial requirements. Within settlement areas in Options 3A, 3B and 3C, development would be prohibited in significant woodlands as it is for significant wetlands (see a discussion on woodlands and rationale for the policy prohibition for significant woodlands in **Appendix B**). Additional areas are added in Option 3B and both additional component features and areas and small linkages are added in Option 3C.

N.H.S. Option 3A

Assumptions

1. Include features and areas in an exclusive land use designation. The designation would prohibit development within certain features and would require the 'no negative impact test' be satisfied for other features and areas (same as Option 2).

2. Development and site alteration would also be prohibited in significant woodlands as it would be for P.S.W.s (more restrictive than Options 1 and 2).

Policy Intent

1. To protect significant features and areas where development is restricted in accordance with the P.P.S. (same as Options 1 and 2).
2. To ensure consistency with P.P.S. policies on where development and site alteration is permitted (feature and adjacent lands) subject to the no negative impact test (same as Options 1 and 2).
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an exclusive land use designation (more restrictive than Option 1 but same as Option 2).
4. To protect significant woodlands from development and site alteration and restrict any modifications to their boundaries (more restrictive than Options 1 and 2).

Components of the N.H.S. within Settlement Areas

Option 3A would include the same natural features and areas as Option 1 and 2. The primary difference is that development is prohibited in significant woodlands as opposed to meeting the test of no negative impact, which is how significant woodlands are dealt with in Options 1 and 2.

N.H.S. Option 3B

Assumptions

1. Include features and areas in an exclusive land use designation. The designation would prohibit development within certain features and would require the 'no negative impact test' be satisfied for other features and areas (same as Options 2 and 3A).
2. Development and site alteration would also be prohibited in significant woodlands as it would be for P.S.W.s (more restrictive than Options 1 and 2 but the same as Option 3A).
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an exclusive land use designation (same as Option 2 and 3A).
4. Certain 'other natural heritage features and areas' (restricted to 'other woodlands') would be identified in an exclusive land use designation and would be subject to the no negative impact test (more restrictive than Options 1, 2 and 3A).

Policy Intent

1. To protect significant features and areas where development is restricted in accordance with the P.P.S. (same as Options 1, 2 and 3A).
2. To ensure consistency with P.P.S. policies on where development and site alteration is permitted (feature and adjacent lands) subject to the no negative impact test (same as Options 1, 2 and 3A).
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an exclusive land use designation (more restrictive than Option 1 but same as Options 2 and 3A).
4. To protect significant woodlands from development and site alteration and restrict any modifications to their boundaries (more restrictive than Options 1 and 2 but same as Option 3A).
5. To identify certain 'other natural heritage features and areas' (restricted to 'other woodlands'), include them in an exclusive land use designation and require that the no negative impact test be applied to recognize the role these features and areas play in supporting a resilient N.H.S. (more restrictive than Options 1, 2 and 3A).

Components of the N.H.S. within Settlement Areas

Option 3B would include the same natural features and areas as Option 1 and 2 and 3A, with the addition of 'other woodlands' (see discussion of woodlands in **Appendix B**).

Note: 'Other woodlands' have been moved from the category of 'supporting features and areas' into the category of 'other natural heritage features and areas' following a review of, and recommended changes to, the definition of woodland and criteria related to the identification of significant woodlands in Niagara Region. The review of the woodland definition, recommendations for revisions and the rationale for making these revisions, and the discussion of significant woodlands is provided **Appendix B** of this Technical Memorandum. As a result, 'other woodlands' are now introduced in Option 3B as opposed to Option 3C as they were previously.

N.H.S. Option 3C

Assumptions

1. Include features and areas in an exclusive land use designation. The designation would prohibit development within certain features and would require the 'no negative impact test' be satisfied for other features and areas (same as Options 2, 3A and 3B).

2. Development and site alteration would also be prohibited in significant woodlands as it would be for P.S.W.s (more restrictive than Options 1 and 2 but the same as Options 3A and 3B).
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an exclusive land use designation (same as Options 2, 3A and 3B).
4. Certain 'other natural heritage features and areas' (restricted to 'other woodlands') would be identified in an exclusive land use designation and would be subject to the no negative impact test (more restrictive than Options 1, 2 and 3A but same as Option 3B).
5. 'Supporting features and areas' would be included as components of the N.H.S. (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).
6. Small linkages that are in a natural state would be identified and included in an overlay designation (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).
7. Enhancement areas would be required in policy (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B) but not mapped in a schedule to the new N.O.P. since their identification within a settlement area is more appropriately determined through a site-specific study.
8. A buffer will be required in policy adjacent to 'natural heritage features and areas' including 'other woodlands' but the buffer width would not be specified (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B). Buffers would not be mapped as part of the schedule to the new N.O.P. since their width would not be prescribed in advance. They would be identified as policy only. It is recognized that the N.P.C.A. will require buffers/setbacks from P.S.W.s.

Policy Intent

1. To protect significant features and areas where development is restricted in accordance with the P.P.S. (same as Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).
2. To ensure consistency with P.P.S. policies on where development and site alteration is permitted (feature and adjacent lands) subject to the no negative impact test (same as Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).
3. To include the 'natural heritage features and areas' identified in Sections 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 of the P.P.S. in an exclusive land use designation (more restrictive than Option 1 but same as Options 2, 3A and 3B).
4. To protect significant woodlands from development and site alteration and restrict any modifications to their boundaries (more restrictive than Options 1 and 2 but same as Options 3A and 3B).
5. To identify certain 'other natural heritage features and areas' (restricted to 'other woodlands'), include them in an exclusive land use designation and require that the no

negative impact test be applied (more restrictive than Options 1, 2 and 3A but same as Option 3B).

6. To require further study of 'supporting features and areas', including enhancement areas, to determine their form and function as part of the N.H.S., with consideration of compatible uses within 'supporting features and areas' (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).
7. To protect small linkages that they can form part of an overall settlement area N.H.S., with the intent of providing ecological connectivity between natural features and areas, with consideration of compatible land uses within linkages (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).
8. To require in policy buffers adjacent to all 'natural heritage features and areas' including 'other woodlands' (more restrictive than Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B).

Components of the N.H.S. within Settlement Areas

Option 3C would include the same natural features and areas as Option 1, 2, 3A and 3B, with 'supporting features and areas' (which include enhancement areas) and linkages being added into the N.H.S., as determined through future study. Given the addition of these components in Option 3C, a discussion is provided on policy intent below.

Supporting Features and Areas

These policies would apply to grasslands/meadows, other valleylands and other wildlife habitat. It is noted that some of the other valleylands may also be regulated by the N.P.C.A if it contains a permanent or intermittent watercourse. Policies for enhancement areas, which are also a 'supporting feature and area', are addressed separately below. following this section. Linkages are not considered to be a 'supporting feature or area', rather they are considered a separate component of the N.H.S.

As mentioned above, 'supporting features and areas' would not be mapped. As a result, they may be identified when an environmental study is completed in support of a secondary plan or through the development approvals process.

In this regard, and if Option 3C is selected, it is anticipated that new N.O.P. policies would indicate that 'supporting features and areas' be identified early on through a screening process and when identified, an environmental evaluation would be completed that assesses and determines:

- Whether the 'supporting feature or area' is a 'natural heritage feature or area' or an 'other natural heritage feature or area' that should be protected;
- The boundary of the 'supporting feature or area' along with its ecological functions and relationship to nearby natural heritage features or areas; and
- What conditions should be attached to the approval of the proposed development to enhance the 'supporting feature or area' where possible.

Note: The above policies get triggered when there is a Planning Act application. Until such a Planning Act application is triggered, uses permitted in both the land use designation and the zoning by-law can be developed. For example, development on existing lots of record would be permitted if the approval required was only a building permit. However, an application to create a new lot on which permission would be sought later to build a new house would trigger the need for an environmental evaluation.

Enhancement Areas

Like other 'supporting features and areas', enhancement areas will not be mapped, which means that they would only be identified when an environmental study is completed in support of a large scale secondary plan or through the development approvals process. In this regard, the policies would indicate that enhancement areas should be identified early on through a screening process, with the principle being that enhancement areas are intended to consist of natural self-sustaining vegetation and increase the ecological resilience and function of individual natural features or groups of natural features by:

- Increasing the size of natural features;
- Connecting key natural features and significant features to create larger contiguous natural areas;
- Improving the shape of natural features to increase interior habitat conditions; and
- Including critical function zones and important catchment areas critical to sustaining ecological functions.

When carrying out an environmental evaluation, it should:

- Assess the ecological benefit of an enhancement to the nearby natural heritage feature or area (e.g., does it fill a gap, close in an indent, connect two separate features, etc.);
- Consider the most appropriate shape/extent of an enhancement area so that the ecological functions of the nearby natural heritage feature or area are enhanced;
- Consider how the function and spatial extent of an enhancement area can be incorporated into the design and layout of the proposed development; and

- Assess the potential for compatible uses such as stormwater management facilities within the enhancement area to ensure that the intended ecological function of the enhancement area is achieved.

In a case where an enhancement area is identified as per the above, the lands within the enhancement area would be planted and left as natural self-sustaining vegetation. The enhancement area could also be designed to include other compatible land uses such as stormwater management ponds if it can be demonstrated that the long-term ecological function of the enhancement area would be retained.

Note: The above policies get triggered when there is a Planning Act application as there would be for other 'supporting areas and features' as discussed above.

Linkages

Linkages will be mapped as an overlay designation in the N.O.P. if Option 3C is selected. Over time and if a linkage is retained, as determined through a site-specific study, the area within the linkage should consist of natural self-sustaining vegetation and support the movement of target wildlife species between 'natural heritage features and areas'.

When development or site alteration that is permitted by the underlying land use designation is proposed within a mapped linkage shown on a schedule to the new N.O.P., the required environmental evaluation should:

- Assess the ecological features and functions of a linkage, including its vegetative, wildlife, and/or landscape features or functions;
- Identify appropriate boundaries/widths that permit the movement of wildlife between nearby 'natural heritage features and areas' (including 'other woodlands');
- Describe the ecological functions the linkage is intended to provide and identifies how these ecological functions can be maintained or enhanced within a development proposal;
- Assess the potential for compatible uses such as stormwater management ponds, passive recreational uses and trails within the linkage to determine how the intended ecological functions of the linkage can be maintained or enhanced;
- Assess potential impacts on the linkage as a result of the development; and
- Make recommendations on how to protect, enhance, or mitigate impacts on the linkage and its ecological functions through avoidance and planning, design and construction practices.

Note: The above policies get triggered when there is a Planning Act application. Until such a Planning Act application is triggered, uses permitted in both the underlying land use designation and the zoning by-law can be developed. For example, development on existing lots of record would be permitted if the approval required was a building permit. However, an application to create a new lot on which permission would be sought later to build a new house would trigger the need for an environmental evaluation.

If a Planning Act application is submitted, possible outcomes include:

- The elimination of the linkage area based on site specific analysis and confirmation that maintaining a linkage area in this location is not necessary for ecological reasons;
- The refinement of the form (i.e., width) and ecological function (i.e., vegetation and wildlife habitat features) of the linkage based on a site-specific environmental evaluation; or
- The incorporation of the linkage area as is into the development plan, such that development would not occur on those lands.

In a case where all or part of a linkage area is retained as per the above, the lands within the linkage area would be planted and left as natural self-sustaining vegetation. The linkage could also be designed to permit trails and other passive recreational purposes so long as the ecological function of the linkage was not impacted. Furthermore, other compatible land uses such as stormwater management ponds could be considered in linkage areas if it can be demonstrated that the long-term ecological function of the linkage area would be retained.

Buffers, Setbacks and Vegetation Protection Zones

Up until this point and because this technical memorandum is focused on settlement areas, the term ‘buffer’ has been used to describe the area that may need to be protected adjacent to natural features and areas in order to mitigate potential impacts to features and functions resulting from a change in adjacent land use. In this regard, buffers of any kind adjacent to ‘natural heritage features and areas’ in settlement areas would not be mapped in any of the options, since there are no standard buffer requirements in the P.P.S. However, since the P.P.S. requires that no negative impact be demonstrated when development is proposed adjacent to all features (i.e., P.P.S. policy 2.1.8), it is anticipated that a buffer of some width would be required in most cases, although the potential exists for no buffer to be required.

The options presented for the N.H.S. make recommendations for “mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers” and “minimum (prescribed)” buffers. The difference between mandatory (non-

prescribed) and minimum (prescribed) buffers is that for mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers, the policy would state that a buffer is required to the feature but would not state any minimum for the buffer width; that determination would be made through a site-specific study. For a minimum buffer, the policy would state the minimum buffer width required. As the term implies, the buffer width cannot be less than the required minimum, but may be larger as determined through a site-specific study. A minimum buffer does not provide any flexibility for a site-specific study to recommend a lesser width based on an analysis of the sensitivity of the feature and potential impacts to the feature and the ecological functions resulting from the proposed change in adjacent land use; this is generally considered more restrictive to development.

In the case of N.H.S. Option 3C within settlement areas, a mandatory (non-prescribed) buffer would be required from all 'natural heritage features and areas' and 'other natural heritage features and areas' as a precautionary approach to protect the long-term ecological function of the feature itself. The width of an ecologically appropriate buffer would be determined through study and be based on the sensitivity of the ecological functions from the change in adjacent land use, and the potential for impacts to the feature and ecological functions as a result of that change in land use.

When identifying ecologically appropriate buffers, it is important to recognize that the purpose of a buffer is to protect features and areas and their ecological functions from the impacts of the proposed land use or site alteration. A buffer is not intended to become part of the feature or area; however, a buffer should consist of natural self-sustaining vegetation as a condition of development (except where certain agricultural uses are exempt from the requirement of a buffer). Consideration can be given to including passive recreational uses such as trails in buffer areas as part of undertaking an environmental evaluation that determines the ecologically appropriate buffer width and what compatible uses may be considered within the buffer.

The buffer discussed above is a term that will only be used in the N.O.P. as it applies to 'natural heritage features and areas' outside of the N.H.S. for the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and outside of the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. The term buffer will apply to 'other woodlands' throughout the Region. Within the N.H.S. for the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and within the N.E.P. area, the term 'vegetation protection zone' (V.P.Z.) will be used to be consistent with the use of that term in those plans (except for 'other woodlands', where buffers apply). Similarly, the term V.P.Z. will be used as they apply to key hydrologic features outside of settlement areas, whereas the term buffer will be used as it applies to key hydrologic features within settlement areas. This is also necessary since both the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan establish specific minimum V.P.Z. requirements for 'natural heritage features and areas' and key

hydrologic features where they apply. While the N.E.P. also uses the term V.P.Z., it does not establish a minimum vegetation protection zone requirement.

The N.P.C.A. policies require a buffer to watercourses based on a certain thermal regime, which is typically 15 metres from watercourse containing permanent flow, cool water or coldwater systems, or specialized aquatic or riparian habitat, and 10 metres from intermittent watercourses, warmwater systems or general aquatic or riparian habitat. Reductions to this buffer may be considered by the N.P.C.A. in special circumstances as outlined in their policies.

The N.P.C.A. also require setbacks from features it regulates as natural hazards. The Conservation Authority Act regulations and N.P.C.A. policies requiring setbacks are intended to manage and minimize the potential for risk of harm to people and property resulting from the hazards associated with flooding, erosion and slope instability. It is important to note that the purpose of setbacks to hazard lands regulated by the N.P.C.A. is different than the purpose and function of a buffer to 'natural features and areas' as previously described. In this regard, N.P.C.A. policies provide some direction on what this setback to natural hazards should be with regard to site specific considerations.

It is important to note that the P.P.S. requires that the no negative impact test be applied whenever a Planning Act application is being considered, with the final determination being made by the municipality. As a result, and in the case of P.S.W.s, it is anticipated that the determination of an ecologically appropriate buffer width would be made by the municipality making a decision on the Planning Act application with input from the N.P.C.A. In all other cases (such as for 'other wetlands', watercourses and natural hazards) reliance would more be placed on the N.P.C.A. policy and regulatory framework.

Policy Approaches to Protect the N.H.S.

With multiple features and areas and different policies for each, it is often challenging to determine the implications of the policies that apply to these features, particularly in settlement areas where growth is directed. Furthermore, it is challenging to understand how these options for the N.H.S. protect features and areas, and conversely, how the options impact development requiring a Planning Act approval. The purpose of this section is to highlight the differences in the level of protection afforded to each component of the N.H.S.; in this regard, there are four categories, as discussed below.

Protection of Features and Areas Determined by the Federal or Provincial Governments

In the case of fish habitat and the habitat of endangered and threatened species (both of which are 'natural features and areas' by the P.P.S.), decisions affecting these features are made in accordance with provincial and federal requirements. For the habitat of endangered and threatened species, the responsibility for making decisions in this regard is the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. For fish habitat, the responsibility lies with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (D.F.O.). This is consistently the case in Options 1, 2, 3A, 3B and 3C.

Protection of Features and Areas

For certain features, they are afforded a high-level of protection where development is prohibited as set out in Section 2.1.4 of the P.P.S. This applies to P.S.W.s in all options, and also applies to significant woodlands in Options 3A, 3B and 3C.

For these features, it is anticipated that only the following would be permitted:

- a) Forest, fish, and wildlife management;
- b) Conservation and flood or erosion control projects, if they have been demonstrated to be necessary in the public interest and after all alternatives have been considered;
- c) Activities that create or maintain infrastructure authorized under an environmental assessment process; and
- d) Small-scale structures for recreational uses, including boardwalks, footbridges, fences, docks, and picnic facilities, if measures are taken to minimize the number of such structures and their negative impacts.

For significant woodlands in Options 3A, 3B and 3C, the following additional permissions could be considered:

- a) Expansions to existing buildings and structures, accessory structures and uses, and conversions of legally existing uses which bring the use more into conformity with this Plan, subject to demonstration that the use does not expand into the natural heritage features or their buffers, unless there is no other alternative, in which case any expansion will be limited in scope and kept within close geographical proximity to the existing structure;
- b) Expansions or alterations to existing buildings and structures for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, or on-farm diversified uses and expansions to existing residential dwellings if it is demonstrated that:

- i. there is no alternative, and the expansion or alteration in the feature is minimized and, in the buffer, is directed away from the feature to the maximum extent possible; and
- ii. the impact of the expansion or alteration on the feature and its functions is minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent possible.

In addition to the above, development and site alteration would not be permitted on adjacent lands to the 'natural heritage features and areas' unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.

Lastly, it is noted that the N.H.S. policies would not limit the ability of existing agricultural uses to continue.

Protection of the Health and Integrity of Features and Ecological Functions

In this case, development is also prohibited, unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions, in accordance with Section 2.1.5 of the P.P.S., where negative impact to 'natural heritage features and areas' (and 'other woodlands' where they are included in the system) is defined as "degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or ecological functions for which an area is identified due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities" (P.P.S. 2020). This policy would apply to the following features and areas:

- a) significant woodlands (in Options 1 and 2);
- b) significant valleylands (in Options 1, 2, 3A, 3B and 3C);
- c) significant wildlife habitat (in Options 1, 2, 3A, 3B and 3C); and
- d) significant areas of natural and scientific interest (in Options 1, 2, 3A, 3B and 3C).

'Other woodlands', which are included in Options 3B and 3C in settlement areas, would also be subject to the above policy.

In addition to the above, development and site alteration would not be permitted on adjacent lands to the 'natural heritage features and areas' unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions.

Opportunities to Enhance Features and Areas

This category applies to the following, which is a component of Option 3C in settlement areas:

- ‘Supporting features and areas’ including:
 - Grasslands/meadows/thickets not meeting the criteria as Significant Wildlife Habitat that are continuous with ‘natural heritage features and areas’ and ‘other natural heritage features and areas’ (not proposed to be mapped in the new N.O.P.);
 - Other valleylands (not proposed to be mapped in the new N.O.P.);
 - Other wildlife habitat (not proposed to be mapped in the new N.O.P.); and
 - Enhancement Areas (not proposed to be mapped in the new N.O.P.).
- Linkages (to be included in overlay designation).
- Since ‘supporting features and areas’ will not be mapped, they would only be identified when an environmental study is completed in support of a large-scale secondary plan or through the development approvals process. For linkages, which will be mapped, the policies on linkages would only be triggered when a Planning Act application is submitted, which means that an evaluation would then need to be completed. In this regard, possible outcomes include:
 - The incorporation of the linkage area as is into the development plan, such that development would not occur on those lands;
 - The refinement of the form (i.e., width) and ecological function (i.e., vegetation and wildlife habitat features) of the linkage based on a site-specific environmental evaluation; or
 - The elimination of the linkage area based on site specific analysis and confirmation that maintaining a linkage area in this location is not necessary for ecological reasons.

Water Resource System Policy Intent

Technical Report #2 recommended two options for a W.R.S. framework including the following:

- W.R.S. Option 1 – required standards related to Provincial planning requirements.
- W.R.S. Option 2 – going beyond required standards including an increasing number of components and potential connections.
 - W.R.S. Option 2 was further subdivided into Option 2A and 2B.

Following an additional review of the required standards of a W.R.S. as directed by the P.P.S. and the Growth Plan, and based on stakeholder feedback, one option has been identified for the

W.R.S.; this option includes the standard requirements as informed from provincial direction and best practices, where refinements to the system would be informed by watershed planning or equivalent.

To be consistent with the approach of the N.H.S. to provide an option for an overlay designation (N.H.S. Option 1) and an exclusive land use designation (N.H.S. Option 2), all wetlands would be identified in an exclusive land use designation in conjunction with N.H.S. Options 2 and 3.

Base Assumptions for the W.R.S.

1. Growth Plan requires that a W.R.S. that protects key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas and their functions be protected - this is the Growth Plan required standard and applies both inside and outside settlement areas and is mandatory. However, Growth Plan policies that prohibit development and site alteration within and adjacent to key hydrological features do not apply in settlement areas. This means that the potential exists for more flexibility to be afforded to evaluated non-Provincially significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands in settlement areas when development and site alteration is proposed within and adjacent to these wetlands in settlement areas.
2. The Growth Plan requires that planning for large-scale development in designated greenfield areas in settlement areas (including secondary plans) be informed by a subwatershed plan or its equivalent. The subwatershed plan should consider existing development and evaluate impacts of any potential or proposed land uses and development; identify hydrologic features, areas, linkages, and functions; identify natural features, areas, and related hydrologic functions; and provide for protecting, improving, or restoring the quality and quantity of water within a subwatershed.
3. One of the features typically considered in sub-watershed plans or its equivalent are headwater drainage features; for the purposes of the W.R.S., headwater drainage features classified as 'protection' or 'conservation' are considered required components.
4. The Greenbelt Plan also indicates that W.R.S. shall be identified in settlement areas and be informed by watershed planning and other available information, and the appropriate designations and policies shall be applied in official plans to provide for the long-term protection of key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas and their functions. However, Greenbelt Plan policies on development and site alteration within and adjacent to key hydrologic areas and key hydrologic features do not apply in settlement areas.
5. The P.P.S. requires that planning authorities protect, improve or restore the quality of water by identifying W.R.S.s consisting of ground water features, hydrologic functions, 'natural heritage features and areas', and surface water features including shoreline

areas, which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed and this mandatory requirement applies to lands within settlement areas as well.

6. The P.P.S. also requires that sensitive surface water and ground water features and their hydrologic functions be protected, improved or restored, provided they are sensitive.
7. P.S.W.s are also a 'natural heritage feature and area', and as such are subject to the policies of the P.P.S. that prohibit development in P.S.W.s and require the test of no negative impact be met for developed proposed on adjacent lands to 'natural heritage features and areas'.
8. Components of the W.R.S. (most notably wetlands and watercourses) are also protected in accordance with Conservation Authority Regulations and are subject to N.P.C.A. regulation and policies.

Policy Intent

1. To include the location of readily identifiable surface water components (most notably all wetlands) of the W.R.S. in an overlay designation or an exclusive land use designation depending on whether N.H.S. Option 1 or either of N.H.S. Options 2, 3A, 3B or 3C is selected;
2. To include policies in the N.O.P. that build upon and support N.P.C.A. policies on wetlands and watercourses, except that N.P.C.A. policies on off-setting will not be carried forward into the N.O.P;
3. To provide some flexibility in how development and site alteration applications are assessed in and adjacent to evaluated non-Provincially significant wetlands and unevaluated wetlands in settlement areas (referred to as 'other wetlands');
4. To ensure that a W.R.S. with all of the components listed in the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and the P.P.S. is identified through policy as a system that needs to be protected and where possible, enhanced or restored;
5. To indicate that other components of the W.R.S. that cannot be mapped be prioritized for identification through watershed planning exercises;
6. To require the identification of W.R.S. components through urban Secondary Plan exercises that also make recommendations on how components of the W.R.S. will be protected, enhanced or restored;
7. To ensure policies are consistent for those components included in the W.R.S. that are also regulated by the Conservation Authority regulations and N.P.C.A. policies; and,
8. To allow appropriate flexibility for refinement of hydrological features through future study, being mindful that a systems-based approach must be preserved, and features and functions must be maintained and/or enhanced.

Components of W.R.S.

At a minimum, the following would comprise the W.R.S.:

- The following features would be included as key hydrologic features in the W.R.S.:
 - Permanent streams and intermittent streams (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P.);
 - Inland lakes and their littoral zones (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P.);
 - Seepage areas and springs (these will not be mapped in the new N.O.P.); and
 - Wetlands (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P.).
- The following areas would be included as key hydrologic areas in the W.R.S.:
 - Significant groundwater recharge areas (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P. and included in an overlay designation regardless of which N.H.S. option is selected);
 - Highly vulnerable aquifers (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P. and included in an overlay designation regardless of which N.H.S. option is selected); and
 - Significant surface water contribution areas (these will not be mapped in the new N.O.P.)
 - These include headwater drainage features classified as “protection” and “conservation”;
- Floodplains, flooding hazards, floodways (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P. and included in an overlay designation regardless of which N.H.S. option is selected.); and
- Shoreline areas (these will be mapped in the new N.O.P. and included in an overlay designation regardless of which N.H.S. option is selected)

The following components are included as part of the W.R.S. It is anticipated that they would be identified through subwatershed studies completed as part of future secondary planning exercises, where they are considered “necessary to sustain healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and human water consumption” (Growth Plan Section 4.2.1.3), or “are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed” (P.P.S. 2.1.1):

- Ground water features:
 - recharge/discharge areas;
 - water tables; and
 - aquifers and unsaturated zones.
- Surface water features:

- headwaters;
- recharge/discharge areas; and
- associated riparian lands that can be defined by their soil moisture, soil type, vegetation, or topographic characteristics.
- Hydrologic functions

Policy Approaches to Protect the W.R.S

The requirement to identify a W.R.S. is relatively new in natural environment planning; as such, there is little direction in Provincial plans or other guidance documents to inform policy approaches to protect the W.R.S. With the direction provided in the Growth Plan and P.P.S. related to the intention of the W.R.S. to “provide for the long-term protection of key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas, and their functions” (Growth Plan, policy 4.2.1.2), as well as the policies of the N.P.C.A. related to regulated features, policy approaches have been developed to protect the W.R.S. The purpose of this section is to highlight the proposed policy approaches in order to highlight the differences in the level of protection afforded to each component of the W.R.S. according to Provincial policy and the policies of the N.P.C.A. In this regard, there are three categories, as discussed below.

Protection of Key Hydrologic Features

Wetlands

Outside of settlement areas, all wetlands (i.e., P.S.W.'s and non-P.S.W.'s) are prohibited from development in accordance with the Growth Plan policies on key hydrologic features, which also requires a minimum V.P.Z. be applied to key hydrologic features. In addition, the P.P.S. prohibits development in P.S.W.s. both outside and inside settlement areas.

Watercourses

The Greenbelt Plan prohibits development within key hydrologic features within the N.H.S., including watercourses. The Growth Plan also prohibits development within key hydrologic features, including permanent and intermittent streams; however, this policy only applies outside of settlement areas. The Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan both require a 30 m V.P.Z.s be provided to watercourses, which would apply outside of settlement areas. However, within the Greenbelt Plan there is a Niagara-specific policy that reduces the required V.P.Z. to 15m for certain permanent and intermittent streams when the proposed adjacent land use will be for agricultural purpose (subject to certain tests being met).

In general, interference with a watercourse is not permitted by N.P.C.A. policies and this also means that development is therefore prohibited within watercourses. This prohibition should

also be included in the N.O.P. Given that the N.P.C.A prohibits development within a watercourse anywhere in the Region, this prohibition should apply within settlement areas.

Inland Lakes and Their Littoral Zones

As a key hydrologic feature, it is also recommended the N.O.P. prohibit development and site alteration within inland lakes and their littoral zones. Outside of settlement areas the Growth Plan requires V.P.Z.s be applied to key hydrologic features, including inland lakes. Inside of settlement areas buffers consistent with those applied to watercourses should be applied as well, where supported by a site-specific study considered acceptable to the Region and subject to input from the N.P.C.A.

Seepage Areas and Springs

Outside of settlement area, development and site alteration within and adjacent to seepage areas and springs and inland lakes and their littoral zones is not permitted according to the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan. As with all key hydrologic features, a minimum V.P.Z. of 30 m is required outside of settlement areas. This policy will need to be incorporated within the N.O.P.

Protection of the Health and Integrity of Features and Hydrologic Functions

Wetlands

The N.P.C.A. generally restricts development and/or site alteration within a wetland (policy 8.2.2.1) as defined by the N.P.C.A. With the intent to align policies in the new N.O.P. with those of the N.P.C.A., in particular with regulated non-P.S.W.s in settlement areas (i.e., 'other wetlands'), it is anticipated that only the following would be permitted within 'other wetlands' by the N.O.P.:

- a) Forest, fish, and wildlife management;
- b) Conservation and flood or erosion control projects, if they have been demonstrated to be necessary in the public interest and after all alternatives have been considered
- c) Activities that create or maintain infrastructure authorized under an environmental assessment process; and
- d) Small-scale structures for recreational uses, including boardwalks, footbridges, fences, docks, and picnic facilities, if measures are taken to minimize the number of such structures and their negative impacts.

It is noted that N.P.C.A. policies also permit replacement of structures in wetlands subject to a number of criteria. It is also noted that N.P.C.A. policies allow for offsetting (policy 8.2.2.8) which will not be permitted in accordance with the new N.O.P.

N.P.C.A. policies require that an area of interference be established within 120 metres of regulated wetlands that have an area of greater than 2 hectares and within 30 metres for wetlands smaller than 2 ha. This area of interference would be analogous to the 'adjacent lands' that is located adjacent to significant natural heritage features and areas according to the P.P.S. Within the area of interference and within 'adjacent lands', studies are typically required to determine the impacts of proposed development on the wetland. For P.S.W.'s, the P.P.S. requires that the 'no negative impact test' be demonstrated when development is proposed on 'adjacent lands.' For 'other wetlands', the N.P.C.A. policies do not require that the no negative impact test be satisfied; instead, a number of site-specific factors are taken into account when considering development adjacent to wetlands.

In terms of the approach going forward in the N.O.P. as it relates to the area of interference and 'adjacent lands' where development may be permitted, it is recommended that satisfying the no negative impact test be a requirement when development is proposed adjacent to P.S.W.'s. For all 'other wetlands' within settlement areas, it is recommended that N.P.C.A. policies that take context into account when development is proposed adjacent to 'other wetlands' be incorporated into the N.O.P.

The N.P.C.A policies do not specify the need for a vegetation protection zone from wetlands, nor do they specify that a buffer from wetlands is required. Instead, the N.P.C.A. policies simply state that no development is permitted within 30 metres of a wetland, and this would be considered a setback. However, within settlement areas the N.P.C.A. may consider the following within this 30-metre area:

- a) Infrastructure;
- b) Conservation and restoration projects;
- c) Passive recreational uses
- d) Replacement structures, accessory structures and minor additions
- e) Other forms of development and site alteration which do not adversely impact the ecological and hydrological function of the wetland, and where the proposed development meets the five tests under the Conservation Authorities Act

It is recommended that a similar policy be incorporated in the new N.O.P. N.P.C.A policies also deal with lot creation through the consent and plan of subdivision processes and these policies also indicate that new development should be 30 metres away from wetlands; however, exceptions are provided based on the characteristics of the wetland, the characteristics of the area adjacent to the wetland and the potential for impact resulting from the proposed development. It is recommended that similar policies be included within the N.O.P.

The above is intended to make a distinction between P.S.W.s and non-P.S.W.s (i.e., ‘other wetlands’) in policy such that while development and site alteration is clearly prohibited in P.S.W.s, there is some flexibility afforded with non-P.S.W.s, with a focus more on protecting hydrological functions.

It should also be noted that for non-P.S.W.s in settlement areas that do not meet the definition of ‘other wetland’ and to which the N.P.C.A. policies would not apply, but do meet the definition of ‘wetland’, the Region and/or the N.P.C.A. may require that an appropriate study (e.g., E.I.S., hydrologic evaluation) be undertaken to determine if the wetland should be protected in situ with appropriate buffers/setbacks or if the hydrologic function provided by the wetland should be maintained or managed as part of the design of the development. This is consistent with N.P.C.A. policies that also require that evaluations be carried out when development is proposed within a wetland that has not been evaluated in accordance with the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System; a similar policy should be included in the N.O.P.

Watercourses

N.P.C.A. policies also require a 10 to 15 metre buffer from watercourses depending on thermal regime, and it is recommended that the new N.O.P. also include a similar requirement from watercourses within settlement areas. However, N.P.C.A. policies do allow for a reduction in the size of the buffer. As a consequence, the policies in the N.O.P. should also allow for a reduction in the size of the buffer within settlement areas where supported by a site-specific study considered acceptable to the Region and subject to input from the N.P.C.A.

Floodplains, Flooding Hazards, Floodways and Shoreline Areas

It is recommended that the N.O.P. policies restrict development in flood hazards consistent with the policy concepts for flood hazards of the N.P.C.A. This includes the policies related to the ‘One Zone Concept’ and the ‘Two Zone Concept’ which provides varying degrees of restrictions to development within the floodway and flood fringe of the flooding hazard. The N.O.P. should also be consistent with identifying restricted and permitted uses within the food hazard that is consistent with the objectives of the Conservation Authorities Act and subject to the Regulation 155/06.

The new N.O.P. should also align policies related to shoreline hazards as they related to the identification of the shoreline areas of the W.R.S. This includes restricting development in the shoreline hazard area including the shoreline flooding hazard, shoreline erosion and slope stability hazard, and the dynamic beach hazard.

The N.P.C.A. policies (5.1.5.2) identify a generic setback for development along the Great Lakes shoreline as 30 metres from the limits of the shoreline food hazard. Consistent with the

N.P.C.A. policies, the extent of the setback can be refined based on a site-specific analysis completed by a qualified engineer to determine the extent of the dynamic beach hazard.

Protect, Enhance or Restore

There are a number of other key hydrologic features and key hydrologic areas that also require protection in accordance with Provincial policy. These include seepage areas and springs within settlement areas (a key hydrological feature), significant groundwater recharge (and discharge) areas, highly vulnerable aquifers and significant surface water contribution areas (which include headwater drainage features), all of which are key hydrological areas. Of these, significant groundwater recharge areas and highly vulnerable aquifers will be mapped in the N.O.P. and included within an overlay designation. The location of seepage areas and springs and significant surface water contribution areas can only be identified through future study.

For each of the above components of the W.R.S., there will be a need for policies in the N.O.P. that require the submission of appropriate studies that evaluate the impacts of the proposed development and which identify how the quality and quantity of water within a subwatershed can be protected, enhanced or restored. To inform the completion of studies considered acceptable to the Region, W.R.S. guidelines could be developed, similar to Environmental Impact Study Guidelines. The requirement that appropriate studies demonstrate that the quality and quantity of water within a subwatershed will be protected, enhanced or restored would be consistent Regional Council direction on the South Niagara Aquifer, which is considered a highly vulnerable aquifer. In this regard, Regional Council directed staff to consider the South Niagara highly vulnerable aquifer as an important vital source of water for rural residents and that specific N.O.P. policies be developed to reflect the importance and subsequent protection of this water source.

The above policy would only be triggered when a Planning Act application is submitted and would not apply to development that is already permitted as-of-right on a property. However, it is also recommended that consideration be given to requiring site plan approval for all development and redevelopment on private services in significant groundwater recharge (and discharge) areas, highly vulnerable aquifers and significant surface water contribution areas as well. Requiring site plan approval would allow the approval authority to require enhancements to existing septic systems through the establishment of on-site phosphorus management and impact mitigation measures.

In addition to the above, enhanced stormwater management policies could be included in the N.O.P. that would apply to significant groundwater recharge (and discharge) areas, highly vulnerable aquifers and significant surface water contribution areas. These enhanced policies would require all proposals to be designed based on a treatment train approach to address

requirements for water quality, erosion control, flood control, thermal mitigation and water budget. Low Impact Development Best Management Practices such as bioswales/biofilters with underdrains, infiltration trenches, rain gardens and perforated pipes would also be encouraged through policy in addition to wet end of pipe facilities to conserve water use and to manage stormwater on-site. These policies would also require that the approval authority be satisfied that:

- a) New buildings are designed where possible to collect rainwater for irrigation on site, and reduce excess stormwater runoff, which carries pollutants into natural waterways and groundwater recharge areas, with these features allowing for the consideration of reduced sizes for stormwater management facilities;
- b) Stormwater management features are strategically located to take advantage of the existing topography and drainage patterns and to minimize their footprint;
- c) Stormwater management features are developed as naturalized facilities, and incorporate native planting to help support pollinator species, and enhance biodiversity;
- d) Stormwater management facilities are designed to support key features and ecological functions in the N.H.S.;
- e) Rainwater harvesting systems, such as rain barrels and other simple cisterns, are installed where feasible to capture rainwater, which can be used for landscape irrigation, thereby reducing unnecessary use of potable water;
- f) All buildings are designed for efficient water use using conventional methods, such as ultra-low flow fixtures and dual flush toilets and other innovative water saving measures like waterless urinals, and grey-water recycling systems;
- g) Landscaped areas are located to optimize water infiltration potential;
- h) The landscaping of public and private facilities utilizes drought tolerant native and non-invasive species that require minimal irrigation;
- i) Surface parking areas minimize the use of impervious surface materials, such as through the incorporation of permeable pavers and trenches, where feasible;
- j) Impermeable hard surfaced areas (i.e., driveways and parking areas) are reduced and opportunities for ground water infiltration are encouraged; and
- k) Rain gardens, complete with native plant species and soil media, are developed to detain, infiltrate and filter runoff discharge from roof leaders, and/or are integrated into surface parking areas where feasible.

Natural Environment System Summary

As described in the introduction to this Technical Memorandum, the N.H.S. and the W.R.S. are ecologically interconnected and are thus collectively referred to as the N.E.S. While the policy framework for the N.H.S. and W.R.S. and the options developed for each system are reviewed independently because of the different Provincial policies that apply to each system, collectively these systems form the integrated N.E.S.

Through the exercise of mapping the N.H.S. and W.R.S. options in settlement areas and preparing policy intent for each of the options, refinements to those options have been made as noted in the preceding sections. Some of the changes to the original options proposed in Technical Report #2 include the following:

1. The definition of ‘woodlands’ was updated resulting in a smaller subset of woodlands being identified as ‘significant’ (many of the features previously identified as significant woodlands are P.S.W.s or ‘other wetlands’ which have a higher-level of protection currently afforded to significant woodlands – see discussion in Appendix B). The analysis in Appendix B concludes the change in definitions would not result in reduction in the area of treed vegetation communities included within the Region’s N.E.S.s if Option 3B or 3C is selected.
2. Due to a smaller subset of woodlands being captured by the criteria for significant woodlands, the category of ‘other woodlands’ was moved from N.H.S. Option 3C to 3B in settlement areas, and moved from N.H.S. Option 3B to 3A outside of settlement areas.
3. Components that are required to be included in the W.R.S. but were identified as optional components of the N.H.S. (e.g., ‘other wetlands’, permanent and intermittent streams, seepage areas and springs, and inland lakes and their littoral zones) are no longer discussed as optional components of the N.H.S. options. Rather, these components are considered a required component of the integrated N.E.S.
4. Following an additional review of the minimum requirements of a W.R.S. as directed by the P.P.S. and the Growth Plan, and based on stakeholder feedback, headwater drainage features that would be classified as “protection” and “conservation” are included as a required component of the N.E.S.
5. Lastly, only one option for the W.R.S. is being proposed based on what are considered standard requirements as informed from provincial direction and best practices, where refinements to the system would be informed by watershed planning or equivalent.

Based on the updated approach to identifying options for the N.E.S., the following standard required components have been identified for the integrated N.E.S.:

- ‘natural heritage features and areas’
 - Provincially significant wetlands
 - Significant coastal wetlands
 - Habitat of endangered species and threatened species
 - Fish habitat
 - Significant areas of natural and scientific interest
 - Significant valleylands
 - Significant woodlands
 - Significant wildlife habitat
- Key hydrologic features
 - Permanent streams and intermittent streams
 - Inland lakes and their littoral zones
 - Seepage areas and springs
 - Wetlands (both P.S.W. non-P.S.W.)
- Key hydrologic areas
 - Significant groundwater recharge areas
 - Highly vulnerable aquifers
 - Significant surface water contribution areas (including headwater drainage features classified as “protection” and “conservation”)
- Ground water features
- Surface water features
- Hydrologic functions;
- Shoreline areas
- Hydrologic functions
 - Floodplains, flooding hazards, floodways
- Vegetation Protection Zones
 - to ‘natural heritage features and areas’ in the Growth Plan N.H.S. and Greenbelt Plan N.H.S.
 - to key hydrologic features outside of settlement areas; and
- Setbacks/buffers to regulated features and areas in accordance with N.P.C.A. policies.

The policy intent for each of the options for the N.H.S. and W.R.S. as described above would apply to the integrated N.E.S., including policies for Significant Woodlands (recall the prohibition to development in N.H.S. Option 3), and the addition of ‘other natural heritage features and areas’ (previously identified in N.H.S. Option 3B, now identified in N.H.S. Option 3A). **Table 1**

provides an overview of the options for the N.E.S. which is consistent with the approach to identifying the options for the N.H.S. and W.R.S identified in Technical Report #2.

The approach to an overlay vs. designation described previously in N.H.S. Options 1 and 2 would be similarly applied where the following features would be identified in an exclusive land use designation in N.H.S. Options 2, 3A, 3B and 3C and the Option for the W.R.S. within settlement areas:

- Wetlands (including P.S.W.s and 'other wetlands')
- Inland lakes and their littoral zones¹
- Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest
- Significant Woodlands
- 'Other woodlands' (where introduced in N.H.S. Option 3B and 3C)

¹ Through applying the criteria established for inland lakes as part of the exercise to map the N.E.S. in urban areas it was determined that there are no inland lakes in urban areas. Therefore while inland lakes are not identified in the mapping of the N.E.S. in urban areas, they are part of the N.E.S. and would be identified in mapping of the N.E.S. outside of urban areas.

Table 1. Overview of the options for the N.E.S. both inside and outside of settlement areas - Note: Not all of the features on this table will be mapped.

	N.H.S. Option 1 and 2 + W.R.S.	N.H.S. Option 3A + W.R.S.	N.H.S. Option 3B + W.R.S.	N.H.S. Option 3C + W.R.S.
Component Features and Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural heritage features and areas • Key hydrologic features • Key hydrologic areas • Ground water features • Surface water features • Hydrologic functions • Shoreline areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as N.H.S. Option 2, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Other woodlands' outside of settlement areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as N.H.S. Option 3A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Other woodlands' Region-wide (i.e., added in settlement areas) ○ 'Supporting Features and Areas' outside of settlement areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as N.H.S. Option 3B, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'Supporting features and areas' Region-wide (i.e., added in settlement areas)

Connecting the System (linkages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None in addition to those identified in the Growth Plan N.H.S. and Greenbelt Plan N.H.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large linkages only between 'natural heritage features and areas' (including 'other woodlands') outside of settlement areas None in settlement areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large and medium linkages between 'natural heritage features and areas' (including 'other woodlands') outside of settlement areas None in settlement areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large and medium linkages between 'natural heritage features and areas' (including 'other woodlands') outside of settlement areas Small linkages between 'natural heritage features and areas' (including 'other woodlands') Region-wide (including within settlement areas)
	N.H.S. Option 1 and 2 + W.R.S.	N.H.S. Option 3A + W.R.S.	N.H.S. Option 3B + W.R.S.	N.H.S. Option 3C + W.R.S.
Buffers, Setbacks, and Vegetation Protection Zones (V.P.Z.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mandatory or minimum buffers to 'natural heritage features and areas' outside of the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan N.H.S. (except for P.S.W.s in accordance with N.P.C.A. policies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as N.H.S. Options 1 and 2 plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers to 'natural heritage features and areas' and 'other woodlands' outside of provincial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as N.H.S. Options 1 and 2 plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum (prescribed) buffers to 'natural features and areas' and 'other woodlands' outside of provincial N.H.S.s, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as N.H.S. Option 3B, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory (non-prescribed) buffers to 'natural heritage features and areas' and 'other woodlands' inside of settlement areas

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffers to watercourses as per N.P.C.A. policies • Setbacks to regulated features and areas as per N.P.C.A. policies • Minimum V.P.Z.s to 'natural heritage features and areas' inside of the Growth Plan NHS and Greenbelt Plan NHS • Minimum V.P.Z.s to Key Hydrologic Features outside of settlement areas as required by the Growth Plan 	N.H.S.s and outside of settlement areas	outside of settlement areas	
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Review of Policy Implications Related to Natural Environment System Options in Settlement Areas

Niagara Region staff have prepared mapping of the options of the integrated N.E.S. in the 27 urban areas based on direction provided by the consultant team (**Appendix C**). In addition, the Region has prepared statistics related to the mappable components in each of the options within each urban area (**Appendix D**). The purpose of preparing the mapping and statistics for each of the options within the 27 urban areas is to provide a visual and quantitative comparison of the options within each urban area. For the purpose of evaluating the implications of N.E.S. policies, the mapping of features and areas previously identified as suitable for mapping in Technical Report #2, and statistics related to natural area cover for each of the options has been combined to review natural features and areas and key hydrologic features in a series of maps with related statistics into three main groups:

- Map A - N.H.S. Option 1/2/3A + Key Hydrologic Features
- Map B - N.H.S. Option 3B + Key Hydrologic Features
- Map C - N.H.S. Option 3C + Key Hydrologic Features

Map A (**Appendix D**) includes N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A because the ‘natural heritage features and areas’ in each are the same (within settlement areas). Map B is different because of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 3B, and then Map C (**Appendix D**) is different because of the addition of linkage areas and buffers (buffers shown for comparison purposes only). The same key hydrological features (most notably ‘other wetlands’) are shown on each map.

An additional map (Map D, **Appendix B**) with related statistics was prepared for each settlement area that identifies the following hydrologic areas of the W.R.S.:

- Key Hydrologic Areas
 - Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas
 - Highly Vulnerable Aquifers
- Shoreline Areas
- Floodplains, Flooding Hazards

For information purposes, the Core N.H.S. from the existing Regional Official Plan was mapped (Map E, **Appendix D**) in each settlement area with accompanying statistics. This is being provided for information purposes only and is not being compared to mapping presented in Maps A, B and C because it would not be an appropriate comparison. This is because the

current Core N.H.S. mapping contains a different set of components (e.g., valleylands are not mapped in options prepared for consideration in the new N.O.P.), and the current N.O.P is not reflective of current required Provincial standards for the identification and protection of the N.E.S. The current Core N.H.S. does not include all of the key hydrological features (most notably non-Provincially significant wetlands) that are regulated by the N.P.C.A. The following section provides an overview of the statistics generated for each option within each urban area.

Grimsby – Review of N.E.S. Options

Grimsby has a total land area of 1,323 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 60.4 ha (4.6%), 70.8 ha (5.3%) and 87.9 ha (6.6%) of Grimsby respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 1A). When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs as result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 3B which adds 13 ha (1%) of natural features, followed by an additional 14.8 ha (1.1%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 27.3 ha (2%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 1,201.8 ha (90.8%) of the urban area, which consists of 1,174.7 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 8.4 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 28.7 ha of shoreline areas, and 33.0 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 1B).

Beamsville – Review of N.E.S. Options

Beamsville has a total land area of 660 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 62.9 ha (9.5%), 68.9 ha (10.4%) and 75.3 ha (11.4%) of Beamsville respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 2A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 8.6 ha (1.3%) of natural features followed by an additional 3.8 ha (0.6%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C when compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 12.4 ha (1.9%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 404.5 ha (61.3%) of the urban area, which consists of 324.5 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 158.5 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 17.3 ha of shoreline areas, and 17.3 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 2B).

Campden – Review of N.E.S. Options

Campden has a total land area of 47.8 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 9.9 ha (20.7%), 10.8 ha (22.5%) and 11.9 ha (24.8%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 3A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 1.1 ha (2.4%) of natural features followed by an additional 0.8 ha (1.9%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 2.0 ha (4.2%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 32.7 ha (68.4%) of the urban area, which consists of 27.65 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 2.0 ha of shoreline areas, and 6.0 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 3B).

Jordan – Review of N.E.S. Options

Jordan has a total land area of 39.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 2.1 ha (5.3%), 2.1 ha (5.3%) and 4.1 ha (10.5%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 4A). The increase in cover that is observed in N.H.S. Option 3C occurs solely as a result of adding buffers to significant woodlands, which adds 2.1 ha, or an additional 2% of cover of N.H.S. to the urban area.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 2.0 (5.1%) of the urban area, which consists of 2.0 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers and 0.1 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas (**Appendix D**, Table 4B).

Jordan Station– Review of N.E.S. Options

Jordan Station has a total land area of 36.5 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 1.0 ha (2.7%), 1.0 ha (2.7%) and 1.8 ha (5.0%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 5A).

The increase in N.H.S. cover between N.H.S. Options 3A and 3B with N.H.S. Option 3C is a result of the addition of mapped buffers to the significant woodlands.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 33.6 ha (92.2%) of the urban area, which consists of 33.2 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 10.1 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, and 0.1 ha of shoreline areas (**Appendix D**, Table 5B).

Prudhommes – Review of N.E.S. Options

Prudhommes has a total land area of 52.7 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 10.5 ha (19.9%), 12.1 ha (23.1%) and 14.3 ha (27.1%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 6A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 1.7 ha (3.1%) of natural features followed by an additional 2.1 ha (4.0%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 3.8 ha (7.2%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 43.3 ha (82.1%) of the urban area, which consists of 41.4 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 13.4 ha of shoreline areas, and 1.0 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 6B).

Vineland – Review of N.E.S. Options

Vineland has a total land area of 144.9 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 4.4 ha (3.1%), 6.7 ha (4.6%) and 9.0 ha (6.2%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 7A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 2.3 ha (1.6%) of natural cover followed by an additional 2.4 ha (1.7%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 4.6 ha (3.1%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 96.9 ha (66.9%) of the urban area, which consists of 96.0 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 32.5 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 0.5 ha of shoreline areas, and 1.0 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 7B).

Vineland South – Review of N.E.S. Options

Vineland South has a total land area of 17.0 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 1.5 ha (8.7%), 1.5 ha (8.7%) and 3.3 ha (19.7%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 8A). The total cover of the N.H.S. as identified in N.H.S. Option 3C is greater than N.H.S. Options 3A and 3B as a result of mapping of buffers to woodlands (1.9 ha; 11.0%).

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 1.0 ha (5.8%) of the urban area, which consists of 1.0 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers (**Appendix D**, Table 8B).

St. Catharines – Review of N.E.S. Options

St. Catharines has a total land area of 6,852.0 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 911.8 ha (13.3%), 963.0 ha (14.1%) and 1,106.5 ha (16.1%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 9A).

The increase in cover observed in the mapping of N.H.S. Options 3B and 3C is combination of mapping of 'other woodlands' (67.4 ha; 1.0%), and mapping of buffers to woodlands (128.1 ha; 1.9%).

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 194.7 ha (2.8%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 4,061.9 ha (59.3%) of the urban area, which consists of 3,916.0 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 4.6 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 211.9 ha of shoreline areas, and 135.5 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 9B).

Glendale – Review of N.E.S. Options

Glendale has a total land area of 370.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 76.3 ha (20.6%), 77.2 ha (20.8%) and 84.6 ha (22.8%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 10A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of 'other woodlands' in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 0.9 ha (0.3%) of natural cover followed by an additional 7.5 ha (2.0%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 8.3 ha (2.2%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 37.1 ha (10.0%) of the urban area, which consists of 4.7 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 17.8 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 19.5 ha of shoreline areas, and 7.6 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 10B).

Niagara-on-the-Lake – Review of N.E.S. Options

Niagara-on-the-Lake (Old Town) has a total land area of 461.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 36.9 ha (8.0%), 43.1 ha (9.3%) and 49.3 ha (10.7%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 11A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 6.7 ha (1.5%) of natural cover followed by an additional 5.7 ha (1.2%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 12.4 ha (2.7%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 117.0 ha (25.3%) of the urban area, which consists of 94.3 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 10.9 ha of shoreline areas, and 21.6 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 11B).

Queenston – Review of N.E.S. Options

Queenston has a total land area of 63.9 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 10.2 ha (16.0%), 10.2 ha (16.0%) and 14.9 ha (23.3%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 12A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of buffers to woodlands in N.H.S. Option 3C, which adds 5 ha (7.8%) to the N.H.S. compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 52.8 ha (82.7%) of the urban area, which consists of 52.4 ha of highly

vulnerable aquifers, 0.5 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, and 1.7 ha of shoreline areas (**Appendix D**, Table 12B).

St. Davids – Review of N.E.S. Options

St. Davids has a total land area of 245.4 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 31.7 ha (12.9%), 32.4 ha (13.2%) and 40.9 ha (16.7%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 13A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 1.0 ha (0.4%) of natural cover followed by an additional 8.2 ha (3.3%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 9.2 ha (3.7%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 178.5 ha (72.7%) of the urban area, which consists of 162.6 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 33.6 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 4.5 ha of shoreline areas, and 3.2 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 13B).

Virgil – Review of N.E.S. Options

Virgil has a total land area of 253.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 19.1 ha (7.5%), 20.6 ha (8.1%) and 21.9 ha (8.6%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 14A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 2.0 ha (0.8%) of natural cover followed by an additional 0.7 ha (0.3%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 2.8 ha (1.1%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 169.5 ha (66.8%) of the urban area, which consists of 150.3 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 44.4 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 7.3 ha of shoreline areas, and 12.0 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 14B).

Smithville – Review of N.E.S. Options

Smithville has a total land area of 565.0 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 76.3 ha (13.5%), 77.0 ha (13.6%) and 82.3 ha (14.6%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 15A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 0.9 ha (0.2%) of natural cover followed by an additional 5.1 ha (0.9%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 6.0 ha (1.1%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 296.9 ha (52.6%) of the urban area, which consists of 283.1 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 23.7 ha of shoreline areas, and 48.5 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 15B).

Fenwick – Review of N.E.S. Options

Fenwick has a total land area of 251.3 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 38.0 ha (15.1%), 48.0 ha (19.1%) and 55.4 ha (22.0%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 16A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 11.3 ha (4.5%) of natural cover followed by an additional 6 ha (2.4%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 17.4 ha (6.9%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 232.6 ha (92.5%) of the urban area, which consists of 232.3 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 169.7 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, and 1.9 ha of shoreline areas (**Appendix D**, Table 16B).

Fonthill – Review of N.E.S. Options

Fonthill has a total land area of 788.3 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 120.4 ha (15.3%), 128.2 ha (16.3%) and 144.3 ha (18.3%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 17A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 8.9 ha (1.1%) of natural cover followed by an additional 15.7 ha (2.0%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 23.9 ha (3.0%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 775.2 ha (98.3%) of the urban area, which consists of 715.2 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 341.9 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, and 5.3 ha of shoreline areas (**Appendix D**, Table 17B).

Port Robinson – Review of N.E.S. Options

Port Robinson has a total land area of 597.4 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 242.6 ha (40.6%), 244.9 ha (41.0%) and 259.0 ha (43.4%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 18A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 3.1 ha (0.5%) of natural cover followed by an additional 9.3 ha (1.6%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. The addition of a small linkage in N.H.S. Option 3C also resulted in an increase of 3.5 ha (0.6%) of the N.E.S.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 16.4 ha (2.7%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 260.5 ha (43.6%) of the urban area, which consists of 70.8 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 265.1 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 11.9 ha of shoreline areas, and 42.4 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 18B).

Thorold North – Review of N.E.S. Options

Thorold North has a total land area of 778.2 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 32.7 ha (4.2%), 32.7 ha (4.2%) and 35.8 ha (4.6%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 19A).

When comparing the options, there is a minor increase in cover resulting from the addition of buffers to woodlands in N.H.S. Option 3C, which adds 3.1 ha (0.4 %).

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 290.7 ha (37.4%) of the urban area, which consists of 291.3 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers and 3.6 ha of shoreline areas (**Appendix D**, Table 19B).

Thorold South – Review of N.E.S. Options

Thorold South has a total land area of 1,073.0 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 184.8 ha (17.2%), 189.1 ha (17.6%) and 204.1 ha (19.0%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 20A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 5.6 ha (0.5%) of natural cover followed by an additional 13.6 ha (1.3%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 19.3 ha (1.8%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 214.5 ha (20.0%) of the urban area, which consists of 202.4 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers and 23.7 ha of shoreline areas (**Appendix D**, Table 20B).

Welland – Review of N.E.S. Options

Welland has a total land area of 4,994.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 1,494.1 ha (29.9%), 1,542.3 ha (30.9%) and 1,567.6 ha (31.4%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 21A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 60.9 ha (1.2%) of natural cover followed by an additional 3.2 ha (0.07%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. The addition of a small linkage in N.H.S. Option 3C also resulted in an increase of 9.6 ha (0.2%) of the N.E.S.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 73.5 ha (1.5%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 452.5 ha (9.1%) of the urban area, which consists of 223.8 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 23.7 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 141.0 ha of shoreline areas, and 141.3 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 21B).

Niagara Falls – Review of N.E.S. Options

Niagara Falls has a total land area of 8,221.4 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 1,893.8 ha (23.0%), 2,037.2 ha (24.8%) and 2,196.3 ha (26.7%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 22A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 3B which adds 199.6 ha (2.4%) of natural cover followed by an additional 121.7 ha (1.5%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. The addition of a small linkage in N.H.S. Option 3C also resulted in an increase of 11.7 ha (0.1%) of the N.E.S.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 302.5 ha (3.7%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 2,947.6 ha (35.9%) of the urban area, which consists of 2,611.2 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 2.7 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 193.8 ha of shoreline areas, and 296.3 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 22B).

Port Colborne – Review of N.E.S. Options

Port Colborne has a total land area of 2,378.1 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 607.4 ha (25.5%), 678.8 ha (28.5%) and 707.1 ha (29.7%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 23A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 85.4 ha (3.6%) of natural cover followed by an additional 5.8 ha (0.2%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A. The addition of a small linkage in N.H.S. Option 3C also resulted in an increase of 9.3 ha (0.4%) of the N.E.S.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 99.7 ha (4.2%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 2,227.4 ha (93.7%) of the urban area, which consists of 2,212.9 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 0.7 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 62.2 ha of shoreline areas, and 72.1 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 23B).

Crystal Beach – Review of N.E.S. Options

Crystal Beach has a total land area of 882.8 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 135.2 ha (15.3%), 140.2 ha (15.9%) and 151.1 ha (17.1%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 24A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 5.4 ha (0.6%) of natural cover followed by an additional 10.5 ha (1.2%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 15.9 ha (1.8%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 704.8 ha (79.8%) of the urban area, which consists of 693.2 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 22.7 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 82.0 ha of shoreline areas, and 28.7 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 24B).

Douglastown – Review of N.E.S. Options

Douglastown has a total land area of 179.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 46.7 ha (26.0%), 56.4 ha (31.4%) and 57.6 ha (32.1%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 25A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs is a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 9.7 ha (5.4%) of natural cover followed by an additional 1.1 ha (0.6%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 10.9 ha (6.1%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 25.1 ha (14.0%) of the urban area, which consists of 3.1 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 14.6 ha of shoreline areas, and 20.7 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 25B).

Fort Erie – Review of N.E.S. Options

Fort Erie has a total land area of 2,855.9 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 1,071.5 ha (37.5%), 1,114.1 ha (39.0%) and 1,139.2 ha (39.9%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 26A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs as a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 2B which adds 52.6 ha (1.8%) of natural cover followed by an additional 15.1 ha (0.5%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

This means that the size of the N.E.S. increases by 67.7 ha (2.4%) in Option 3C over the Provincial standard requirements in N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A as more components are added in each of Options 3B and 3C.

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 2,009.5 ha (70.4%) of the urban area, which consists of 1,990.6 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 17.3 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 75.1 ha of shoreline areas, and 79.0 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 26B).

Stevensville – Review of N.E.S. Options

Stevensville has a total land area of 211.6 ha. The mapping of the three options in Maps A, B and C results in the N.E.S. covering 68.6 ha (32.4%), 68.6 ha (32.4%) and 69.2 ha (32.7%) of the urban area respectively (**Appendix D**, Table 27A).

When comparing the options, the increase in cover occurs as a result of the addition of ‘other woodlands’ in N.H.S. Option 3B which adds 0.1 ha (0.05%) of natural cover followed by an additional 0.5 ha (0.2%) of buffers in N.H.S. Option 3C compared with N.H.S. Option 3A.

There is a minor increase in environmentally protected lands between the minimum requirements and N.H.S. Option 3C (0.6 ha or 0.3%).

The mapping of the Key Hydrologic Areas, Shoreline Areas, and Areas that Support Hydrologic Functions (Map D) covers 39.8 ha (18.8%) of the urban area, which consists of 12.1 ha of highly vulnerable aquifers, 23.5 ha of significant groundwater recharge areas, 31.0 ha of shoreline areas, and 14.5 ha of floodplains and flooding hazards (**Appendix D**, Table 27B).

Discussion – Implications of Natural Environment System Options

As mentioned above, N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A within settlement areas and the one W.R.S. Option reflect Provincial standards and are considered to be required standards in accordance with Provincial policy. Combined, the land areas that reflect Provincial standards are generally fixed. However, the boundaries of the ‘natural heritage features and areas’ (including ‘other woodlands’) and key hydrological features can be reviewed in more detail through the preparation of secondary plans, watershed studies and through the review of development applications.

It must first be recognized that there are a number of ‘natural heritage features and areas’ that have not been mapped including significant wildlife habitat and habitat of endangered and threatened species. Their identification through site-specific studies may have an impact on the amount of potentially developable land. That said, within settlement areas the majority of natural features where significant wildlife habitat and habitat of endangered and threatened species would mostly be located within natural features already included within the N.E.S. (e.g., woodlands and wetlands), so the impact on the amount of potentially developable land would likely be marginal.

The total amount of land within the urban areas that is comprised of mapped ‘natural heritage features and areas’ and key hydrologic features that is based on Provincial standards is 7,260 ha. Given that the total land area of the Region's urban areas is 34,346 ha, these components of the N.E.S. comprise about 21.1% of the Region's urban area. The amount of land available for new development within each urban area will depend on how much of the urban area is already developed and the size of the urban area. For example, while mapping of the ‘natural heritage features and areas’ and key hydrologic features amounts to 4.6% of Grimsby's urban area, much of the urban area is developed meaning any increase to the system beyond Provincial standards would have a relatively greater impact to the remaining area of developable land. In comparison, large undeveloped areas remain in Niagara Falls, even where 1,893.8 hectares or 23.0% of the urban area is comprised of required components of natural heritage features and key hydrologic features.

There is a distinction in natural cover and feature type throughout the Region depending on the topography of the urban area. For example, urban areas with relatively flat topography and poor draining soils support wetland communities include P.S.W.s and ‘other wetlands’, both required components of the W.R.S. In these urban areas, there is little change in spatial coverage of the N.E.S. across the options. However, in urban areas with more upland communities, there is a higher proportion of significant woodlands and ‘other woodlands’. Since ‘other woodlands’ are considered an ‘optional component’ and not introduced in settlement areas until N.H.S. Option

3B, there tends to be a greater difference in spatial coverage between the options in urban areas with more upland vegetation communities. In this regard, the amount of land area that is occupied by 'other woodlands' added in Option 3B is very little in some cases such as 0.1 ha in Stevensville to 199.6 ha in Niagara Falls. However, while 199.6 hectares is a large amount of land on its own, it only adds 2.4% of the land in the Niagara Falls urban area to the N.E.S. This is due to the larger size of the Niagara Falls urban area, which is 8,221.4 ha. In total, the amount of 'other woodlands' added to the N.E.S. in all of the Region's urban areas is 548.2 ha, and results in 1.6% of the total combined area of the Region's urban area potentially being added into the N.E.S. as a result. To put this in perspective, 26,659.3 ha of land within the Region's urban areas remain outside of the N.E.S. if Option 3B is selected.

It is noted that buffers² are already required for wetlands and watercourses in accordance with N.P.C.A. policy and as a result 2,192.2 ha of land in buffer areas is included within Options 1, 2, 3A and 3B. The only buffers that are being added in Option 3C are to non-regulated features such as significant woodlands and 'other woodlands'. In this regard, the amount of land added to the N.E.S. for these buffers in Option 3C is directly proportional to the amount of land that is significant woodland or 'other woodlands' in the urban area. Again, taking Niagara Falls as an example, it contains 554.7 hectares of significant woodlands and 199.6 hectares of 'other woodlands' and as a consequence, 121.7 hectares in buffers are added as a result. For an urban area with less woodland, a correspondingly smaller area of land would be added as buffers.

In terms of the total amount of buffer lands being added in Option 3C compared with Option 3A, it is 394.8 ha which increases the percentage of the urban areas in the N.E.S. by 1.1%. It is noted that the extent of the buffer can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, however; buffers would most likely be required for both significant woodlands and 'other woodlands' to satisfy the no negative impact test in accordance with the P.P.S. This means that it is very likely that the majority of the lands so identified would be required for buffers in any event, which to a very large extent neutralizes the impacts of adding buffers to significant woodlands and 'other woodlands' in Option 3C.

While Option 3C includes 'supporting features and areas', linkages and enhancement areas, only linkages will be mapped. It is anticipated that the policies in the N.O.P. will allow for some flexibility in how linkages are dealt with (size and location) when they are looked at comprehensively through future secondary planning and watershed planning exercises and

² Regarding buffers, it is first important to recognize that the statistics generated from the mapping are intended to inform the assessment of the implication of buffers. The actual width of buffers will be informed by site-specific study and may be wider or narrower than what has been mapped.

through the review of major development applications. The amount of land included within linkages in all of the urban areas is 34.2 ha (0.1%), which when compared to the amount of land within the urban areas is not substantial.

As a result of the above, the most significant change in the amount of land being added to the N.E.S. across urban areas occurs in Option 3B, when 548.2 ha of land is being added to the N.E.S. as a result of adding 'other woodlands'. While 'other woodlands' occupy a total area of 548.2 ha, they are often located adjacent to or abutting 'natural heritage features and areas' including significant woodlands and P.S.W.s. to which a buffer is mapped for the purposes of understanding the potential extent of the N.E.S. Therefore, with the overlap of 'other woodlands' on buffers to 'natural heritage features and areas', the net increase in total natural area cover of the N.E.S. resulting from the addition of 'other woodlands' in N.H.S. Option 3B is 427 ha.

Buffers to significant woodlands and 'other woodlands' adds 394.5 ha to the N.E.S. Buffers would most likely be required from these woodlands as part of demonstrating 'no negative impact'.

While other 'supporting features and areas' and enhancement areas are required to be considered in Option 3C, the amount of land included within these areas is expected to be limited in settlement areas due to the extent of developed area and limited opportunities for incorporate other natural areas into the N.E.S. The identification of 'supporting features and areas' is best determined through future study.

In terms of the impacts of the addition of 'other woodlands' in Option 3B within settlement areas, the location of these features may have an impact on the ability to efficiently lay out and service new development areas, particularly if the 'other woodland' areas are separate from other components of the N.E.S. and are isolated or if the addition of the 'other woodland' has the effect of creating smaller development areas that may be more costly and less efficient to develop as a result. However, a determination of the impacts in this regard can only be made after carrying out a review of the location of 'other woodlands' in each of the settlement areas and completing a more detailed analysis that takes into account a number of factors, most notably servicing feasibility.

Review of Hydrologic Areas of the Water Resource System in Urban Areas

As mentioned previously, Map D identifies the following hydrologic areas of the W.R.S.:

- Key Hydrologic Areas
 - Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas
 - Highly Vulnerable Aquifers

- Shoreline Areas
- Floodplains, Flooding Hazards

The intent of Map D is to illustrate other components of the W.R.S. (i.e., in addition to key hydrologic features) where additional constraints to development exist; while some of these hydrologic areas may be coincident with ‘natural heritage features and areas’ and ‘other wetlands’, these hydrologic areas will pose constraints to development in addition to the mapped components of the N.H.S. and key hydrologic features.

These hydrologic areas of the W.R.S. comprise a large proportion of some of the urban areas (e.g., 90.8% of Grimsby, 98.3% of Fonthill, 82.1% of Prudhommes, and 92.2% of Jordan Station). While these areas are required components of a W.R.S. according to Provincial policy, the policies related to these features are considerably different than policies for well-defined feature of the landscape, such as wetlands and significant woodlands that are generally protected in a way that restricts development. Groundwater systems are vast and cover significant portions of the Region and are protected in ways that do not necessarily restrict development. The policies and regulations used to protect these hydrologic areas are therefore different and consider the requirement to protect, enhance and restore water quality and quantity. These Provincial policies and regulations currently in place establish a framework for the protection and management of the water resources within the N.E.S. As such, the formal identification of a W.R.S. and components therein will not substantially increase the amount of land within the Region that is already the subject of Provincial policies that require that consideration of impacts be a part of the review of development applications and the preparation of Official Plans and secondary plans.

In addition to the above, there is now a requirement in the Growth Plan that requires that watershed planning or equivalent inform “a) the identification of water resource systems, b) the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the quality and quantity of water, c) decisions on allocation of growth, and d) planning for water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure” (Growth Plan policy 4.2.1.3). In addition, there is a requirement that “planning for large-scale development in designated greenfield areas, including secondary plans, will be informed by a subwatershed plan or equivalent” (Growth Plan policy 4.2.1.4). As such, there will be a need through future secondary planning and watershed planning exercises to identify components of the W.R.S, including those that cannot be mapped at this time, “which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed” (P.P.S. policy 2.2.1. d.). The identification of the components of the W.R.S. and applicable policies will also have an impact on the amount of land potentially available for development.

Implementation of the Natural Environment System

The implementation of one of the N.E.S. options presented in this technical memorandum will occur first through the preparation of updated policies and mapping in the N.O.P. Once this occurs, updates will then be required to each of the local Official Plans as well. The purpose of this section is to discuss implementation options.

Overlay and Mapping Implications

If N.E.S. Option 1A is selected, all of the mappable ‘natural heritage features and areas’ and key hydrological features would be included in an overlay designation on the schedules to the N.O.P. This means that decisions would need to be made on what the underlying land use designation would be. However, since the current N.O.P. does not currently establish separate land use designations within the settlement areas, those decisions would not need to be made at the Regional level; however, it is acknowledged that the Growth Plan now requires in Section 2.2.5.6 that upper-tier planning authorities such as Niagara Region designate employment areas to protect them for appropriate employment uses over the long term.

If the N.E.S. is included within an overlay designation in the N.O.P., modifications to the boundary of the N.E.S. would not require an amendment to the N.O.P.

If N.E.S. Option 1A is selected, the local municipalities will also include the same area on their Official Plan schedules as well and if they do so, it will then be up to each local municipality to determine what the underlying land use designation should be. However, this may not be appropriate for all of the ‘natural heritage features and areas’ within the N.E.S., particularly P.S.W.s, where development and site alteration is already prohibited by Provincial policy. In this case, designating these lands for development may not be appropriate and consistent with the P.P.S.

As a result, the local municipalities may need to include components of the N.E.S. in a land use designation that prohibits development and include the other components of the mapped N.E.S. in an overlay designation. For the component of the N.E.S. that is designated, it will be up to the local Official Plans to determine whether amendments are required, if modifications to the boundary of the designated area were proposed. For those components of the N.E.S. that are in the overlay, it is not anticipated that a local municipality would require an amendment to the Official Plan to facilitate changes in the boundaries of an overlay designation, as long as whatever was proposed conformed to the policies of the underlying land use designation.

In addition to updating the mapping as discussed above, updated N.H.S. and W.R.S. policies will need to be included in the N.O.P. and then in the local Official Plans as well. These policies would establish development permissions in each natural heritage feature or area and within each component of the W.R.S. Policies on land securement, existing uses and requirements for supporting studies (e.g., environmental impact studies) would also be included in the N.O.P. and the local Official Plans. It is also anticipated that the N.O.P. would provide direction on how natural heritage feature or areas and components of the W.R.S. would be zoned by the local municipalities. This direction will be required to ensure firstly that lands that are prohibiting from developing are zoned accordingly and secondly, to ensure that lands are not pre-zoned for development particularly in designated greenfield areas, where secondary plans and watershed studies or their equivalent will be required to support development.

Designation and Mapping Implications

If one of N.H.S. Options 2 or 3 are selected, 'natural heritage features and areas' (and 'other woodlands' in N.H.S. Option 3B and 3C within settlement areas), and 'other wetlands' would be included within an exclusive land use designation in the new N.O.P. The same would occur in the local Official Plans as well.

Given the strategic focus of upper tier Official Plans, it is recommended that consideration be given to not requiring an amendment to the N.O.P. provided the proposed change has been justified in accordance with criteria established with the N.O.P., with these criteria implementing Provincial policy requirements, such as demonstrating no negative impact in particular.

Given that several components of the N.E.S would be included as a designation in the N.O.P., these components would also be a designation in the local Official Plan in order to conform to the N.O.P. The local Official Plan would also include policies on whether local Official Plan Amendments would be required if boundary changes were proposed.

In addition, updated N.H.S. and W.R.S. policies will need to be included in the N.O.P. and then in the local Official Plans as well as already discussed. It is also anticipated that the N.O.P. would provide direction on how features and areas of the N.H.S. and W.R.S. would be zoned by the local municipalities.

Impacts of the Natural Environment System on Long-Term Planning

The Growth Plan requires that planning for large-scale development in designated greenfield areas in settlement areas (including secondary plans) be informed by a subwatershed plan or its equivalent. Such a subwatershed plan should consider existing development and evaluate

impacts of any potential or proposed land uses and development; identify hydrologic features, areas, linkages, and functions; identify natural features, areas, and related hydrologic functions; and provide for protecting, improving, or restoring the quality and quantity of water within a subwatershed. This requirement will need to be included in both the new N.O.P. and the local Official Plans.

Summary and Conclusions

This technical memorandum has been prepared in order to provide more details on the policy intent for each of the options for the N.H.S. and W.R.S. as identified in Technical Report #2. This additional work included establishing a preliminary methodology and criteria for each feature-type in order to prepare mapping within each urban area in the Region for each of the options and provide detailed statistics to allow for a comparison of each option as they apply to the mapped urban areas.

These options were informed by guidance provided in Provincial policy documents including the P.P.S., the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan. The policies in these documents informed the identification of the options and policy intent for the N.E.S. in each option. The policy intent of each option is intended to further inform local area municipalities and Council on the differences between the options, including the required standards for the N.E.S.

The main differences between the Options for the N.E.S. in urban areas include:

- Overlay vs. designation
- Prohibition on development in significant woodlands in N.H.S. Option 3
- Addition of 'other woodlands' in N.H.S. Options 3B and 3C
- Addition of 'supporting features and areas' in N.H.S. Option 3C
- Policy requirement for mandatory buffers on 'natural features and areas' and 'other woodlands' in N.H.S. Option 3C
- Small linkages in urban areas added in N.H.S. Option 3C

Based on the review of the options for the N.E.S., the main difference in area between the options was a result of mapping 'other woodlands' and buffers to significant woodlands and 'other woodlands'. The addition of 'other woodlands' has the most potential to impact developable land within urban areas, resulting in a net increase of 427 ha of natural cover to the N.E.S. or a 1.3% increase to the standard requirements of the N.E.S. While having a policy that requires buffers to be identified will result in a slightly larger increase in the mapping of the

N.E.S. than 'other woodlands', they are typically necessary in most cases to meet the test of no negative impact and are not expected to add an additional constraint to development.

This technical memorandum has also concluded that in fact there are no 'optional' components for the W.R.S. and therefore there is only one option for the W.R.S. There will be a need for the new N.O.P. to provide direction for large-scale development in designated greenfield areas, including secondary plans, to be informed by a subwatershed plan or equivalent to further refine and identify components of the W.R.S, including those that cannot be mapped at this time, in order to maintain or enhance the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed.

In summary, the options for the N.E.S. provide a standard requirement for the N.E.S. in settlement areas (N.H.S. Options 1, 2 and 3A) with increasing numbers of optional components and protection for components of the N.E.S. moving through N.H.S. Options 3B and 3C. The options were developed to ensure consistency with Provincial standard requirements, clarify and simplify a policy intent for the identification and protection of the features and areas of the system, and provide a range of options that exceed standard requirements that identify a Region-wide N.E.S. based on a systems-based approach to natural environment planning.

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Appendix A: Definitions and Criteria for Components of the N.H.S. and W.R.S and Methodology for Mapping

Preliminary Definitions and Criteria for Features and Areas

The two discussion papers, Technical Report #1 and Technical Report #2 provided a review of best practices for the identification of various components of the N.E.S., including definitions and criteria for the identification of some of the components. **Table 1** includes the proposed definitions for each component recommended for mapping in urban areas as well as the criteria for identifying the component or a reference to the agency responsible for creating the dataset.

Table 1. Preliminary definitions and criteria for features and areas proposed for mapping within settlement areas.

Feature and Area	Definition	Criteria
Natural Heritage System		
Provincially Significant Wetland	Provincially Significant Wetlands are those identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time (P.P.S. 2020)	The criteria for identifying Provincially Significant Wetlands are established by the Province. At the time of writing this report the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, Southern Manual, 3 rd Edition, Version 3.3. (M.N.R.F. 2014) is considered the document by which an evaluation should be undertaken. The MNRF is responsible for review and approval of a wetland evaluation.
Significant Woodland	<p>Woodlands - treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas and vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels. Woodlands will be delineated according to the Province's Ecological Land Classification system definition for "forest" (P.P.S. 2020). For the purposes of this definition, forests include terrestrial vegetation communities as defined in accordance with the Province's Ecological Land Classification system, where the tree cover is greater than 60%.</p> <p>Significant Woodlands are woodlands that are ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history. (P.P.S. 2020).</p>	<p>To be identified as significant a woodland must meet the definition of E.L.C. "forest" (as per the definition of 'woodland'), and a woodland must meet one or more of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any woodland 2 ha or greater in size; 2. Any woodland 1 ha or greater in size meeting at least one of the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Naturally occurring (i.e., not planted) trees (as defined in the species list of Appendix D in the Greenbelt Technical Paper); b. 10 or more trees per ha greater than 100 years old or 50 cm or more in diameter; c. Any woodland wholly or partially within 30 m of a significant wetland; habitat of an endangered or threatened species; significant woodland; d. Any woodland overlapping or abutting one or more of the following features: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Permanent streams or intermittent streams; ii. Fish habitat; iii. Significant valleylands; 3. Any woodland 0.5 ha or greater in size meeting at least one of the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A provincially rare treed vegetation community with an S1, S2 or S3 in its ranking by the M.N.R.'s N.H.I.C; b. Habitat of a woodland plant species with an S1, S2 or S3 in its ranking or an 8, 9, or 10 in its Southern Ontario Coefficient of Conservatism by the N.H.I.C., consisting of 10 or more individual stems or 100 or more sqm of leaf coverage; c. Any woodland overlapping or abutting one or more of the following features: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Significant wildlife habitat; and ii. Habitat of threatened species and endangered species; iii. 'Other wetlands'

Feature and Area	Definition	Criteria
		<p>4. Any woodland of any size overlapping or abutting one or more of the following features:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> P.S.W.s; and Life Science A.N.S.I. <p>Woodlands that “abut” another feature are considered adjacent when located within 20 m of each other.</p> <p>Guidance for delineating the boundary of a ‘woodland’ as defined by the Region should follow those of Appendix B in the Greenbelt Plan 2005 – Technical Definitions and Criteria for Key Natural Heritage Features in the Natural heritage System of the Protected Countryside (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2012)</p>
Linkages	Linkage means an area, that may or may not be associated with the presence of existing natural features and areas, that provides and maintains ecological connectivity between natural heritage features, and supports a range of community and ecosystem processes enabling plants and animals to move among natural heritage features, in some cases over multiple generations, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability of the overall N.H.S.	<p>In urban areas, the following criteria are applied to identify small linkages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> consist of natural vegetation (e.g., water courses, valleylands, meadow, thicket, woodland, wetland, and hedgerows) or rural/agricultural lands without major barriers (i.e., developed areas or major roads greater than 30 m in width); be 60-100 m in width, as confirmed through a site-specific study evaluating the ecological function of the features being connected and the need to maintain ecological connectivity between natural features; and connect core areas (i.e., a group of natural features and areas within 30 m of each other) with a combined area of ≥4 ha in size. <p>For mapping purposes of small linkages, a 100 m wide linkage should be illustrated as part of the N.H.S. recognizing that the width of the linkage will be reviewed and may be refined through site specific studies.</p>
Life Science A.N.S.I.	Life Science A.N.S.I.s are identified as being high quality example(s) of ecological form and function in each Ecodistrict in the province (provincially significant) and the Region (regionally significant) and are generally defined by natural heritage features (e.g., a woodland, valley top of bank, etc.) and generally exclude anthropogenic land uses (e.g., residential areas / properties). Life Science A.N.S.I.s include areas identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time (P.P.S. 2020)	The identification of Life Science A.N.S.I.s is determined by the Province using criteria established by the Province.
Earth Science A.N.S.I.	Earth Science A.N.S.I.s represent the best examples of geologic and geomorphic landforms and areas (e.g., a moraine) in each Ecodistrict in the province (provincially significant) and the Region (regionally significant). They may encompass a single feature or a group of related features (e.g., a drumlin field). As geologic / geomorphic	The identification of Earth Science A.N.S.I.s is determined by the Province using criteria established by the Province.

Feature and Area	Definition	Criteria
	landforms, the overlying land use may include a composite of natural and anthropogenic uses (e.g., woodland, agricultural, rural residential, etc.). Earth Science A.N.S.I.s include areas identified as provincially significant by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time (P.P.S. 2020)	
Other Woodlands	Other woodlands are woodlands determined to be ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of an identifiable geographic area or natural heritage system. Other woodlands include all treed vegetation communities where the percent tree cover is >25%, in accordance with the 2 nd Approximation of Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario (2008). Other woodlands would not include woodlands meeting the criteria as Significant Woodlands.	To be identified as an “other woodland”, a treed area must have ≥ 25% tree cover and meet one or more of the following criteria: 1. The treed area has an average minimum width of 40 m and is ≥0.3 ha, measured to crown edges; or 2. Any treed area of any size abutting a significant woodland. Treed areas that “abut” a significant woodland or treed swamp are considered adjacent when located within 20 m of each other.
Water Resource System		
Wetlands	Wetlands are defined as “lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. In either case the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils and has favoured the dominance of either hydrophytic plants or water tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs and fens. Periodically soaked or wet lands being used for agricultural purposes which no longer exhibit wetland characteristics are not considered to be wetlands for the purposes of this definition. Wetlands are further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time.”	Wetlands will be identified according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time.
Other Wetlands	Other wetlands (i.e., non-P.S.W.s in settlement areas) are defined in accordance with the N.P.C.A. definition for wetland, as follows: “land that a) is seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water or has a water table close to or at its surface, b) directly contributes to the hydrological function of a watershed through connection with a surface watercourse, c) has hydric soils, the formation of which has been caused by the presence of abundant water, and d) has vegetation dominated by hydrophytic plants or water tolerant plants, the dominance of which has been favoured by the presence of abundant water, but does not include periodically soaked or wet land that is used for agricultural purposes and no longer exhibits a wetland characteristic referred to in clause c) or d).” It should also be noted that for non-P.S.W.s in settlement areas that do not meet the definition of ‘other wetland’ and to which the N.P.C.A. policies would not apply, but do meet the definition of ‘wetland’, the Region and/or the N.P.C.A. may require that an appropriate study (e.g., E.I.S., hydrologic evaluation) be undertaken to determine if	Wetlands meeting the definition as ‘other wetlands’ will be identified according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time

Feature and Area	Definition	Criteria
	the wetland should be protected in situ with appropriate buffers/setbacks or if the hydrologic function provided by wetland should be maintained or managed as part of the design of the development.	
Inland Lakes	Inland lakes are considered any inland body of standing water larger than a pool or pond or a body of water filling a depression in the earth's surface, where their water levels and hydrologic functions are not directly influenced by either Lake Erie or Lake Ontario.	Inland lakes include any body of water larger than a pool or pond, except for storm water management ponds, ponds constructed for irrigation purposes, such as those on a golf course or used for agriculture, lakes that have been constructed and managed with the sole purpose of supporting essential infrastructure, and where their ecological function is not a consideration in their management.
Permanent and intermittent streams	Permanent streams are watercourses that contain water during all times of the year. Intermittent streams are stream-related watercourses that contain water or are dry at times of the year that are more or less predictable, generally flowing during wet seasons of the year but not the entire year, and where the water table is above the stream bottom during parts of the year." (Greenbelt Plan 2017)	Criteria for the identification of a permanent or intermittent stream should follow protocols established by the Province, such as the Ontario Stream Assessment Protocol.
Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas	<p>"An area that has been identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a significant groundwater recharge area by any public body for the purposes of implementing the P.P.S.; b) a significant groundwater recharge area in the assessment report required under the Water Act, 2006; or c) an ecologically significant groundwater recharge area delineated in a subwatershed plan or equivalent in accordance with provincial guidelines. <p>For the purposes of this definition, ecologically significant groundwater recharge areas are areas of land that are responsible for replenishing groundwater systems that directly support sensitive areas like cold water streams and wetlands. (Greenbelt Plan 2017)</p> <p>Groundwater recharge areas are classified as "significant" when they supply more water to an aquifer (which is used as a drinking water source) than the surrounding area (N.P.C.A., 2013). This method is recommended where recharge rates are fairly homogenous such as is generally the case for NPCA. In other words, a recharge area is considered significant when it helps to maintain the water level in an aquifer that supplies a community with drinking water, or supplies groundwater recharge to a coldwater ecosystem that is dependent on this recharge to maintain its ecological function (N.V.C.A., 2015b). S.G.R.A.s were identified where groundwater is recharged by a factor of 1.15 or more than the average recharge rate for the whole watershed (average recharge rate for NPCA is 46 mm/year). Significant groundwater recharge areas are subdivided by the groundwater vulnerability and assigned scores of 6, 4 or 2 for groundwater vulnerabilities of high, medium and low, respectively (N.P.C.A., 2009).</p>	Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas have been delineated for the entire Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Area using methodology developed by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority in consultation with the Ministry of Natural Resources (M.N.R.), and was based on the March 2007 Draft Guidance Module – Water Budget and Water Quantity Risk Assessment (Guidance Module). The identification of the Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas adheres to the Assessment Report Technical Rules (M.O.E., 2009), Regulation 287/07 and Technical Bulletin methodology descriptions (M.N.R., M.O.E., 2009).

Feature and Area	Definition	Criteria
Highly Vulnerable Aquifers	<p>Highly Vulnerable Aquifers are "aquifers, including lands above the aquifers, on which external sources have or are likely to have a significant adverse effect." (Greenbelt Plan)</p> <p>According to the 'Groundwater Vulnerability Analysis, Niagara Peninsula Source Protection Areas' study completed by the N.P.C.A. (2009) Highly Vulnerable Aquifers (H.V.A.s) are areas of high groundwater vulnerability that "typically consist of granular aquifer materials or fractured rock that have a high permeability, are exposed near the ground surface, and have a relatively shallow water table" (N.P.C.A., 2009). Aquifer Vulnerability Index (A.V.I.) groundwater vulnerability assessments have been completed to improve the delineation of highly vulnerable aquifers. The A.V.I. groundwater vulnerability assessments were based on regional hydrostratigraphic interpretations (N.P.C.A., 2009). The H.V.A. delineation reflects the increased vulnerability of the shallowest identified aquifers by transport pathways. H.V.A are also defined as aquifers, including lands above the aquifers, on which external sources have or are likely to have a significant adverse effect (Greenbelt Plan, 2017).</p>	Highly vulnerable aquifers are identified based primarily on vulnerability mapping completed as part of the 2005 N.P.C.A. Groundwater Study (Waterloo Hydrogeologic Inc., 2005). The mapping combined two vulnerability assessment methods: (i) intrinsic susceptibility index (I.S.I.) and (ii) aquifer vulnerability index (A.V.I.). Transport pathways, such as unused private wells, were also considered as they can increase groundwater vulnerability.
Shoreline Areas	Shoreline areas are the interface between terrestrial and aquatic environments, allowing for interactions between them, providing: specialized habitats (e.g., natural beach, overhanging cover, bird stopover or nesting, etc.), natural cover, areas of shoreline erosion or accretion, nutrient and sediment filtration / buffering, shading, foraging opportunities.	Shoreline areas include any natural vegetation community (as determined according to Ecological Land Classification) ≥ 0.1 ha in size, located within 30 m of the limits of the shoreline flood hazard associated with the Great Lakes, or within 15 m of a surface water feature, as defined by the P.P.S.
Floodplains, flooding hazards, floodways	<p>Floodplains are defined "for river, stream and small inland lake systems, means the area, usually low lands adjoining a watercourse, which has been or may be subject to flooding hazards" (P.P.S. 2020).</p> <p>Flooding hazard: "means the inundation, under the conditions specified below, of areas adjacent to a shoreline or a river or stream system and not ordinarily covered by water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) along the shorelines of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River System and large inland lakes, the flooding hazard limit is based on the one hundred year flood level plus an allowance for wave uprush and other water related hazards; b) along river, stream and small inland lake systems, the flooding hazard limit is the greater of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the flood resulting from the rainfall actually experienced during a major storm such as the Hurricane Hazel storm (1954) or the Timmins storm (1961), transposed over a specific watershed and combined with the local conditions, where evidence suggests that the storm event could have potentially occurred over watersheds in the general area; 2. the one hundred year flood; and 3. a flood which is greater than 1. or 2. which was actually experienced in a particular watershed or portion thereof as a result of ice jams and 	The floodplain, flooding hazard and floodway are identified in accordance with technical guidelines established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (e.g., Understanding Natural Hazards (2001); Technical Guide - River & Stream Systems: Flooding Hazard Limit (2002); Hazardous Sites - Technical Guide (1996); Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Shorelines, Flooding, Erosion and Dynamic Beaches (2001); Technical Guide for Large Inland Lakes Shorelines, Flooding, Erosion and Dynamic Beaches (1996); Technical Guide - River and Stream Systems: Erosion Hazard Limit (2002)).

Feature and Area	Definition	Criteria
	<p>which has been approved as the standard for that specific area by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry;</p> <p>except where the use of the one hundred year flood or the actually experienced event has been approved by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry as the standard for a specific watershed (where the past history of flooding supports the lowering of the standard).” (P.P.S. 2020).</p> <p>Floodway: “for river, stream and small inland lake systems, means the portion of the flood plain where development and site alteration would cause a danger to public health and safety or property damage. Where the one zone concept is applied, the floodway is the entire contiguous flood plain. Where the two zone concept is applied, the floodway is the contiguous inner portion of the flood plain, representing that area required for the safe passage of flood flow and/or that area where flood depths and/or velocities are considered to be such that they pose a potential threat to life and/or property damage. Where the two zone concept applies, the outer portion of the flood plain is called the flood fringe.”</p>	

Components Recommended for Mapping the Natural Environment System

The Mapping Discussion Paper provided a review of the P.P.S., Provincial plans and policies, and a review of comparable municipal approaches to mapping N.H.S.s. The review of mapping datasets recommended a subset of components that should be mapped based on a review of the age of data, accuracy, completeness (i.e., representation of the data across the entire Region) and the need to provide a visual representation of the feature to support policy implementation. The Mapping Discussion Paper also provided a review of existing datasets in Table 9 of that report and provided a recommendation on the suitability of datasets and preliminary considerations for use of each dataset. Through applying a set of criteria related to the age, accuracy and areal (i.e., geographic) coverage of the dataset recommendations, as well as considerations of options to update existing datasets or develop new datasets, recommendations for mapping components were provided in Section 8.3.1 of the Mapping Discussion Paper. Technical Report #2 further assessed the available mapping and made additional recommendations for which datasets to use or not, and how to create datasets based on currently available information.

Through the development of natural environment system options provided in Technical Report #2 and in consideration of the data that will be obtained through studies currently being completed (i.e., Ecological Land Classification (E.L.C.) mapping for the Region and the Watershed Equivalency Study) the following components are recommended for mapping the N.H.S. and W.R.S. in urban areas:

Natural Heritage System

- P.S.W.s;
- Significant woodlands;
- Life Science A.N.S.I.s;
- Earth Science A.N.S.I.s;
- Other woodlands; and
- Linkages

Water Resource System

- Wetlands (P.S.W.s and non-P.S.W.s);
- Inland lakes;
- Permanent streams (including rivers) and intermittent streams;

- Significant groundwater recharge areas;
- Highly vulnerable aquifers;
- Shoreline areas; and
- Floodplains, flooding hazards, floodways.

It should be noted that Technical Report #2 had recommended enhancement areas be mapped as part of the N.H.S. However, it has been determined through the mapping exercise in urban areas that mapping of enhancement areas in settlement areas at the Regional-scale is not appropriate due to the built environment in urban areas and the level of information required to accurately identify potential enhancement areas in urban areas. The identification and configuration of enhancement areas in urban areas requires site-specific knowledge of the natural feature and the ecological functions to be enhanced, therefore mapping of enhancement areas within urban areas is not recommended. The determination of enhancement areas is better determined through site-specific studies, including those completed in support of secondary plans.

Sources of Mapping Data and Recommendations for Mapping

The Mapping Discussion Paper and Technical Report #2 provided a review of available mapping as well as recommendations for how datasets could be improved, acquired, or created. **Table 5** provides recommendations for datasets that should be used to produce preliminary mapping of the N.H.S. and W.R.S. options within urban areas. Appendix 1 includes a table of the 54 different classification types, including anthropogenic and natural areas, that are included in the Ecological Land Classification (E.L.C.) dataset, indicating what classification codes should be used to develop another dataset.

Table 2. Datasets and recommendations for improving or creating datasets for the components considered for mapping in the Region's Natural Environment Systems within Urban Areas.

Component Features and Areas	Existing Source of Data	Notes
Natural Heritage System		
Provincially Significant Wetland	Wetlands (M.N.R.F., last updated November 2020)	Ensure most recent Land Information Ontario (L.I.O.) dataset is obtained.
Significant Woodland	Niagara Region 2020 Ecological Land Classification	The Region's 2020 Ecological Land Classification dataset is current and should be the most accurate dataset available to identify woodlands. Apply criteria established for significant woodlands.
Linkages	Niagara Region 2020 Ecological Land Classification Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses (Niagara Region, 2016)	Apply criteria established for linkages.
Life Science A.N.S.I.	Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (M.N.R.F., last updated July 2020)	Ensure most recent L.I.O. dataset is obtained.

Component Features and Areas	Existing Source of Data	Notes
Earth Science A.N.S.I.	Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (M.N.R.F., last updated July 2020)	Ensure most recent L.I.O. dataset is obtained.
Other woodlands	Niagara Region 2020 Ecological Land Classification	Apply criteria established for other woodlands.
Water Resource System		
Provincially Significant Wetlands	Wetlands (M.N.R.F., last updated November 2020)	Ensure most recent Land Information Ontario (L.I.O.) dataset is obtained.
Other Wetlands	Niagara Region 2020 Ecological Land Classification Wetlands (M.N.R.F., last updated November 2020)	Apply criteria established for 'other wetlands'. Select wetlands that were either "evaluated-other" or not evaluated
Inland Lakes	Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses (Niagara Region, 2016)	Apply criteria established for inland lakes.

Component Features and Areas	Existing Source of Data	Notes
Permanent and Intermittent Streams	Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses (Niagara Region, 2016)	Use watercourse layers with attribute of 'permanent' or 'intermittent' flow regime.
Significant Groundwater Recharge Areas (S.G.R.A.s)	N.P.C.A. Groundwater Protection Quantity S.G.R.A.s (created 2010)	Existing dataset can be obtained through the N.P.C.A. open data portal. Other sources of data or mapping as identified through the Watershed Equivalency Planning Study.
Highly Vulnerable Aquifers	HighlyVulnerableAquifer_NPCA (created June 2010)	This mapping is based on the N.P.C.A. Groundwater Study Final Report (Waterloo Hydrogeologic Inc. 2005). The recommended scale for usage is 1:50,000. Other sources of data or mapping as identified through the Watershed Equivalency Planning Study.
Shoreline Areas	N.P.C.A. Regulated Shoreline Extent (last updated June 2019) Niagara Region 2020 Ecological Land Classification	Apply criteria established for shoreline areas.

Component Features and Areas	Existing Source of Data	Notes
	Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses (Niagara Region, 2016)	
Floodplain, flooding hazard, floodway	N.P.C.A. Regulated Floodplain Extent (last updated May 2020)	<p>Apply criteria established for floodplain, flooding hazard, floodway.</p> <p>“The data currently includes both regulatory floodplains, and advisory floodplains. This dataset was developed by creating polygons from the polyline geometry of the flood lines in the Authority's Riverine Floodplain Mapping database. Please note most of the floodplains are based on the 100 year event but some systems in Niagara Falls specifically are still managed with the Regional Storm (Hurricane Hazel)” (description of metadata from https://maps.niagararegion.ca/Metadata/md/Explorer/1616.aspx, accessed December 2020).</p>

Assumptions and Limitations

The Mapping Discussion Paper and Technical Report #2 provided a review of the datasets available to map components of the N.H.S. and W.R.S. Through the review of the available datasets recommendations were made on which components to map and not to map; these recommendations were based on several factors related to the confidence that the mapping provides an accurate and complete representation of the feature it is intended to capture. There will always be a level of inaccuracy and incompleteness of a dataset - this results from the fact that a) mapping represents a 'point in time' of a feature or area (i.e., some datasets may be older), b) methods for identifying some features may have been updated more recently that would result in changes to the delineation of a feature or area, and c) some datasets may have been developed at a smaller scale (i.e., developed for a larger area) and may not translate well into a larger scale map (i.e., depicting the extent of features on a property). The assumptions and limitations for the use of datasets and the application of criteria to some datasets to represent the extent of a significant feature or areas is discussed below.

Highly Vulnerable Aquifers Dataset

There are some limitations related to the scale at which the H.V.A. dataset was produced. This dataset was developed at a scale of 1:50,000 and is appropriate for use at a local municipal scale (i.e., to be viewed when looking at the entire municipality). However, this is not considered accurate at a site-specific scale (e.g., individual property scale). While sufficient for the purposes of as part of the Region's W.R.S. mapping, policies will need to be developed to require site-specific studies to be completed in order to assess the sensitivity of the aquifer to changes in landuse and the potential for impacts on the aquifer.

Floodplains, Flooding Hazards, Floodways

The metadata for this dataset notes that the floodplain mapping may not be complete for the entire Region "(technical criteria from MNR dictate that surface water reaches draining greater than 125 hectares be considered as part of the riverine flood hazard) and only represents what floodplains are currently mapped. Therefore, there are regulatory floodplains that are not mapped but are covered by the text of the [N.P.C.A.] regulation" (<https://maps.niagararegion.ca/Metadata/md/Explorer/1616.aspx>, accessed in December 2020). Therefore, it should be acknowledged that mapping of floodplains, flooding hazards, and floodways may not be fully represented on mapping of the W.R.S. However, like other datasets, mapping is typically not complete; for the purposes of including floodplains on mapping of the W.R.S., and recognizing boundaries of features and areas can be refined through detailed studies, this dataset is still considered appropriate for use in mapping as part of the W.R.S.

Ecological Land Classification

The recent E.L.C. mapping project was undertaken to produce a more accurate and complete dataset of natural cover in Niagara Region. The dataset includes 54 different classification types, including anthropogenic and natural areas (**Table 3**, located at the end of this appendix). The primary methodology used to produce this dataset is orthoimage interpretation using new 2018 aerial imagery. While this methodology is acceptable in accordance with the industry recognized E.L.C. methodology, and the accuracy of this method can be high, there will inevitably be some vegetation communities that are missed, erroneously included, or mis-identified – this results from the fact that not every vegetation community or area within Niagara Region can be ground-truthed, either due to high lack of available resources (e.g., person time and available capital) or lack of landowner permission. Furthermore, the minimum mapping unit used for the E.L.C. dataset was 0.1 ha. Therefore, some vegetated areas that are less than 0.1 ha are not captured. It should be acknowledged that like most datasets where ground-truthing is not possible for every feature and limitations exist in available resources, there will be a need for future ground-truthing as part of site-specific studies to confirm and refine the mapping of natural features.

Proposed Methodology for Mapping the NHS and WRS

Creating Datasets for the Natural Environment System

The following describes methods that should be applied to create new preliminary datasets for natural features and areas within the Region’s urban areas. It should be noted that this methodology is for the purpose of a preliminary analysis of the options in the Region’s urban areas to support the generation of statistics and a comparative evaluation. A final methodology will be prepared as part of the third technical paper for the Natural Environment Work Program.

Significant Wetlands Dataset

1. Import the LIO Wetland Layer
2. Definition Query or use the SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE tool to select all woodlands under the attribute column “Wetland_SI” that are ‘Evaluated-Provincial’ from the Significance column.
3. SELECT by LOCATION from current selection all wetlands that intersect or overlap urban areas
4. Export the selected data into a new dataset entitled “Provincially_Significant_Wetlands”
5. Clear the Selection and create another selection for Wetlands within the LIO Wetland layer that are not provincially significant wetlands (PSW). Use the Definition Query or the

SELECT BY ATTRIBUTES tool to create a NOT function “NOT “WETLAND_SI” = ‘Evaluated-Provincial’”. SELECT by LOCATION from the current selection these Non-PSWs that intersect or overlap urban areas. Export all selected features into a new dataset entitled “LIO_Other_Wetlands” (This will be used within the Other Wetlands Dataset)

Other Wetlands Dataset

1. Import the Region’s 2020 E.L.C. dataset, the ‘LIO_Other_Wetlands’ dataset, and ‘Provincially_Significant_Wetlands (Previously created) dataset.
2. Select the following wetland codes from the Region’s 2020 E.L.C. dataset:
 - i. SWT, SWD, SWM, SWC, BOS, BOT, MAM, MAS, SAS, SAM, SAF.
 - ii. SELECT by LOCATION from the current selection that intersect or overlap urban areas. Export this layer as “Niagara_ELC_Wetlands”
3. Use the UNION tool to join the geographies of the two wetland layers inputting “Niagara_ELC_Wetlands” and “LIO_Other_Wetlands”. Ensure the Niagara_ELC_Wetlands is set as the highest rank as the geometry and attributes take precedence over the LIO_Other_Wetlands layer. Call this new feature “Niagara_Union_Other_Wetlands”
4. Use the ERASE tool to clip the “Niagara_Union_Other_Wetlands” mapping with the “Provincially_Significant_Wetlands” layer to ensure no overlap between wetland features as P.S.W.s are already captured in the Significant Wetland layer. Call this layer “Niagara_Other_Wetlands”

Permanent and Intermittent Streams

1. Import the Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses (CMW) dataset.
2. Select all watercourses within settlement areas and then use the SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE tool to select all features that are identified as “Intermittent” or Permanent”.
3. Export these selected features and call the layer “Watercourses_perm_inter_Niagara”

Woodlands Dataset

In order to create a woodlands dataset that contains woodlands in accordance with the definition of woodland proposed to be used for Niagara Region, the E.L.C. data will be used to extract woodlands.

1. Import the E.L.C. layer and SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE the following ELC classes:
 - i. FOD, FOM, FOC, HOC, HOD, SVC, SVD, SVM, WOC, WOD, WOM, TAG, BLT, BOT, CLT, RBT, SBT, SHT, and TAT.

2. SELECT by LOCATION from the current selection that intersect or overlap urban areas. Export these selected features and save as a separate dataset entitled “Niagara_Woodlands”.

Significant Woodlands Dataset

In order to consider the 20m connection between woodlands a processing step to the woodland layer will be done to identify where woodlands should be joined due to proximity.

1. Import the “Niagara_Woodlands” layer and SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE these ELC classes: FOC, FOM, FOD and call this dataset “Niagara_Woodlands_Connectivity”. Import the “Niagara_Woodlands_Connectivity” and Edit the features by joining consecutive features, these features should be adjacent with a shared border. Merging these together will eliminate any overlaps. Using the editing tool select all features, then merge all polygons together. From there use the advanced editing tools to ‘EXPLODE MULTIPART FEATURES’ to separate the polygons so that all polygons are separate from non-adjointing geometries.
2. Use the BUFFER tool to buffer “Niagara_Woodlands_Connectivity” layer by 10 m. Use the INTERSECT tool on the newly formed buffer layer to identify any intersecting polygons that fall within a buffer of another polygon and call this ‘Woodlands_Intersect’.
3. These intersecting buffers are where the woodland should be joined together to form one continuous feature. Zoom to each polygon created in the “Woodlands_Intersect” layer and select the polygons that should be merged. Use the merge tool once polygons are selected.
4. Use the “Woodlands_Intersect” to navigate to areas where a polygon should be considered continuous. To join the geometry of these features in the “Niagara_Woodlands_Connectivity” dataset use the editing tool to merge polygons together that are considered continuous based on the 10 m buffer (i.e., where their buffers overlap, they are considered within 20 m of each other).
5. Re-Calculate the area of the features within “Niagara_Woodlands_Connectivity” so any connecting woodland should now be joined and have a cumulative area.

Applying criteria for Significant Woodlands:

1. Import the following data layers:
 - i. Urban Area boundaries
 - ii. Niagara_Woodlands_Connectivity

- iii. Provincially Significant Wetlands
 - iv. Other Wetlands
 - v. Life Science ANSI; and
 - vi. Watercourse_Perm_Inter_Niagara.
2. Create an attribute column entitled “Significance” within the Woodlands dataset.
 3. To apply criterion “1” in Table 6 of this memo.
 - i. SELECT by LOCATION woodlands that intersect or overlap urban areas where the woodland is greater or equal to 2 ha in size.
 - ii. Classify these as ‘Significant’ under the “Significance” attribute column.
 4. To apply criterion “2c”
 - i. SELECT by LOCATION woodlands that intersect or overlap urban areas SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE and make sure to select “select from current selection” to select all woodlands which are greater or equal to 1 ha.
 - ii. SELECT BY LOCATION, “select from current selection” to select overlapping woodland features that fall within or from a distance of the Provincially Significant wetlands, set the distance as 30m.
 - iii. Run the selection and classify any selected as ‘Significant’ under the “Significance” attribute column.
 5. To apply criterion “2d”
 - i. SELECT by LOCATION woodlands that intersect or overlap urban areas SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE and make sure to select “select from current selection” to select all woodlands which are greater or equal to 1 ha.
 - ii. SELECT BY LOCATION, “select from current selection” to select overlapping woodland features that fall within or from a distance of (abutting) ‘Watercourses_Perm_Inter_Niagara’, set the distance as 20m.
 - iii. Run the selection and classify any selected as ‘Significant’ under the “Significance” attribute column.
 6. To apply criterion “3c”
 - i. SELECT by LOCATION woodlands that intersect or overlap urban areas SELECT BY ATTRIBUTE and make sure to select “select from current selection” to select all woodlands which are greater or equal to 0.5 ha.
 - ii. SELECT BY LOCATION, “select from current selection” to select overlapping woodland features that fall within or from a distance of (abutting) ‘Other_Wetlands’, set the distance as 20m.
 - iii. Run the selection and classify any selected as ‘Significant’ under the “Significance” attribute column.
 7. To apply criterion “4”

- i. SELECT by LOCATION woodlands that intersect or overlap urban areas SELECT BY LOCATION and make sure to select “select from current selection” to select overlapping woodland features that fall within or from a distance of (abutting) P.S.W.s, set this distance as 20m.
 - ii. Classify any woodlands selected as ‘Significant’ under the “Significance” attribute column.
 - iii. Re-do these steps using the different datasets from criterion “4” using the Life Science ANSIs – LIO layer) as the intersecting feature and classify selections as ‘Significant’ under the “Significance” attribute column.
8. Create a layer named “Region_Significant_Woodland”. Update the Hectares column and select all woodlands that do not intersect PSWs or ANSIs. Select from this, the woodlands less than 4ha (roughly). Visually identify if these woodlands meet the 0.16ha and 40m average width criteria. If they do not, remove from layer. If a woodland patch has a long “finger” that results in the total average width to be < than 40m, the fingers should be applied against the 3:1 ratio.

Other Woodlands Dataset

1. Import the “Niagara_Woodlands” data previously created.
2. Assess Hedgerows:
 - i. Export another woodlands layer from the “Niagara_Woodlands” and call it “NiagaraWoodlands_UA_Hedgerow_edits”. Definition query to select only hedgerows. Select by Location any hedgerow that intersects or is within 20m of Niagara_Woodlands.
 - ii. Switch the selection to only select all isolated hedgerows (not that intersect or within 20m of a woodland) and those which are obviously single rowed tree lines.
 - iii. Apply a 3:1 width to length ratio on remaining hedgerows where the fingered extension begins (this is a manual step that requires the polygons of hedgerows to be reshaped by editing tool).
 - iv. Re-run the area calculation on the attribute table to recalculate area for edited features.
3. Import the dataset “Region_Significant_Woodland”.
 - i. Use the ERASE tool to erase all Significant woodland features (Region_Significant_Woodland) from the “Niagara_Woodlands UA Hedgerow_edits” layer.
4. Export this to a new data set called “Niagara_Other_Woodlands”.
5. Edit the ‘Niagara_Other_Woodlands’ layer.
 - i. SELECT from “Niagara_Woodlands” those woodlands that are ≥ 0.16 ha in size.

- ii. From these selections delete any polygons which do not “abut” (20m from other woodland polygons). Therefore, deleting small, isolated woodlands. Perform visual analysis on undersized woodlands that “abut” other wooded feature, roughly using these guides:
 - For woodlands that were only within the 20m “abut” threshold by slivers or fingers (that could technically have a 3:1 ratio applied) – they were removed.
 - For woodlands that were within the 20m “abut” threshold but were very clearly separate features within a highly developed area and not representative of aerial imagery – e.g., small patch of backyard trees – they were removed.
 - If it was adjacent to a significant woodland or other woodland feature – they were kept.

Linkages Dataset

Small linkages are to be placed between natural features and areas and are generally 60-100m wide. To identify the locations for linkages it will be necessary to identify ‘core areas’ (that consist of natural vegetation communities according to E.L.C.) within the landscape through area calculations.

Identifying Core Areas

1. To identify core areas, use the Niagara 2020 E.L.C. dataset and select all of the natural features (these natural features are identified in the ‘Natural Cover’ field within the E.L.C. Table found in Appendix 1). Export this data and call this dataset “Natural_Cover”
2. Edit the “Natural_Cover” features by joining consecutive features, these features should be adjacent with a shared border. Using the editing tool select all E.L.C. codes representing natural communities. Then merge all polygons together. From there use the advanced editing tools to ‘EXPLODE MULTIPART FEATURES” to separate the polygons so that all polygons are separate from non-adjoining geometries. Name this layer “Natural_Cover_UA_Exploded”.
3. Use the BUFFER tool to buffer these areas by 15 m. Use the INTERSECT tool on the newly formed buffer layer to identify any intersecting polygons that fall within a buffer of another polygon and call this ‘CoreAreas_Intersect’.
4. These intersecting buffers are where the core features should be joined together to form one continuous feature.
5. Use the “CoreAreas_Intersect” to navigate to areas where a polygon should be considered continuous. To join the geometry of these features in the “Natural_Cover_UA_Exploded” dataset use the editing tool to merge polygons together

that are considered continuous based on the 15 m buffer (i.e., where their buffers overlap, they are considered within 30 m of each other).

In order to refine and identify more specific core areas and identify priority core areas that will support biodiversity with linkages further methods are run on the core area layer. Some areas within the core area layer include long stretches of riparian zone or skinner long patches of natural cover that will not be enhanced by a linkage, therefore, to exclude them from the core areas the following methods were conducted:

6. Within the “Natural_Cover_UA_Exploded” layer create a field called “Area_ha” make sure this field is a ‘short integer’ data type. Use the calculate geometry tool within the “Area_ha” attribute field to calculate the Area in hectares as an integer.
7. Use the Polygon to Raster tool to convert the “CoreAreas_Intersect” to a raster that only picks up 50% or more area covered by each 200x200m grid cell. Use the following parameters within the tool:
 - Input: CoreAreas_Intersect
 - Value Field: Area_ha
 - Output raster: Core_areas
 - Cell Assignment Type: Maximum Area (this will ensure that you are collecting cells with 50% or more cover.
 - Priority Field: NONE
 - Cellsize: 200 (this will ensure a 200x200m grid cell)
8. Use the Raster to Polygon tool to re-convert the Core_Areas raster to a vector in order to intersect the final core areas. Keep all defaults and call the vector layer “Core_areas_fromRaster”. Create an area field within the attribute column and populate it with the area.
9. Open the “Natural_Cover_UA” layer and intersect with “Natural_Cover_UA_Exploded” to select the polygons that were previously identified as core polygons. Once selected export to new layer and explode the polygons. Call new layer “Natural_Cover_UA_ExplodeForCores”. Use the Select by Location tool to select features from “Natural_Areas_UA_ExplodeForCores” layer that intersect the “Core_areas_fromRaster” layer. From this export the selected features from the “Core_areas_Intersect” and call this layer “CoreAreas_Final”.

Identifying Linkages

Linkages should be identified along corridors of natural areas or watercourses within settlement areas. This can be done through orthoimage interpretation or appropriate identification within the landscape where the linkage would promote landscape connectivity and biodiversity.

1. Create a new polyline Layer entitled 'Small_Linkages'. Start editing the line feature to create the line that will be buffered to create the linkage.
2. Identify core areas that intersect from the previously created 'CoreAreas_Final'. This layer identified core areas that were within 30m of each other. Use this layer to navigate to areas where a potential linkage could occur.
3. A linkage should occur from one natural heritage feature to another (not just a core area since it contains more than natural heritage features and areas); this includes significant woodlands, P.S.W.s, 'other wetlands', and LS-ANSI. Intersect the above noted natural heritage features layers on the "Core_Areas_Final" layer to determine which core areas should be considered for creating linkages.
4. Create the line features from the feature class 'Small_Linkages' to find the mid-area between features – these should either follow a watercourse, other natural cover types, or extend across agricultural lands. Create linear linkages between the core areas using this line feature.
5. Use the BUFFER tool and buffer the polyline "Small_Linkages" layer by 50m. For a total of 100m wide linkage entitled "Small_Linkages_100m".
6. Edit the feature to CLIP the linkage to a key natural heritage feature (i.e., natural feature and area such as Significant Woodland or Significant Wetland).

Verify that linkages overlap with naturally vegetated areas and do not include developed areas (e.g., residential developments, industrial/commercial areas, roads wider than 20 m) or areas incompatible with ecological functions of a linkage.

1. Using the "Natural_cover" dataset, use the CLIP tool to clip out all the portions of the linkage features that overlap with built areas. Name this dataset "Small_Linkages_100m_nat_cover".
2. Edit the "Small_Linkages_100m_nat_cover" dataset by using orthoimagery to identify where the linkages would not be ecologically function (i.e., where they are interrupted by developed areas or unachievable due to an incompatible use, or where the linkage narrows below a width that would provide a functional linkage). For example, where a linkage is entirely bisected by a road that is wider than 20 m, the potential to achieve a functional linkage (e.g., through future road work and installation of a wildlife passage) should be considered; if it is determined that the width of the road precludes current or future safe passage of wildlife, the linkage should be removed. Where the width of a segment of the linkage narrows to less than 20 m for a distance of 60 m or more, it should be removed. Edit the layer by deleting any linkages that would not be ecologically functionally.
3. Save the new edited layer as "Small_Linkages_100m_Final"

Shoreline Areas

1. Import the Natural_Cover dataset, Contemporary Mapping of Watercourses dataset and the N.P.C.A. Regulated Shoreline Extent dataset.
2. SELECT BY LOCATION any Natural Cover feature that is found within 15m of a Waterbody or permanent stream or intermittent stream.
3. Export these selected features and call the layer “natural_cover_water”
4. SELECT BY LOCATION any Natural Cover feature that is found within the N.P.C.A. Regulated Shoreline Extent.
5. Export these selected features and call the layer “natural_cover_reg_shoreline”
6. Merge the “natural_cover_water” dataset with the “natural_cover_reg_shoreline” dataset to create a new dataset to be labelled as “Niagara_Shoreline_Areas”
7. Create a buffer area that is 15m from a waterbody or permanent stream or intermittent stream, call this layer “Buffer_Watercourse_SL_15m” then merge this layer with the NPCA regulated shoreline extent dataset. Call this “Merged_Shoreline_Extent”. Clip the “Niagara_Shoreline_Areas” to this newly merged layer “Merged_Shoreline_Extent” and call this layer “Niagara_Shoreline_Areas_Clip”.
8. SELECT by LOCATION from “Niagara_Shoreline_Areas_Clip” that intersect or overlap urban areas. Export this data as “Niagara_Urban_Shoreline_Areas”.

Inland Lakes

1. Import the CMW permanent and intermittent shorelines polygon layer.
2. SELECT BY LOCATION all waterbody polygons within UAs and adjacent to UA boundaries by 100m.
3. Overlay the CMW permanent and intermittent flowlines polyline layer with a query to only show flowlines for the following feature types; ‘Lake’, ‘Pond-Other’, or ‘Reservoir’ (this will remove all agricultural and stormwater ponds, canals, rivers)
4. Select from the waterbody layer all polygons intersecting with the queried watercourse layer. Export and call “Inland_Lakes”.
5. Select all waterbodies that are physically connected to and within 30 m of the limits of the shoreline flood hazard associated with the Great Lakes. Delete these polygons from the Inland Lakes layer.
6. Visually assess remaining polygons using the following guides:
 - i. If the waterbody is managed or maintained recreational or other related uses – delete
 - ii. If the waterbody forms part of the reservoir/holding pond structure of the active Welland Canal – delete

- iii. If the primary purpose and function of that water body is not natural or it does not contribute meaningfully to the functioning of the ecosystem and related water resource system – delete.
7. Assess remaining waterbodies and edit polygon with the “CUT POLYGON” tool to define exact extents of the inland lakes (i.e., separated the lake from the watercourse etc.).

Buffers

The mapping of the N.H.S. on the schedules of the new N.O.P. will not include buffers within urban areas. However, mandatory non-prescribed buffers are included as a component in N.H.S. Option 3C. While the width of these buffers is expected to be determined through site-specific studies, the purpose of the mapping and statistical analysis is to contrast and compare the options related to their ability to protect the natural environment systems, and the impact of the options on developable lands in urban areas. Therefore, for the purpose of allowing a fulsome comparison of the options, buffers will be mapped.

For the sake of generating statistics related to mapping N.H.S. Option 3C, the following buffer widths will be applied to the following features:

- significant woodlands = 10 m
- provincially significant wetlands = 30 m
- other woodlands = 5 m
- other wetlands = 15 m
- permanent and intermittent streams = 15 m
- inland lake = 15 m

Significant Woodlands buffer:

1. Use the BUFFER tool to produce a **10m** buffer on the ‘Region_Significant_Woodland’ dataset (Significant Woodland layer). Call this layer “Region_Significant_Woodland_Buffer”.

Provincially Significant Wetland Buffer:

1. Use the BUFFER tool to produce a **30m** buffer on the ‘Provincially_Significant_Wetlands’ dataset. Call this layer “PSW_Buffer”.

Other Woodlands Buffer:

1. Use the BUFFER tool to produce a **5m** buffer on the ‘Niagara_Other_Woodlands’ dataset (Other Woodlands layer). Call this layer “Other_Woodlands_Buffer”.

Other Wetland Buffer:

1. Use the BUFFER tool to produce a **15m** buffer on the 'Niagara_Other_Wetlands' dataset (Other Wetlands layer). Call this layer "Other_Wetlands_Buffer".

Watercourse Buffer:

1. Use the BUFFER tool to produce a **15m** buffer on the 'Watercourses_perm_inter_Niagara' dataset. Call this layer "Watercourses_perm_inter_Buffer".

Inland Lake Buffer:

8. Use the BUFFER tool to produce a **15m** buffer on the 'Inland_Lake_Niagara' dataset. Call this layer "Inland_Lake_Buffer".

Use the MERGE tool to merge all the buffers together (Region_Significant_Woodland_Buffer, PSW_Buffer, Other_Woodlands_Buffer, Other_Wetlands_Buffer, Watercourses_perm_inter_Buffer, Inland_Lake_Buffer). Call this layer "Natural_Feature_Buffers". It is recommended to select all the buffer features from 'Natural_Feature_Buffers' dataset and use the editing merge tool to merge all the features together to form one buffer as there may be overlapping features. After this is complete use the 'Explode multi-part feature' in advanced editing tools so all features that are separate from one another have their own buffer, but continuous features only have one buffered feature. Clip this layer to the Urban Area boundary and export as "Natural_Features_Buffer_UA".

Mapping the Natural Heritage System

The following describes the methods that should be applied to assemble the datasets for each of the N.H.S. options in the Region's urban areas (the source of the dataset has been identified in brackets).

N.H.S. Option 1

Bring into the map document the following natural features and areas:

- Provincially_Significant_Wetlands (L.I.O.)
- Region_Significant_Woodland (Niagara)
- Earth Science A.N.S.I.s (L.I.O.)
- Life Science A.N.S.I.s (L.I.O.)
- Watercourses_perm_inter_Niagara (Niagara)

N.H.S. Option 2

Map all of the natural features and areas from Option 1 – there is no difference in option 2 within settlement areas.

N.H.S. Option 3A

Map all of the natural features and areas from Option 1 – there is no difference in option 3A within settlement areas.

N.H.S. Option 3B

Map all natural heritage features and areas from Option 3A + **Other natural heritage features and areas**, including:

- Niagara_Other_Woodlands (Niagara)

N.H.S. Option 3C

Map all layers from Option 3B + **Buffers + Linkages**:

- Natural_Feature_Buffers (Niagara)
- Small_Linkages_100m_Final (Niagara)

Mapping the Water Resource System

The mapping discussion paper provided a review of available datasets and made recommendations for what should or should not be mapped. Technical Report #2 went further recommend mapping for the W.R.S. It was determined that at this time there is enough data to map many of the main components of the W.R.S. The following describes the methods that should be applied to assemble the datasets to map the W.R.S.

Bring into the map document the following components:

- Watercourses_perm_inter_Niagara (Niagara)
- Waterbodies (Niagara)
- Inland_Lake_Niagara (Niagara)
- Niagara_Other_Wetlands (Niagara)
- Provincially_Significant_Wetlands (L.I.O.)
- Significant groundwater recharge areas (N.P.C.A)
- HighlyVulnerableAquifer_NPCA (N.P.C.A.)
- Niagara_Shoreline_Areas (Niagara)
- Floodplains, flooding hazards, floodways (N.P.C.A.)

Assumptions and Limitations

Through the review of the available mapping and application of criteria to develop some datasets (e.g., Significant Woodlands), it should be acknowledged that there are some limitations resulting from the lack of complete information and datasets. A few examples of these limitations are discussed below.

Significant Woodlands - The criteria developed for Significant Woodlands includes criterion that require site-specific information about the woodland, such as the age of the trees, vegetation type, or abundance of rare species or those with a high coefficient of conservatism. Since this information is mostly unknown, the application of the criteria can only include those related to size and proximity. This means that there will be some smaller woodlands (e.g., 0.5 ha \geq 2 ha) that will not be identified as significant woodland but may otherwise qualify according to other criteria. Policies will therefore be required that require the completion of a site-specific study (e.g., Environmental Impact Study) as part of a development application when the woodland is \geq 5 ha in size to undertake field studies to evaluate the significance of the woodland.

Linkages – Depending on the level of effort and time taken for identifying and reviewing linkages, there will be some linkages that may be mapped that are not be possible to achieve as they may contain essential infrastructure that prevents the establishment of vegetation that can be left in a ‘free-to-grow’ state (i.e., without regular maintenance), or where there is a recently approved development application, but natural vegetation still exists in orthoimagery.

Table 3. Classification of vegetation communities according to Ecological Land Classification prepared in November 2020 for Niagara Region.

ELC Code	ELC Full Name	woodland (>60% canopy)	other woodland (>25% canopy)	Natural Cover	Wetland
TAG	Treed Agriculture	x	x	x	
BOT	Treed Bog		x	x	x
HOC	Coniferous Hedgerow		x	x	
SVC	Coniferous Savanna		x	x	
WOC	Coniferous Woodland		x	x	
HOD	Deciduous Hedgerow		x	x	
SVD	Deciduous Savanna		x	x	
WOD	Deciduous Woodland		x	x	
SVM	Mixed Savanna		x	x	
WOM	Mixed Woodland		x	x	
BLT	Treed Bluff		x	x	
CLT	Treed Cliff		x	x	
RBT	Treed Rock Barren		x	x	
SBT	Treed Sand Barren and Dune		x	x	
SHT	Treed Shoreline		x	x	
TAT	Treed Talus		x	x	
FOC	Coniferous Forest	x	x	x	
FOD	Deciduous Forest	x	x	x	
FOM	Mixed Forest	x	x	x	

ELC Code	ELC Full Name	woodland (>60% canopy)	other woodland (>25% canopy)	Natural Cover	Wetland
SWC	Coniferous Swamp			x	x
SWD	Deciduous Swamp			x	x
SAF	Floating-leaved Shallow Aquatic			x	x
MAM	Meadow Marsh			x	x
SAM	Mixed Shallow Aquatic			x	x
SWM	Mixed Swamp			x	x
MAS	Shallow Marsh			x	x
SAS	Submerged Shallow Aquatic			x	x
SWT	Swamp Thicket			x	x
BOS	Shrub Bog			x	x
OAQ	Open Aquatic			x	
IAG	Agricultural Infrastructure				
CVC	Commercial and Institutional				
THC	Coniferous Thicket			x	
THD	Deciduous Thicket			x	
MEF	Forb Meadow			x	
MEG	Graminoid Meadow			x	
CGL	Green lands			x	
MEM	Mixed Meadow			x	
THM	Mixed Thicket			x	
OAG	Open Agriculture			x	

ELC Code	ELC Full Name	woodland (>60% canopy)	other woodland (>25% canopy)	Natural Cover	Wetland
BLO	Open Bluff			x	
CLO	Open Cliff			x	
RBO	Open Rock Barren			x	
SHO	Open Shoreline			x	
TAO	Open Talus			x	
OAW	Open Water			x	
CVR	Residential				
SAG	Shrub Agriculture			x	
BLS	Shrub Bluff			x	
CLS	Shrub Cliff			x	
RBS	Shrub Rock Barren			x	
SHS	Shrub Shoreline			x	
TAS	Shrub Talus			x	
CVI	Transportation and Utilities				

Appendix B: Discussion on Woodlands in Niagara Region's Natural Heritage System

Discussion on Woodlands in Niagara Region's Natural Heritage System

The following discussion reviews the existing definition for woodlands in Niagara Region's Official Plan to inform an update to the woodland definition, and in turn criteria for determining significant woodlands and considerations for other components of the N.H.S. that contribute to maintaining and enhancing tree canopy cover in Niagara.

Definition for Woodlands

Current Definition of Woodland

Niagara Region currently defines woodlands as the following:

“Woodland means a treed area that provides environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public such as erosion prevention, hydrologic and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities and the sustainable harvest of woodland products. It does not include a cultivated fruit or nut orchard, or a plantation used for the purpose of producing Christmas trees.”

Based on the above definition and in recognition of the value of the treed areas in Niagara, woodlands were considered treed vegetation communities where the treed canopy cover was greater than 35%.

Mapping of woodlands in Niagara Region was previously prepared through orthoimage interpretation to identify those treed vegetation communities with >35% tree cover. In order to update the mapping and improve accuracy, the Region recently had the Natural Areas Inventory (N.A.I.) mapping, originally completed by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (N.P.C.A.) from 2006-2009, updated using Ecological Land Classification (E.L.C.) to the community series level. The E.L.C. mapping provides a more current and accurate dataset of natural features that is appropriate to support mapping of the N.H.S. for the new Niagara Official Plan.

Based on the new E.L.C. dataset, the Region has approximately 35,663 ha (18.9%) of treed vegetation communities, where treed vegetation communities are considered those that have >25% tree cover (see discussion of treed vegetation communities in the 'Treed Terrestrial Vegetation Communities' section below).

Of the total treed area in the Region, there is approximately 4,155 ha occupying urban areas, representing approximately 12.1% of urban areas, or 2.2% of the Region.

Proposed Definition of Woodland

The Greenbelt Plan (2017), Growth Plan (2019) and Provincial Policy Statement (P.P.S.) (2020) have the same definition for woodlands, as follows:

“Treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas and vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels. Woodlands may be delineated according to the Forestry Act definition or the Province’s Ecological Land Classification system definition for “forest”.

The main difference between the Region’s definition for woodland and the definition for woodland in the Provincial Plans and the P.P.S. is the last sentence that provides direction for delineating woodlands based on the “Forestry Act definition or the Province’s E.L.C. system for “forest”.” The last sentence uses the word “may” indicating that other means of delineating a woodland would be acceptable, as determined by the municipality. Therefore, the definition could rely on, or not, the Forestry Act definition, or the E.L.C. definition for forest to identify woodlands. In that case, the Region’s current definition is acceptable regarding the identification of woodlands. However, the current definition is not consistent with Provincial definitions and may lead to confusion with applying definitions and criteria across the Region. Furthermore, the current definition for woodland is not consistent with the Niagara Region Woodland Conservation By-law (January 2021) which applies the definition for woodland as identified in the Forestry Act. Since the Region will be responsible for incorporating the policies of the Provincial Plans into the new Niagara Official Plan for ease of implementation and be consistent with the definitions in the Provincial Plans and the P.P.S., it is recommended that the Provincial definition for woodland be adopted, with modifications, in the new Niagara Official Plan (N.O.P.).

The definition of woodland in the O.P. is intended to inform the application of criteria to identify significant woodlands as part of the N.H.S. The identification of a N.H.S. is intended to take an ecological systems-based approach to natural heritage protection. The Forestry Act definition of woodland is intended to identify woodland for the sake of applying the Forestry Act, which is focused on the wise use and sustainable management of woodlands. In comparison, the Province’s Ecological Land Classification system definition for “forest” consider a broader scope of ecological functions associated with woodlands. Since the purpose of the definition of woodland should be more ecologically focused to support the identification of the N.H.S. and implementation of related policies, the Province’s Ecological Land Classification will be used to delineate woodlands.

Proposed Modifications to the Province's Definition for Woodland

To be clear on the method to delineate woodlands, the word “may” will be replaced with the word “will”, and reference to the Forestry Act definition will be removed, as follows:

“Woodlands will be delineated according to the Province’s Ecological Land Classification system definition for “forest”.

In addition, the following sentence will follow the definition:

“For the purposes of this definition, forests include terrestrial vegetation communities as defined in accordance with the Province’s Ecological Land Classification system, where the tree cover is greater than 60%.”

The proposed definition for woodland will then be:

“Treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas and vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels. Woodlands will be delineated according to the Province’s Ecological Land Classification system definition for “forest”. For the purposes of this definition, forests include terrestrial vegetation communities as defined in accordance with the Province’s Ecological Land Classification system, where the tree cover is greater than 60%.”

Implications to Changing the Definition for Woodland

The implication of adopting the Provinces definition for woodland is that there would be a smaller geographical subset of tree vegetation communities which meet this definition. This definition would only include treed areas classified as forest according to E.L.C. According to the First Approximation for Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario (Lee et. al. 1998), forest is defined as “a terrestrial vegetation community with at least 60% tree cover”. That would mean those terrestrial vegetation communities (e.g., the E.L.C. community of ‘woodland’ which has a tree cover of greater than 35%, but less than 60%) that were previously included in the definition would no longer be considered as woodland and would therefore no longer qualify as significant woodland and be protected as such, according to Official Plan policy. Some vegetation communities, such as swamp communities, which are not considered ‘terrestrial’ vegetation communities on account of their hydric soils, would also not be considered as woodlands when strictly applying the definition that restricts forests to terrestrial vegetation communities. By applying the updated definition for ‘woodland’, there is approximately 11,623 ha of E.L.C. vegetation community considered ‘forest’ in Niagara Region, representing

approximately 6.2% of Niagara; in urban areas there would be approximately 1,726 ha of ‘forest’, representing approximately 5.0% of urban areas. Considering an objective in the current Region Official Plan is to maintain or enhance treed area, it will be important to determine how the other treed vegetation communities will be identified and protected under the new N.O.P. The following discussion provides an overview of the other treed vegetation communities (i.e., those that would no longer be considered woodlands under the new definition), how much land area they would occupy, and how they would be identified and protected according to Provincial and Regional policy.

Treed Wetlands (Swamps)

A large proportion (21,999 ha, or 11.7%) of the treed vegetation communities in Niagara are found in swamps; of this, 1,909 ha is found in urban areas, representing 5.6% of urban areas. Swamps are “a mineral-rich wetland characterized by a cover of deciduous or coniferous trees” with > 25% tree canopy cover (Lee et. al. 1998). Swamps include SWD, SWM and SWC classes in accordance with E.L.C. for southern Ontario. Since swamps are currently considered a “woodland” according to the Region’s Official Plan, changing the definition to only include ‘terrestrial’ vegetation communities with >60% canopy cover will mean swamps would no longer be included as woodlands and therefore not be subject to policies protecting significant woodlands. However, swamps are wetlands that are considered key hydrologic features according to the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan; both plans prohibit development (with few exceptions) in wetlands outside of settlement areas. Furthermore, in accordance with the policies of the Growth Plan wetlands outside of settlement areas would be subjected to a 30 m vegetation protection zone (VPZ). In addition, development is prohibited within wetlands in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area and all Provincially Significant Wetlands across the Region in accordance with P.P.S. policy 2.1.4. Wetlands are also considered a standard required component of the W.R.S., which extends into settlement areas; policies for non-provincially significant wetlands (or ‘other wetlands’) will be developed to be consistent with the regulations and policies of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (N.P.C.A.). Therefore, while swamps would no longer be considered a ‘woodland’ and therefore no longer qualify as significant woodlands, they would be afforded with greater protection than is currently provided for significant woodlands outside of the N.H.S. for the Growth Plan.

The net result of the increased protection afforded to wetlands would result in a greater level of protection than is currently provided to these wetlands under the current policy regime in Niagara.

Treed Terrestrial Vegetation Communities

Treed terrestrial vegetation communities are those “with a tree cover greater than 10%” according to the E.L.C. definition (Lee et. al. 1998). However, E.L.C. vegetation where tree cover is less than 25% can include shrub vegetation communities, which are not considered

‘treed’ communities. In consideration of the ecological function of treed vegetation communities and the intent of including those vegetation communities that contain a higher proportion of tree cover in the Region’s N.H.S., those terrestrial vegetation communities with a canopy cover of >25% will be considered treed vegetation communities. Treed terrestrial vegetation communities with a canopy cover >25% as classified according to the 2nd Approximately for E.L.C. in Southern Ontario (2008), would include the following:

- Treed agriculture (TAG) (e.g., plantations, hedgerows)
- Treed Rock Barren (RBT)
- Treed Sand Barren or Dune (SBT/SDT)
- Treed Shoreline (BBT)
- Treed Talus (TAT)
- Treed bluff (BLT)
- Treed bog (BOT)
- Treed cliff (CLT)
- Coniferous, mixed or deciduous woodland (WOC, WOM, WOD)
- Coniferous, mixed or deciduous savanna (SVC, SVM, SVD)
- Coniferous, mixed or deciduous forest (FOC, FOM, FOD)

These treed vegetation communities cover approximately 35,663 ha of Niagara Region (18.9 %), including 4,155 ha within urban areas (12.1% of urban areas). Changing the definition of woodland to only include ‘forest’ (i.e., FOC, FOM, FOD) would exclude the remaining treed vegetation communities, potentially resulting in a loss in protection for these vegetation communities that had previously qualified as significant woodland, and that did not qualify as another type of ‘significant’ feature (e.g., significant wildlife habitat). The total area of these treed vegetation communities (i.e., excluding FOC, FOM and FOD) is 3,556 ha (1.9%) across the Region, or 519 ha (1.5%) within urban areas. As part of ensuring the Region is able to maintain or enhance treed area, these other treed terrestrial vegetation communities will comprise the category of ‘other woodland’. ‘Other woodlands’ would be defined as:

“woodlands determined to be ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of an identifiable geographic area or natural heritage system. ‘Other woodlands’ include all treed terrestrial vegetation communities, that have not been considered Significant Woodland, where the percent cover is >25%, as defined according to Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario.”

In this case, ‘other woodlands’ would be considered a treed area with $\geq 25\%$ tree cover and meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. The treed area has an average minimum width of 40 m and is ≥ 0.3 ha, measured to crown edges; or
2. Any treed area of any size abutting a significant woodland,

where, treed areas that “abut” a significant woodland or treed swamp are considered adjacent when located within 20 m of each other.

It is recommended a policy be developed that provides the following protection for ‘other woodlands’:

“development and site alteration shall not be permitted” [in ‘other woodlands’] “unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions” (P.P.S. policy 2.1.5).

This policy is currently in place for these ‘other woodlands’ that qualify as significant under the current Regional Official Plan. Therefore, the intent is to ensure these ‘other woodlands’ continue to be protected in the same manner as they are currently, while retaining flexibility in policy.

Definition of Significant Woodland and Criteria for Identifying Woodlands as Significant

The proposed definition for significant woodland is taken from the P.P.S., as follows:

“woodlands that are ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history.”

Appendix A of Technical Report #2: Identification and Evaluation of Options for Regional Natural Environment System(s), provides a review and recommendations for criteria to identify a woodland as significant in Niagara Region. Re-defining the definition for woodland in Niagara Region requires revisiting the size criteria for identifying a woodland as significant since the criterion are based on a previously estimated 17.5% treed area. Under the proposed definition of woodland, ‘forest’ in Niagara covers 11,623 ha (6.2%) of the Region, and 1,726 ha (5%) in urban areas. According to the Natural Heritage Reference Manual (MNR 2010) [N.H.R.M.], where woodland cover is between 5 and 15%, woodlands 4 ha or larger should be considered significant. That said, where there is an absence of information related to ecological functions, uncommon characteristics, and economic and social functional values, the N.H.R.M. recommends the size threshold be reduced. Therefore, as this is the case in Niagara, the size threshold for significant woodlands should be 2 ha across the Region.

The proposed criteria are as follows:

“To be identified as significant, a woodland must meet the definition of E.L.C. “forest” (as per the definition of ‘woodland’) and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Any woodland 2 ha or greater in size;
- Any woodland 1 ha or greater in size meeting at least one of the following criteria:
 - 10 or more trees per ha greater than 100 years old or 50 cm or more in diameter;
 - Any woodland wholly or partially within 30 m of a significant wetland; habitat of an endangered or threatened species; significant woodland;
 - Any woodland overlapping or abutting one or more of the following features:
 - Permanent streams or intermittent streams;
 - Fish habitat;
 - Significant valleylands;
- Any woodland 0.5 ha or greater in size meeting at least one of the following criteria:
 - A provincially rare treed vegetation community with an S1, S2 or S3 in its ranking by the M.N.R.’s N.H.I.C.;
 - Habitat of a woodland plant species with an S1, S2 or S3 in its ranking or an 8, 9, or 10 in its Southern Ontario Coefficient of Conservatism by the N.H.I.C., consisting of 10 or more individual stems or 100 or more sqm of leaf coverage;
 - Any woodland overlapping or abutting one or more of the following features:
 - Significant wildlife habitat; and
 - Habitat of threatened species and endangered species;
 - ‘Other wetlands’
- Any woodland of any size overlapping with one or more of the following features:
 - a. P.S.W.s; and
 - b. Life Science A.N.S.I.

Woodlands that “abut” another feature are considered adjacent when located within 20 m of each other.

Guidance for delineating the boundary of a ‘woodland’ as defined by the Region should follow that of Appendix B in the Greenbelt Plan 2005 – Technical Definitions and Criteria for Key Natural Heritage Features in the Natural heritage System of the Protected Countryside (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 2012)”

Maintaining Treed Area in Niagara Region

If the Region aims to maintain or enhance treed area there are different policy approaches that could be considered to achieve the goal to maintain treed area as part of the new N.O.P. A policy approach to protect Significant Woodlands may include the following:

- Afford a higher level of protection for those woodlands that are found to be significant by prohibiting development in significant woodlands across the Region similar to the requirements for significant woodlands in the N.H.S. for the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan.
- Protect ‘other woodlands’ in accordance with the test for no negative impact, consistent with P.P.S. policy 2.1.5.

As noted previously, the recommended policy approach to protect ‘other woodlands’ can be to apply the policy from the P.P.S. that states “development and site alteration shall not be permitted” [in ‘other woodlands’] “unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions” (P.P.S. policy 2.1.5).

If one of the goals for the N.H.S. is to maintain treed area in Niagara Region, the above policy will allow for some treed area removal to occur as part of development applications when the test of no negative impact is met – while this policy is intended to provide flexibility, some removal can occur so long as the impact does not lead to “degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or ecological functions for which an area is identified”. As part of achieving the goal to maintain treed areas in Niagara, an additional policy can be considered that requires a vegetation planting plan that demonstrates a “net gain” in treed area is achieved, when tree removal is proposed. As an example, the City of Guelph Official Plan, 2018 consolidated version (policy 4.1.4.3) requires a “vegetation compensation plan” be prepared that demonstrates a net gain is achieved when treed area removal is proposed.

There are also instances where the ecological functions of some woodlands may be “substantially compromised as a result of prior land use activity and would be difficult to restore and/or manage as a native woodland in an urban setting” (York Region 2010 Official Plan, policy 2.2.48). Policy 2.2.48 of the York Region 2010 Official Plan provides a series of tests that must be met to classify a woodland as a “Cultural and Regenerating Woodland”:

“An environmental impact study should assess these ecological functions with consideration of the following:

1. the woodland is regenerating, typically with a dominant proportion of woody species being invasive and non-native (e.g., Norway Maple, Manitoba Maple, Siberian Elm, Scots Pine, European Buckthorn, White Mulberry, Tree-of-heaven, Apple, White Poplar, etc.)

2. the area was not treed approximately 20 to 25 years ago as determined through air photo interpretation or other suitable technique
3. soils may be degraded, for example, soil may be compacted, the topsoil removed, or there may be substantial erosion from over-use and/or the woodland may be regenerating on fill
4. there is limited ability to maintain or restore self-sustaining ecological functions typical of native woodlands

Woodlands (including plantations) established and/or managed for the purpose of restoring a native tree community are excluded from cultural and regenerating woodlands (e.g., naturalization or restoration projects)."

Policy 2.2.49 of the York Region 2010 Official Plan allows for removal of the treed area of a "Cultural and Regenerating Woodland" subject to preparing a "woodland compensation plan" that demonstrates a "net gain" in woodland area is achieved.

A similar policy requiring a vegetation planting plan that achieves a "net gain" in treed area cover could be considered in the new N.O.P. for where some tree removal is contemplated in 'other woodlands' where the test of no negative impact has been met, as well as for those woodlands that meet criteria such as those of "Cultural and Regenerating Woodlands" in York Region's O.P. It is important to note that a vegetation planting plan should not be used as part of demonstrating no negative impact when evaluating the impacts of removing treed areas.

Summary of Policy Recommendations for Treed Vegetation Communities

The change in definitions would not result in reduction in the area of treed vegetation communities included within the Region's N.E.S.s if the approach to identifying significant woodlands and 'other woodlands', and the proposed policy direction is implemented. Following the proposed approach, all treed vegetation communities captured as part of the Regions current definition for woodland would be included in the N.H.S. and/or W.R.S. (i.e., wetlands) under one category or another. The proposed policy approach provides both restrictive policies for Significant Woodlands and flexible policies for 'other woodlands', that aims to protect significant features and enhance treed area cover, thereby achieving the goal to maintain and enhance treed area cover in the Region.

Under the above recommended policy direction dealing with treed vegetation communities, the following could be applied:

- Development is prohibited in all significant woodlands in the Region consistent with policies for significant woodlands (i.e., a key natural heritage feature) in the N.H.S. for the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan;

- Development is prohibited in all wetlands (including treed wetlands) outside of settlement areas in accordance with the policies of the Growth Plan dealing with key hydrologic features, including the requirement for a 30 m VPZ and in alignment with N.P.C.A. regulations and policies;
- Development is prohibited in all P.S.W.s. (including treed P.S.W.s.) across the entire Region consistent with P.P.S. policy 2.1.4. and in alignment with N.P.C.A. regulations and policies;
- Development is prohibited in ‘other woodlands’ across the Region, consistent with P.P.S. policy 2.1.5 that prohibits development unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological functions;
- Protection of ‘other wetlands’ in settlement areas would be achieved in accordance with N.P.C.A. regulations and policies for wetlands; and
- A requirement for a vegetation planting plan that achieves a net gain in treed area cover and ecological function where a proposal for removal of treed areas that are part of ‘other woodlands’ has met the test of no negative impact.

The proposed policies would provide protection for Significant Woodlands beyond what is currently provided for in the Region’s Official Plan, protect ‘other woodlands’ as provided under current R.O.P. policies, provide flexibility through policies permitting application of the test of no negative impact to ‘other woodlands’, and require a vegetation planting plan that achieves a net gain in treed area, where removal is proposed as part of a development application. These policies would be consistent with the intent of maintaining or enhancing the Region’s total treed area.

Appendix C: Mapping of the Natural Environment System in Urban Areas

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/natural-environment-options.aspx>

Appendix D: Statistics of Mapped Components of the Natural Environment System in Urban Areas

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/natural-environment-options.aspx>

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 3 – Section 2. WATERSHED PLANNING

SUMMARY

The *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (“PPS”) requires that watersheds be the ‘ecologically meaningful scale for integrated and long-term planning’. This is not a new concept. However, recent Provincial changes have reinforced the need for watershed planning to ‘inform’ municipal land-use planning.

Watershed planning is a methodology used to define values, objectives and targets that support the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the natural resources (with an emphasis on water resources) within a watershed through the development of management plans and policies.

Through a 2018 update to the protocol for environmental planning services in the Region, responsibility for ‘watershed planning’ was transferred to the Region, and the responsibility for ‘subwatershed planning’ was transferred to the local municipalities.

To facilitate this transfer of responsibilities, a Watershed Planning Discussion Paper (“WPDP”) was completed (see Overview below to access the Discussion Paper). The WPDS identified the need for additional watershed planning to be completed to inform various aspects of the new Niagara Official Plan (“NOP”). To meet this need, a consultant has been retained and a project to prepare a Niagara Watershed Plan (“NWP”) is underway. NPCA staff are involved in the project.

The NWP is the next step in implementing a watershed planning program and will ensure that the NOP is appropriately informed by watershed planning in accordance with provincial requirements. The ongoing work of the NWP project has been informing the work on the NOP on an iterative basis.

A Goals and Objectives Discussion Paper for the NWP project was shared with the local municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders in November 2020 for input (see Overview below to access the Discussion Paper). Once a draft of the entire NWP is complete it will be shared with Regional Council. A comprehensive engagement program will then follow before the plan is finalized.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change



OVERVIEW

The updated Provincial Plans in 2017 increased the emphasis on the need for watershed planning to ‘inform’ land-use planning. This was accompanied by a Provincial shift in the direction for responsibility for watershed planning.

Specifically, Section 4.2.1.1 of the 2017 *Growth Plan* states “*Municipalities, partnering with conservation authorities as appropriate, will ensure that watershed planning is undertaken to support a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the quality and quantity of water within a watershed.*”

Coinciding with this Provincial direction, in 2018, there was a transfer of responsibility for a number of environmental planning responsibilities from the NPCA to Niagara Region.

At the time of this shift, the Region was progressing with its NOP, and that the process, roles, and responsibilities for watershed planning would be better refined through that process.

To facilitate this transfer of responsibilities, one of the background reports for the natural environment work program (“NEWP”) was the Watershed Planning Discussion Paper (“WPDP”). The purpose of the WPDP was to better understand the history, new provincial direction, and the updated process, roles, and responsibilities related to watershed planning in the Region. The WPDP provided direction in three key areas:

- The scope of watershed planning that is required to ‘inform’ the NOP.
- Policies for watershed planning that should be included in the NOP.
- A framework for watershed planning in Niagara moving forward.

The Watershed Planning Discussion Paper (October 2019) can be accessed here:

[Watershed Planning Discussion Paper \(October 2019\)](https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/natural-environment-watershed-planning.pdf)

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/natural-environment-watershed-planning.pdf>

Following the completion of the WPDP, a project to complete a Niagara Watershed Plan (“NWP”) was initiated. The NWP is being prepared as a watershed planning equivalency document in accordance with provincial direction.

A “watershed” is defined as an area that is drained by a river and its tributaries. The NWP is being completed at a ‘tertiary-level’. The ‘tertiary’ watersheds in Niagara are

Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River. Following the completion of the NOP project there will be a need for the Region to complete more detailed watershed planning at the 'quaternary-level'. The NWP has delineated 12 quaternary watersheds in the Region. After that, subwatershed planning becomes the responsibility of the local municipalities. Subwatershed plans are typically completed in support of Secondary Plans or similar large-scale developments.

The NWP is informing the NOP. This work is ongoing on an iterative basis, which is the typical way that watershed planning informs the land-use planning. Several highlights include:

- Informing what features and systems should be considered required components of the WRS.
- The integration of the NHS and WRS. It was the work of the NWP that confirmed the need to consider these systems collectively as the integrated natural environment system (NES).
- Providing criteria to support the evaluation of various growth options in the Region.

The NWP project was first introduced as part of the virtual public information centre for the NOP in September 2020. A Goals and Objectives Discussion Paper for the NWP project was shared with local municipalities, the public, and other stakeholders in November 2020 for input. This included the use of a survey which was widely shared.

The Niagara Watershed Plan – Goals and Objectives Discussion Paper (October 2020) can be accessed here:

[Niagara Watershed Plan – Goals and Objectives Discussion Paper \(October 2020\)](https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/niagara-watershed-plan-discussion-paper.pdf)
<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/rural-and-natural-systems/pdf/niagara-watershed-plan-discussion-paper.pdf>

NPCA staff have been actively participating in the process. Region staff are thankful for their willingness to participate, provide technical support, and direct us to a range of data and other background information that has been required.

The NWP will be a thorough and comprehensive report that will inform the NOP, future watershed planning, and ongoing land-use planning in the Region. Once a draft of the entire NWP is complete it will be shared with Regional Council. A comprehensive engagement program with the public and other stakeholders will then follow before the plan is finalized.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 3 – Section 5. CLIMATE CHANGE

SUMMARY

The need to plan and prioritize climate change throughout all sections of the Niagara Official Plan is in line with updated Provincial land use planning documents. Planning for climate change requires consideration of the impacts of a changing climate across all sections of the Official Plan, with the goal of mitigation and adaptation to achieve resiliency.

- Supporting the achievement of complete communities that are compact, walkable, and transit-supportive, implementing sustainable design principles, protecting agricultural lands, water resources and natural areas will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in order to create resilient communities.
- Planning for climate change also requires considerable background work to be considered, including climate projections, vulnerability assessments, adaptation plans, energy plans, greenhouse gas emission inventories and targets in order to comprehensively understand and address impacts from a changing climate.
- Some initiatives, such as the development of greenhouse gas emission inventories and associated reduction targets is work beyond land use planning and requires coordination at a corporate organizational level.
- A Climate Modeling and Projections Project is currently underway for Niagara and will be used to understand the changing climate in Niagara, inform the climate change section of the Niagara Official Plan, and all future adaptation planning.
- The Climate Change section of the Niagara Official Plan will include policy supporting the development of a Regional Greening Initiative, as proposed through PDS 6-2021- Climate Change Work Program Update
- The Climate Change section of the Niagara Official Plan will have policy that supports and refers to other priority areas of the Official Plan, including Regional Structure, Infrastructure, District and Secondary Plans, Natural Heritage and Water Resource Systems, Urban Design, and Agriculture.

A Section Update is provided with this sub-section document.



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aggregates
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

OVERVIEW

In 2017, changes were made to the *Planning Act*, through *Bill 139, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds*, which outlines the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to a changing climate is a matter of Provincial interest. Additionally, Official Plans must contain climate change mitigation and adaptation policies with the intent to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase the resiliency of the community.

Through the *Growth Plan*, *Greenbelt Plan*, and *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, climate change policies are integrated throughout the Provincial plans, demonstrating the interconnectedness of policies to address climate change. Planning for growth will require consideration of developing complete communities, which can be transit-supportive, compact, mixed-use, and sustainable. The protection of agricultural lands, water resources, and natural areas will assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, acting as carbon sinks. Applying the policies of the Provincial plans is in support of the draft Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan which commits to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The key objective of the climate change section will be working towards the development of resilient communities, which encompasses policies throughout the Niagara Official Plan. Resilient communities are planned and built with consideration to alternative processes to minimize impacts to a changing climate. Resilient communities conserve and protect natural heritage, water resources and agricultural lands to ensure natural green infrastructure can provide ecological benefits and agricultural land can produce local healthy food into the future.

A Climate Change Discussion Paper was prepared to understand climate change, impacts in Niagara, land use planning as it relates to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and the Provincial requirements to integrate climate change into Official Plans. The paper also provided background on previous initiatives Niagara Region had conducted as it relates to climate change.

Consultation and engagement is an important component for all work programs related to the Niagara Official Plan, including Climate Change. Consultation and engagement has occurred through both in-person and virtual Public Information Centres, meeting with local municipalities, survey responses to the Climate Change Discussion Paper and Growth Management survey, the Planning Advisory Committee, and with the project's Climate Change Working Group, consisting of cross-departments at the Region and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA).

The background work and consultation on Climate Change and other work programs, such as the Natural Environment Work Program was key to informing an update to the work program as identified in PDS 6-2021- Climate Change Work Program Update. This update included the addition of two pillars to the policy stage: A Climate Modeling and Projections Project and research commencement of a Regional Greening Initiative.

The Climate Modeling and Projections Project has commenced with the Ontario Climate Consortium, a branch of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, which will provide critical data for understanding how the climate will change in Niagara over the next 50+ years. The project team has held a workshop with staff and stakeholders to understand the parameters that should be used for the project, such as temperature, high heat days, precipitation, frost free days, etc. This project will inform the policy section for climate change and is an important first step for all adaptation planning the Region decides to undertake.

Planning staff have formulated a research outline for the Regional Greening Initiative, have engaged with the NPCA, and have formed an internal working group to begin this project. Staff will provide an update on research and lessons learned in Q3 of 2021.

Draft policy for the climate change section of the Official Plan is not complete at this time, however the update will provide identification of Provincial policies and their connection to other draft policy and sections of the Joint Report. Climate change policy will be completed in Q4 of 2021, following completion of the Climate Modeling and Projections Project.

The attached update (**Appendix 8.2**) provides information on the integration of climate policies for the Niagara Official Plan, a progress update on the Climate Modeling Project, and preliminary information on the Regional Greening Initiative research.

Appendix 8.2

SECTION UPDATE - Climate Change

At the January 2021 Planning and Economic Development Committee, PDS 6-2021-Climate Change Work Program Update identified changes to the work program previously proposed. The changes included the addition of two pillars to the policy development stage: a Climate Modeling and Projections Project with the Ontario Climate Consortium, a sub-set of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; and a Staff developed Regional Greening Initiative. This section update is intended to provide information on those two initiatives, as well as identify the interconnectedness of Provincial climate-related policies throughout sections of the Niagara Official Plan.

1.0 Policy Conformity for the Niagara Official Plan

The Niagara Official Plan will have a Climate Change policy section, highlighting the integration of climate policies throughout the Official Plan as well as climate change specific policies. Draft policy for the Climate Change section will be forthcoming following consultant prepared climate modeling and projections work set to conclude in Q4 of 2021.

Provincial climate change policies are highly integrated and will be identified within other sections of the Niagara Official Plan, as detailed in Section 4.0 below, including Infrastructure, Transportation, Employment, Agriculture, District and Secondary Plans, Urban Design, Regional Structure, and Natural Environment. Staff would note that this chart identifies draft policy intent, and may change throughout 2021.

2.0 Climate Modeling and Projections Project

The Climate Modeling and Projections project commenced in February 2021 with the Ontario Climate Consortium (OCC). As part of the approved work plan for the climate modeling, the submitted detailed project methodology includes key data inputs and outputs, analysis components, engagement process to be followed, and climate parameters. This was presented recently to Niagara Region staff and stakeholders, where project deliverables and climate parameters were confirmed. Completion of the climate modeling process is anticipated by the end of October 2021.

3.0 Regional Greening Initiative

A Regional Greening Initiative was approved by Council as an additional pillar to the Climate Change work program as detailed in PDS 6-2021-Climate Change Work Program Update. This initiative extends beyond the timeline of the Official Plan to ensure robust consultation, and detailed research in best practices and implementation measures for achieving project goals.



Staff continue to consult with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority to identify restoration programs and opportunities. In addition, staff have met with Land Care Niagara with respect to Provincial tree planting programs. A potential pilot program may include the use of Region owned properties for this tree planting initiative.

Staff have formed an internal working group to support the Regional Greening Initiative. It is anticipated that staff will bring forward a report to Committee and Council following detailed research into best practices and organization and municipal tree planting programs in Q3 of 2021.

4.0 Climate Change Policy Conformity Chart

Provincial Topic and Policy Direction	Connected Region		Competitive Region		Vibrant Region		Growing Region	Sustainable Region	
	Infrastructure Policy	Transportation Policy	Employment Policy	Agriculture Policy	Urban Design Policy	District and Secondary Plans Policy	Regional Structure Policy	Natural Environment Policy	Climate Change Policy
Goals									
Integrating climate change considerations into planning and managing growth (reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing resilience)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complete Communities (mixed-use neighbourhoods, providing appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, services, housing, transportation options, and public service facilities)									
Promoting development and land use patterns that conserve biodiversity, promoting compact form, mixed-use development			✓		✓	✓	✓		
Supporting achievement of complete communities			✓		✓	✓	✓		
Integrating green infrastructure and low impact development as appropriate	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Transportation									
Reducing dependence on automobiles, supporting existing and planned transit and active transportation		✓	✓		✓				
Encouraging transit-supportive development and intensification			✓		✓		✓		
Infrastructure									
Assessing infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities	✓								
Stormwater Management, Sewage and Water, Water Conservation									
Planning for storm water management to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Planning for sewage and water services to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate	✓								
Supporting strategies for water conservation and other water demand management initiatives	✓				✓				
Natural Hazards									
Directing development outside of lands unsafe for development due to natural hazards								✓	

Provincial Topic and Policy Direction	Connected Region		Competitive Region		Vibrant Region		Growing Region	Sustainable Region	
	Infrastructure Policy	Transportation Policy	Employment Policy	Agriculture Policy	Urban Design Policy	District and Secondary Plans Policy	Regional Structure Policy	Natural Environment Policy	Climate Change Policy
Waste Management									
Ensuring waste management systems are provided that support waste reduction, composting and recycling, reuse and diversion	✓								
Strategies, Inventories, and Targets									
Development of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience	✓		✓		✓				✓
Encouragement to develop greenhouse gas inventories and establish targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions									✓
Air Quality									
Air quality improvements and protection, including through reduction in emissions					✓				✓
Emergency Management									
Infrastructure and public service facilities should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Energy									
Promoting energy conservation for existing buildings and planned developments	✓				✓				✓
Natural Environment and Vegetation									
Maximizing vegetation within settlement areas, where feasible					✓				✓
Development of Natural Heritage System and associated policy protections for features								✓	
Development of Water Resource System and associated policy protection for features								✓	
Agriculture									
Protection of the Agricultural System (agricultural land base and agri-food network)				✓					
Supporting farm diversification				✓					
Expanding convenient access to local food options, including through urban agriculture							✓		

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 4 – Section 1. AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM

SUMMARY

Agriculture in Niagara is a prominent and thriving industry both culturally and economically. The Agricultural System contains an agricultural land base and the agri-food network that enables the agri-food sector to thrive. The Agricultural System objectives and policies support agricultural uses, normal farm practices, and diversification uses to ensure the industry continues to prosper in Niagara.

- The agricultural land base, consisting of specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas, and rural lands will be a mapped schedule in the Niagara Official Plan.
- The Province has identified and mapped an Agricultural System through the *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan*. In Niagara, specialty crop areas are mapped through the *Greenbelt Plan* and are refined by the Province at the time of plan review. Prime agricultural areas are mapped through the *Growth Plan*, with additional candidate areas for consideration as prime agricultural areas to be determined by the Region in collaboration with local municipalities.
- The Agricultural System supports all types, sizes, and intensities of agricultural uses, activities and normal farm practices.
- Niagara developed farm diversification policies, encouraging a wide range of diversified uses that contribute to long-term farm viability through Regional Official Plan Amendment 6-2009. Diversification policies continue to be a key component of the Agricultural System reflected in the Niagara Official Plan.
- Non-agricultural uses being proposed on agricultural land, will be required to meet criteria in the Niagara Official Plan, including the new Provincial requirement of an agricultural impact assessment (AIA) prepared by a qualified professional. An AIA identifies and evaluates potential impacts of non-agricultural development on agricultural operations and the Agricultural System and recommends ways to avoid or, if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
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<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

OVERVIEW

Niagara Region is home to an active and vibrant farming sector which includes a wide range of farming types including grape and tender fruit, greenhouse/nursery/floriculture operations, oilseeds and grain operations, livestock operations, and more. In Niagara Region, approximately 218,251 acres of farmland creates \$1.41 billion GDP impact from agriculture. Agriculture in Niagara has an employment impact of approximately 19,892 jobs.

Mapping of Niagara Region's agricultural land base needs to be updated as part of the Niagara Official Plan exercise. There are differences between the Region's current agricultural land base mapping and the Province's updated mapping as identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Municipalities have been given the opportunity to refine candidate areas proposed for inclusion as prime agricultural areas based on Provincial criteria. Planning staff at the Region have been considering these candidate areas through a collaborative process with local area municipal planning staff. The updated mapping will be included in the agriculture land base schedule of the Niagara Official Plan.

Viable agricultural land, including specialty crop areas, which are comprised of the highest capability soils, are a non-renewable, finite resource that is essential for the existence of a healthy agriculture and food system. Provincial Plans, including *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* ("Growth Plan"), *Greenbelt Plan*, and *Niagara Escarpment Plan* require implementation of an Agricultural System approach, which includes protection of the agricultural land base and the agri-food network. The Provincial land use plans also introduced the requirement for an agricultural impact assessment, through the 2017 *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan*, which is a study to evaluate the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on agricultural operations and recommend ways to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts.

Background work for the Agricultural System chapter has been underway since 2015, with a number of reports that have been prepared for Council. A key focus of the Niagara Official Plan review has been the refinement of the Province's Agricultural System Mapping with local area municipalities.

During the Province's Coordinated Policy Review, there have been many requests for land to be removed from the Greenbelt Plan area, which is a Provincial decision. No changes have been made to the Greenbelt Plan area mapping at this time. The issue of agricultural viability of some land designated specialty crop areas is being addressed through policy using specialty crop guidelines developed by Planning staff.

Consultation and engagement to date has included in-person and virtual public information centres on the Agricultural System background work, review of draft mapping with local area municipal planning staff, and review of draft policies with the Region's Agricultural Policy and Action Committee (APAC) and other agricultural stakeholders.

The attached draft policy and mapping, **Appendix 9.2** and **Appendix 9.3** respectively, illustrates the direction the Niagara Official Plan is taking as it continues towards completed final draft status.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 4 - Section 2. EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY

Employment planning has been modernized through recent changes to Provincial policy, including from *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (“Growth Plan”) and the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (“PPS”).

The Region is required to map Employment Areas and provide policy to ensure that these employment clusters are protected over the long term. The existing Official Plan is deficient in this area.

An Employment Policy Paper is included as **Appendix 10.2**. That Paper contains significant details on employment-related topics set out in this Executive Overview.

Draft employment policies are also included as **Appendix 10.3**. Key policies include the following:

- Protecting designated employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth. This protection includes mapping Employment Areas based on existing and planned employment clusters.
- Recommending minimum density targets for Employment Areas that have been discussed and confirmed with local municipal planning staff.
- Creating Employment Area sub-groupings to implement and protect envisioned functions of each draft employment area. The sub-groupings include Core (for the heaviest industrial), Knowledge and Innovation (for lighter industrial), and Dynamic (mix of traditional and lighter employment).
- Establishing Employment Land Redevelopment Criteria and Employment Area Conversion Criteria to assist with the municipal review and evaluation of related applications.
- Creating a process to identify and implement future employment areas.
- Consulting the Province and local municipalities in establishing Provincially Significant Employment Zones as part of this Official Plan process.
- Leveraging Niagara’s infrastructure and assets to strengthen existing and attract new economies and skilled labour workforce.

The Region has received several requests to convert employment lands to other uses. The Region will assess and report on these requests in summer 2021.

Prior to that, **the Region asks that any comments on the materials provided here, including those relating to conversion requests, be made by July 2, 2021.** This is asked so that the Region has sufficient time to review and make recommendations prior to reporting further in August 2021.



A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

OVERVIEW

The Region must be proactive to support existing employment and future job growth.

The Region allocates population and employment forecasts to 2051 as set out in the *Growth Plan*. Planning to accommodate these forecasts requires comprehensive assessment using a land needs assessment methodology issued by the Province. This process is detailed in the Draft Land Needs Assessment Summary (**Appendix 3.2**).

The *Growth Plan* and *PPS* direct the Region to plan for and protect different aspects of employment growth, development, and redevelopment. In determining employment land needs, the Province sets out four categories of employment for municipalities to consider. These categories are major office employment; population-related employment; employment land employment; and rural area employment.

The focus of most employment is within two land use types: employment lands and employment areas.

- Employment lands are parcels designated for employment uses within a local municipal official plan and/or zoning by-law.
- Employment areas are made up of groups or clusters of contiguous employment land parcels.

The Province directs the Region to map Employment Areas in the Official Plan. The Region has consulted with the local municipalities, industry stakeholders and the public many times in preparing draft mapping. Those maps are attached as Appendix A to **Appendix 10.2**.

The Region proposes three sub-groupings of Employment Area to implement and protect envisioned functions of each Employment Area.

The sub-groupings are Knowledge and Innovation Employment Areas (most compatible, lighter employment uses), Dynamic Employment Areas (mix of traditional and lighter employment), and Core Employment Areas (traditional/heavy employment type uses).

The Region is also responsible for identifying a minimum density target (jobs per hectare) for individual Employment Areas. The minimum target was established by analyzing the existing employment density, reviewing vacant lands supply within the boundary and considering the development potential of the vacant land supply. This analysis was carefully done with local municipal staff input.

Draft employment policies set out a process to convert lands within employment areas to non-employment uses. Employment Area Conversion Criteria will assist with municipal review and evaluation of any proposed conversion within an employment areas during, and after, the Region's municipal comprehensive review process.

The Region has received a number of requests for employment conversion through this Official Plan process. Staff are not making any recommendations with respect to these requests at this time.

Following the consideration of this Joint Report, the Region will continue to assess received requests and any new employment conversion requests received up to July 2, 2021. Following this date, the Region will be able to comprehensively evaluate conversion requests for conversion based on the process and criteria outlined in the draft policies. The process of examining requests is a requirement of the Land Needs Assessment Methodology as it relates to community area land need.

As noted above, employment is categorized as employment area and employment lands. The paragraphs above generally described matters relating to employment areas. The Region also has an interest in employment land, although the Region's role is less directive.

Specifically, the Region helps manage employment land use changes (redevelopment), which occurs on lands outside of Employment Areas that are designated employment in a local Official Plan.

Draft policies include criteria to assist with municipal review and evaluation of proposed employment land redevelopment (i.e. outside of an Employment Area) that introduces non-employment uses to the site. For the purposes of redevelopment, the *Growth Plan* requires that space for a similar number of jobs remain accommodated on site.

The Region has also set out a process to identify and implement future employment areas. The concept of a future employment area is to protect lands outside of the urban area that possess desirable traits for large-scale future employment uses. A future employment area is intended to protect lands from re-designating to land uses that are less compatible with employment uses.

Ongoing employment work is investigating the identification of Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs). This requires additional consultation with local municipalities and the Province. Effort is being made to have draft PSEZs identified in for the next round of consultation and draft policy and mapping release in summer and fall 2021.

In addition, a process is outlined in the Employment Policy Paper (**Appendix 10.2**) on steps to request a PSEZ designation in the future, if needed. PSEZs can work alongside the Regional economic development strategy to help drive job growth.

The Niagara Economic Gateway identification in the Growth Plan continues to recognize strategic benefits of proximity to the Niagara-United States border. The Niagara Official Plan can assist in leveraging the Niagara Economic Gateway for strategic employment investment through prioritizing the identification of future employment areas and PSEZs within the Gateway.

The Region's policies seek to strengthen Niagara's existing employment base by attracting and retaining jobs and skilled labour while fostering new economic sectors. Diversification of Niagara's economic sectors that had previously relied heavily on manufacturing and agricultural, will help create a resilient economy that is better equipped to handle localized, national and global disruptions.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an example of such a disruption. At the time of writing, the impacts of the pandemic on employment planning are uncertain. Many businesses have made work-from-home arrangements, but such solution impacts only a portion of the workforce, and its mid- and longer-term implications are unknown.

Regionally, employment planning seeks to protect land for that purpose for the long term. The Region has taken a conservative, wait-and-see approach to the pandemic. Since the pandemic implications are unknown, Staff are of the view that larger changes to employment planning should not be implemented at this time, in the event that pandemic changes are only short-term, and employment trends do not materially change as we exit the pandemic.

Thus, for the purpose of the ROP, the Region does not propose major employment policy changes. The Region's priority remains the protection of, and planning for, employment areas over the long-term.

If, over the coming years, employment trends do change, the Region will undertake an Official Plan Amendment to revise its employment policies accordingly.

Included within this Appendix are the following:

- A comprehensive Employment Policy Paper that details the above matters, including additional background work and mapping (**Appendix 10.2**) ;
- Draft employment policies (**Appendix 10.3**); and
- Draft Employment Areas Schedule (**Appendix 10.4**)

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 4 – Section 3. MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES

SUMMARY

Aggregates include gravel, sand, clay, earth, bedrock, and other material as prescribed under the *Aggregate Resources Act (ARA)*. The terminology used in planning documents is ‘mineral aggregate resources’. These resources play a vital role in supporting both the Regional and Provincial economy and need to be managed for long-term protection and use.

A ‘pit’ is a facility where loose material, such as sand and gravel, is extracted. Solid bedrock, such as limestone and granite, is extracted from a ‘quarry’. Pits and quarries both fall under the classification of a mineral aggregate operation which additionally includes facilities for the transport, processing, and recycling of aggregate resources.

- There will be policies in the Niagara Official Plan related to both mineral aggregate resources and mineral aggregate operations.
- Aggregate planning at the Regional level is unique in comparisons to other types of land-use planning. There is an additional Provincial process that also occurs being the licensing of mineral aggregate operations by the Province through the *Aggregate Resources Act (ARA)*. Whereas the *Planning Act* and Regional Official Plan process is concerned with land use approvals – licenses under the ARA control and regulate the operation of mineral aggregate operations.
- It is common for applications under the Aggregates act and Planning Act to be processed simultaneously. Before an ARA license can be granted the lands must be appropriately zoned for the use.
- The Niagara Official Plan needs to ensure that policies are within the Region’s area of responsibility and that the policies do not conflict with ARA requirements. The new policies that are being developed would apply to new applications. New policies are not being developed to regulate existing operations in the Region.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021			
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeology		
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Employment		
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture		
<input type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aggregates		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options		
<input type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning		
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change		



OVERVIEW

In 2014, an aggregate resources policy project was initiated as part of the former Regional Official Plan Amendment 8 (ROPA 8). A background study was completed in 2016 to inform the project was the “State of Aggregate Resources in Niagara Region: Background Report”. Following completion of this background work, the Region began the process of preparing the new Niagara Official Plan. The aggregate resources project transitioned into preparing policies for the Niagara Official Plan, and ROPA 8 was abandoned. Following this, a Technical Addendum was completed in 2018 to summarize legislative changes to the *Growth Plan*, *Greenbelt Plan*, and *Niagara Escarpment Plan*; changes to the *Aggregate Resources Act*, and other new provincial legislation. Since that time, there continues to be ongoing changes at the Provincial level regarding aggregate resources planning. These changes have been reflected in the preparation of the draft policies.

The policy framework for managing mineral aggregate resources and mineral aggregate operations is complex, it includes planning policies at the Provincial, Regional, and Local levels as well as the ARA. The *Planning Act* identifies the conservation and management of aggregate resources as a matter of Provincial interest. With the introduction of the new *Growth Plan* and *Greenbelt Plan* in 2017, Provincial policies for mineral aggregate resources have become some of the most prescriptive. There are additional and more detailed policies that the Region is required to implement through the Official Plan, and in many cases this means less flexibility for designing policies at the Regional or Local level.

As noted, much of the direction for aggregate resource planning comes from the Province. Provincial direction starts with the *Provincial Policy Statement* (PPS) – with more specific policies being provided in the *Growth Plan*, *Greenbelt Plan*, and *Niagara Escarpment Plan*. Key provincial direction through the PPS includes:

- Aggregates shall be made available as close to markets as possible;
- There is not a requirement to demonstrate ‘need’ when considering a mineral aggregate operation;
- Extraction must minimize social, economic, and environmental impacts;
- Need to protect existing operations from incompatible land uses;
- Need to protect known deposits of mineral aggregates for long-term use; and

- Importance of rehabilitation planning, including progressive and comprehensive rehabilitation

In addition, Provincial Plans include several Niagara-specific policies to be included in the Official Plan, including detailed policies regarding the Fonthill Kame area, and specific strict rehabilitation requirements in the specialty crop area above the escarpment.

Managing mineral aggregate truck traffic through haul routes has been identified as a highly important issue by Regional Council. Haul route agreements may be used to ensure haul routes are defined, utilized and secure for improvements and additional maintenance. Ensuring the appropriate use of Regional roads for aggregate truck traffic is critical to mitigate impacts and protect sensitive road users.

Mapping of mineral aggregates resources is completed by the Province (Ontario Geological Survey (OGS) – Earth Resources and Geoscience Mapping Section). A process is currently underway by the OGS to update the sand and gravel and bedrock mapping in Niagara:

- Updated sand and gravel mapping is now available and will be reflected in the schedules of the Niagara Official Plan.
- Updated bedrock mapping from the Province is not yet available. The mapping included with this report is based on the best available information.
- Mapping of aggregate resources is neither limiting nor permissive for mineral aggregate operations. Mapping helps us to understand where the resources are to inform land use planning decisions.

Land-use planning for aggregates is unique. This is because of the scope, scale, and size of mineral aggregate operations. In addition, these are not common applications, and require the support of a range of experts to process and review. In support of any application there will be a full range of detailed technical studies that would need to be reviewed including environmental, water resources, blasting and vibration, transportation etc. The application process and types of studies to be submitted will be reflected in the policies of the Niagara Official Plan.

Aggregate applications are complex, involving multiple review agencies, required to consider a range of technical issues. A Joint Agency Review Team (JART) process is a best practice that will assist with streamlining the application process for mineral

aggregate operations between the Region, Local Municipalities, and the NPCA. The expectations for the JART process are included in the draft policies.

To date consultation has included the use of a Technical Advisory Group (TAG), industry consultation, and presentation of key material at the Official Plan Public Information Centers (PICs) in both 2019 and 2020. A preliminary draft of the policies were circulated to key stakeholders including Provincial Ministries, Local Municipalities, NPCA, and industry representatives. The next step in the consultation process will be to circulate the attached draft of the policies more broadly for input including to the public.

The attached draft policies (**Appendix 11.2**) illustrates the direction for mineral aggregate resource policies in the Niagara Official Plan. Additional consultation and input will assist in refining the policies as the Niagara Official Plan continues towards completed final draft status.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 5 – Section 1. TRANSPORTATION

SUMMARY

Regional Transportation policies align with the more detailed recommendations of the approved Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan, to ensure coordination between infrastructure and land use planning.

A properly supported transportation system connects our communities and places of employment, and can play a role in lowering emissions and addressing climate change.

In 2019, transportation policies were updated for the in-effect Official Plan (an exercise known as ROPA 13). The new Niagara Official Plan predominately carries forward those policies and mapping.

- Transportation policies will coordinate with Urban Design to contribute to an attractive and connected public realm, as well as Regional Structure to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to serve Strategic Growth Areas.
- New investments in the Region's transportation system will prioritize public transit and active transportation, including inter-municipal and demand-responsive transit, multi-use paths, trails, and dedicated cycling routes.
- A complete streets approach will be taken for all Regional and local municipal road improvements. Complete streets refer to design principles that consider the needs and safety of all road users, including people who walk, cycle, take transit, or drive.
- The Public Works department is overseeing the development of a Complete Streets Design Manual (CSDM). A component of the CSDM is the application of complete street typologies to the Region's transportation system, which will identify the characteristics and appropriate road width ranges needed to accommodate potential streetscape elements for all Regional Roads.
- The Region will use the results of the CSDM analysis to update the required right-of-way widths considered during the review of development applications and future road improvements projects. The timing for this work is anticipated for Fall 2021.
- Following the approval of the Niagara Official Plan, the Region is directed to undertake a "Goods Movement Study" that considers the precise needs of Niagara's goods movement facilities and corridors.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 5 – Section 2. INFRASTRUCTURE

SUMMARY

Well planned and managed infrastructure is fundamental to maintaining existing levels of service and preparing for the population and employment growth targeted for Niagara Region by the *Growth Plan*.

The infrastructure policies guide and set priorities for infrastructure planning and investments ensuring economic competitiveness, quality of life, and the delivery of public services related to drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, energy, and utilities.

Planning for new or expanded infrastructure will occur in an integrated manner, including evaluations of long-range land use, environmental and financial planning, and will be supported by infrastructure master plans, asset management plans, watershed planning, community energy plans, environmental assessments, climate vulnerability analyses and other relevant studies.

- Infrastructure investments will be leveraged to direct growth and development to achieve the minimum intensification and density targets of the Plan.
- Before developing new infrastructure, the use of existing infrastructure shall be optimized, and growth will be planned to ensure efficient use of existing services.
- Infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities caused by the impacts of climate change will be assessed, and actions and investments to address these challenges identified.
- Water supply and sewage collection shall be provided to meet existing and future development needs within the urban settlement area.
- Outside urban areas, development will continue to be serviced by sustainable individual on-site water and sewer systems. Municipal services will not be provided outside of urban areas, except where necessary to correct an existing health problem.
- Waste management systems are provided at an appropriate size and type to accommodate present and future requirements and to promote reduction, reuse, diversion, and recycling objectives.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

OVERVIEW

The *Growth Plan* sets out an integrated, comprehensive and coordinated approach to plan for the provision of infrastructure capacity for forecasted growth.

In order to provide sound infrastructure investments aligned to these servicing responsibilities, infrastructure policies identify the need to prepare or update several studies, including: Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan, Stormwater Management Guidelines, a Long-Term Waste Management Strategic Plan, a Regional Energy Strategy, and several climate change studies.

Climate change is a significant new area of focus within the infrastructure policies. The *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (“PPS”) was recently updated to require attention and action on climate change. To be consistent with the *PPS* and conform to the *Growth Plan*, the infrastructure policies include directions for adaptation, resilience and sustainability; notably, the assessment of infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities, greenhouse gas emission reductions, solid waste reduction programs, and energy efficiency and conservation.

The Region reviewed its existing policy on municipal water and sewer services connections outside urban area boundaries. This review found significant inconsistencies within Provincial, Regional and local policies in allowing permission for such connections.

In addition to policy limitations, the Region has numerous practical concerns with permitting servicing connections outside urban areas. A significant concern from the Region’s Finance group is the insufficiency of funds in the 10-year capital infrastructure forecast directed to the urban area. Accordingly, capital forecasting is focused on urban areas, or those required to correct existing health problems or a Provincial Clean Up Order, and where necessary for operating purposes, such as looping of existing mains. Similarly, service connection planning is limited to those required to correct an existing health problem or a Provincial Clean Up Order.

Notwithstanding the above, the Region continues to consider servicing outside urban areas through its forthcoming Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan update. This will examine the impacts of connections outside the urban area boundary to the planned water and wastewater infrastructure, including costs of doing so. Policies restricting servicing outside urban areas will remain pending the outcome of the Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan update – which will provide data on the consequences of permitting such connections – after which, a decision can be made on whether or not to change the connection restrictions.

The infrastructure policies also address financial sustainability, which includes consideration of the co-relationship between full life cycle infrastructure costs and long-term funding plans. This work could be incorporated into asset management plans and environmental assessments.

The infrastructure policies have been informed by the *Provincial Policy Statement 2020*, the *Growth Plan*, and other Provincial Plans and Statements, and various Regional master plans, policy documents and studies, including, but not limited to, A Review of Servicing Policies - Connections to Existing Watermains and Sanitary Sewers Outside the Urban Area Boundary, March 2020; Sewage Pumping Station and Forcemains Policy; and the Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan.

Draft Infrastructure Policy is included as **Appendix 13.2**.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 6 – Section 1. DISTRICT PLANS AND SECONDARY PLANS

SUMMARY

District Plans and Secondary Plans provide a framework for proactive, coordinated and comprehensive growth management planning within defined areas. These Plans are the Region's best planning tool to support the achievement of vibrant, complete and resilient communities that improve quality of life.

- District Plans are prepared by the Region in collaboration with the local municipalities in which they are situated. Their purpose is to strategically direct a significant portion of population and employment growth to specific areas of the Region and help guide the creation of complete communities.
- District Plans will continue to be prepared through an established process for areas that have cross-jurisdictional interests and require regional-level planning. The draft policies of the NOP include direction for preparation and ongoing implementation of these Plans.
- The Region has two existing District Plans: Brock and Glendale. These District Plans will be carried forward into the Niagara Official Plan to ensure future decisions within these areas are consistent with their vision and direction.
- Secondary Plans have a different function than District Plans and are implemented at the local level. Unlike District Plans, they may, or may not, be used to help direct anticipated population and employment growth.
- One purpose of Secondary Plans is to implement the Regional Structure. Secondary Plans will be required for Strategic Growth Areas, newly designated greenfield areas and to implement District Plan direction. In some cases, Secondary Plans will be used for existing greenfield areas and built-up areas, as appropriate.
- Secondary Plans provide a specific land use policy framework that relies on supporting technical information for an identified area of the municipality.
- Proactive secondary planning is essential to managing change that is thoughtfully integrated with the existing community. This process also provides numerous opportunities for public engagement.
- The Region will continue to work collaboratively with the local municipalities on Secondary Plan plans to ensure the creation of strong, healthy, balanced and complete communities.



A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Employment
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate Change

OVERVIEW

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“Growth Plan”), requires all municipalities to plan for forecasted growth. Policy 5.2.5.5 requires upper-tier official plan policies to identify minimum density targets and lower-tier municipalities to undertake planning, such as Secondary Plans, to establish permitted uses and identify densities, heights, and other elements of design.

The Region is committed to improving the quality of life and prosperity for its citizens and recognizes District Plans and Secondary Plans as important tools to achieve this goal.

District Plans are prepared by the Region to strategically direct a significant portion of population and employment growth to specific areas of the Region. District Plans provide proactive planning strategies that focus on growth, the development of complete communities and which support economic prosperity.

The District Plan policies provide criteria to consider new locations and a process for undertaking and implementing these Plans. Through this process, a vision and framework is created for areas with cross-jurisdictional interests that may require regional-scale coordination. The result is a shared vision, proactive land use concept, urban design guidance, and other recommended studies to support the implementation of the Plan.

Consultation is a key component of the District Plan process. This includes extensive collaboration with the local municipalities in which they are situated and consultation with a variety of stakeholders, including the public.

The Region currently has two District Plans: the Brock District Plan and the Glendale District Plan. These District Plans will be carried forward into the Niagara Official Plan to ensure consistent decision-making with the vision and direction set out by these Plans.

The creation or update of a Secondary Plan is the next step to implement a District Plan at the local level through more detailed policy guidance.

While Secondary Plans are a tool for implementing District Plans, they may also be undertaken by the local municipality outside of a District Plan process.

Secondary Plans are implemented through amendment to the local Official Plan. They consist of policies and maps that provide more specific direction for a defined area of the municipality than what is provided in the general policies of the municipality's Official Plan.

Local municipalities will use Secondary Plans as a tool to locally manage growth distribution, intensification and direct land use arrangement to ensure appropriate development and redevelopment occur in specific areas of the community.

The Secondary Plan process provides an opportunity for the municipality to engage residents, business owners and other stakeholders in the creation of a shared vision for how the area will evolve in the future. The process relies on this input, and that of a full understanding of the context of the study area, to demonstrate how change can be managed.

Secondary planning involves many aspects of land use planning and relies on direction from technical studies to evaluate matters such as:

- appropriate policies for different land uses, built-form and a variety of housing options to meet community needs now and in the future,
- the availability and capacity of infrastructure and transportation connections,
- recommendations for protection and conservation of natural heritage features and systems,
- consideration of the long term financial impacts of the community,
- identification of locations for parkland and community facilities, and
- providing urban design direction that will enhance both the public and private realm.

As an example, a technical study would provide input to determine infrastructure capacity and upgrades to ensure availability aligns with land use direction.

Secondary planning is often complimented by urban design direction. Urban design guidance can support intensification by outlining scale, materials and standards used for built form, streetscapes and the public realm. Proactively planning for change that is informed by urban design can ensure intensification is thoughtfully integrated within the neighbourhood context and new development enhances the function and character of the community.

Within the Niagara Official Plan, Secondary Plans will be required to proactively plan for population and employment growth in the Strategic Growth Areas identified through the Regional Structure. Secondary Plans will also be required for designated greenfield areas and new urban areas established through urban settlement area boundary expansions.

In addition to the above, local municipalities are encouraged to prepare Secondary Plans for built-up areas that require a proactive policy approach to address redevelopment pressure or direct intensification opportunities. This tool may also be used to coordinate development for multiple properties and interests.

The Region supports proactive Secondary Plan efforts and will continue to work collaboratively with the local municipalities on these plans to ensure the creation of a strong, healthy, balanced and complete communities.

Although they vary in scale, both District Plans and Secondary Plans require a collaborative effort between the Region, the local municipalities and stakeholders. Each process reviews the planning context of the study area, creates a strategic vision, and evaluates land use against technical studies to inform how much and where growth can occur. Throughout this process, engagement with agencies, stakeholders and the public is continuously occurring.

By using proactive planning tools like District Plans and Secondary Plans, communities have a comprehensive land use direction that manages existing resources and future development in that specific area. These plans provide clarity on what the public should expect and provide more certainty for investment.

Included in this Appendix are draft District and Secondary Plans policies as **Appendix 14.2**.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 6 – Section 2 – URBAN DESIGN

SUMMARY

Urban design is the practice of making places that are attractive, memorable, and functional. It involves the arrangement, appearance and relationship between buildings, outdoor spaces, transportation systems, services, and amenities.

Urban Design helps to create communities and streets that are vibrant. This strengthens Niagara's image and directly affects quality-of-life and the richness of our experiences.

- The Region's commitment to excellence in Urban Design will show leadership in guiding the design of the built environment and public realm towards more attractive, safe, diverse, and functional communities.
- Updates to the existing Regional Urban Design Guidelines (2005) will provide clarity and guidance to local municipalities and developers.
- Strong Urban Design policies ensure that new development will be of a high design quality, while ensuring careful consideration of the existing character of a community. Urban design promotes a context-sensitive approach that respects and celebrates Niagara's diverse communities and unique geography.
- Urban Design assists with climate change resilience through the provision of sustainable design best practices.
- Urban Design improves vibrancy and diversity of places, and helps to accommodate people of all ages and abilities. Strong Urban Design supports the creation of inviting places with well-designed buildings and streetscapes that attract people and investment to Niagara.
- Urban Design fosters a Complete Streets approach to the design of communities. A public realm that supports active transportation contributes to health and well-being.

A Draft Policy set is provided with this sub-section document.



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

OVERVIEW

Niagara is growing and changing; it is important that we have Urban Design policies that proactively address growth before places are built. Effective Urban Design can demonstrate how to accommodate growth that is compact, attractive, inviting, and safe.

Provincial plans, including the *Growth Plan*, set out policies for where and how Niagara will grow. The *Growth Plan* has policies that direct and support – through site design and Urban Design standards – the achievement of complete communities, high quality compact built form, and vibrant public realms.

To conform to the *Growth Plan*, Urban Design policies are included in the Official Plan to establish the context and direction for development and transportation systems. Urban design policies shape vibrant, attractive communities that address climate change through the design of compact built forms, mixed land uses and enhanced streetscapes.

The draft Urban Design policies include key objectives, which are summarized below.

Commit to excellence in urban design.

This commitment ensures that built environments enjoy lasting value through the creation of attractive and functional places. Urban design promotes a context-sensitive approach that respects Niagara's diverse communities and unique geography. Celebrating community identities contributes to authentic experiences.

Good Urban Design also contributes to the health and well-being of people in Niagara through design approaches that embrace accessible, vibrant and safe communities and streets. Additionally, sustainable design practices relating to the built environment can enhance the resiliency of Niagara's communities.

Enhance the public realm and promote active transportation.

The evolution of Regional roads and streetscapes will promote a balanced approach to road design, which is known as Complete Streets. This approach ensures that the needs of motorists, transit users, cyclists and pedestrians are considered in the design conversation. Examples of enhancements to Regional roads and streetscapes can include sustainable design features, street trees, street furniture, enhanced lighting, wayfinding and public art.

Enhanced public realms also promote transit-supportive community design through attractive and comfortable streetscapes, a mix of land uses, and high-quality buildings and landscapes.

Within Niagara's downtowns and community cores, public realm improvements foster vibrancy and celebrate community identity through design approaches that create enlivened streetscapes and placemaking elements.

Identify and establish tools for urban design implementation.

The Region's update to its Model Urban Design Guidelines will align with the Region's Complete Streets program. Both programs demonstrate leadership in design of the built environment. These tools will guide the design of higher quality developments, alongside other tools that reflect best practices to gain better design outcomes.

Foster an understanding of urban design and its role in creating meaningful places.

People choose attractive communities and meaningful places that create unique, authentic, and memorable experiences. The Region's Urban Design approaches will respect the character of a place and adopt a contextual approach to design. Urban Design features include a variety of placemaking elements that enhance accessibility, inclusivity, and vibrancy.

The Region offers a series of Urban Design programs that foster an understanding of Urban Design. For example, the Niagara Biennial Design Awards is a bi-annual design competition. It celebrates excellence in design of the built environment in design categories such as urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and outdoor art. Additionally, the Public Realm Investment Program (PRIP) is a matching grant initiative that collaborates with local municipalities to contribute to the enhancement of public realm projects along Regional roads.

Provide clear direction to area municipalities on urban design.

Niagara's local municipal partners will develop Urban Design tools and programs that implement the Region's Official Plan to best reflect the character of their respective communities. Local communities can commit to excellence in Urban Design through available tools, some of which are exclusive to the local municipality. These tools may include local official plan policies, secondary plan policies, zoning standards, urban design guidelines, manuals, and site plan control.

Local municipalities can also seek Urban Design assistance from the Region. This assistance can support the development of vibrant communities plus safe and inviting streets. This includes addressing resiliency through sustainable design principles.

Public consultation on Urban Design matters has been extensive. Details are included in **Appendix 1**.

Included as **Appendix 15.2** are Urban Design draft policies.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Chapter 6 – Section 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

SUMMARY

An Archaeological Management Plan (“AMP”) is a planning tool for conserving and protecting fragile archaeological resources.

The AMP is to be used by the Region, local municipalities, development proponents and the public in screening and identifying areas with archaeological resource potential in advance of municipal development approvals.

An AMP is a proactive planning approach to archaeological resource management that is consistent with Provincial policy. The Province reports that site disturbance from land development remains one of the greatest threats to our shared, non-renewable archaeological resources. Proactive and coordinated municipal planning approaches to protecting the physical remains of our past histories and cultures is paramount

- The Region has retained Archaeological Services Inc. (“ASI”), an industry-leader in archaeological management plans, to develop the first Region-wide AMP for Niagara. ASI has developed more than thirteen AMPs for local and Regional municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, including Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Town of Fort Erie.
- An AMP helps municipal planners screen planning applications for archaeological potential using a predictive modelling based map which shows areas of archaeological potential. This is a first step in the archaeological review process to be completed prior to any *Planning Act* application submission. The AMP helps planners make consistent decisions about when to request an archaeological assessment by a licensed archaeologist in support of a development application under the *Planning Act*.
- An AMP provides a “How to Guide” for municipal planners, outlining how and when to engage Indigenous communities as part of the archaeological review process, requirements under the Provincial Standards and Guidelines for Consulting Archaeologists, and the stages of archaeological assessment necessary to support approval of a development application.
- Consultation on the AMP with local municipalities, stakeholders, the public and Indigenous partners is a critical component in the AMP’s development. Consultation is invaluable in identifying, conserving and managing the Region’s cultural heritage resources. Niagara Region will continue to engage on the AMP using a variety of consultation activities and formats.
- The AMP will be complete in Q3 and endorsed by Council in September, 2021.



- In addition to the AMP as a planning tool, the AMP will include policy directions for inclusion in the Official Plan.

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

- The above integration table will be completed at the policy development stage.

OVERVIEW

The Archaeological Management Plan's key purpose is to ensure a more coordinated and consistent system for accurately screening *Planning Act* applications for significant archaeological resources prior to development occurring.

The AMP is an industry-leading planning tool in archaeological resource conservation and developed with current best science in the field of predictive modelling, providing accurate and timely data for land use planners and decision-makers regarding areas of archaeological resource potential. The use of advance screening with science-based predictive modeling reduces the threat to unearthed archaeological artifacts and sites that connect the community to our past histories and cultures.

The *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)* promotes municipal archaeological management plans for the conservation of archaeological resources.

Policy 2.6.4 sets out that:

Planning authorities should consider and promote archaeological management plans and cultural plans in conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

Language promoting municipal AMPs is included in other Provincial Plans, including *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, the *Greenbelt Plan* and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*.

From the outset of Official Plan preparation, cultural heritage resource conservation was a key priority. Specifically, development of an Archaeological Management Plan for

enhanced conservation and protection of Niagara's fragile, non-renewable resources was identified as an opportunity to improve the planning service.

Regional Planning staff have been responsible for archaeological review as part of the transfer of development review function by the Province in the early 1990s. As part of the delegation of responsibility, the Province has continued to maintain oversight of the archaeological review process by prescribing provincially-approved screening criteria in check-box form for municipal planning staff's screening of *Planning Act* applications.

Since the 1990s, archaeological consultants specializing in AMPs have been developing modelling techniques that combine environmental reconstruction with provincially-established archaeological screening criteria, registered archaeological sites, and burial and cemetery data to produce maps of areas of archaeological potential. These maps and visual representation of areas of archaeological potential are an invaluable tool for conserving and protecting archaeological resources.

In April 2019, the Region retained Archaeological Services Inc. (ASI) to complete the first Region-wide AMP for the Official Plan. As an industry-leader, ASI has developed more than thirteen AMPs for local and Regional municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, including Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Town of Fort Erie.

As a planning tool, an AMP helps municipal planners screen planning applications for archaeological potential using a predictive modelling generated map which shows areas of archaeological potential. The AMP then helps planners make consistent decisions about when to request an archaeological assessment by a licensed archaeologist in support of a development application under the *Planning Act*. In this way, the AMP is a kind of "How to Guide" for municipal planners, which outlines how and when to engage Indigenous communities as part of the archaeological review process, requirements under the Provincial Standards and Guidelines for Consulting Archaeologists, and the stages of archaeological assessment necessary to support approval of a development application.

Consultation on the AMP with local municipalities, stakeholders, the public and Indigenous partners is a critical component in the development of the AMP and is invaluable in identifying, conserving and managing the Region's cultural heritage resources.

The Region will continue to engage on the AMP using a variety of consultation activities and formats. The AMP project will continue to host virtual open houses, post information on the new Niagara Official Plan Sharing Portal for Indigenous partners, meet with Indigenous communities, engage in stakeholder sessions, as well as meet with local

municipalities and provincial ministry representatives to gain valuable feedback on the AMP project.

Key project deliverables of the AMP include:

- AMP Background Report – Complete
- AMP Consultation Report – Q2 2021
- Draft AMP, including draft mapping Q3 2021
- Final AMP – Q3 2021

Staff will bring forward the final AMP with mapping for Council endorsement in Q3 2021. The AMP will offer future recommended policy directions for inclusion in the draft consolidated Niagara Official Plan anticipated for Q4 2021.

Glossary of Terms

Active Transportation

Any form of self-propelled transportation that relies on the use of human energy such as walking, cycling, inline skating, jogging, or travel with the use of mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs and other power-assisted devices at a comparable speed.

(*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Affordable

1. in the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:
 - a) housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 - b) housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 per cent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;
2. in the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:
 - a) a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 - b) a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Agricultural Impact Assessment

A study that evaluates the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on agricultural operations and the Agriculture System and recommends ways to avoid, or, if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts. (*Greenbelt Plan*, 2017)

Agriculture-Related Uses

Those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity (*PPS*, 2020).

Agricultural System

The system mapped and issued by the Province, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:

- a) an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas, and *rural lands* that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture; and
- b) an *agri-food network*, which includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector. (*Greenbelt Plan*, 2017)

Agricultural Uses

Growing of crops or raising of animals; includes associated on-farm buildings and structures; all types, sizes and intensities; normal farm practices are promoted and protected (e.g. cropland, pastureland, barns and other associated buildings and structures).

Agri-food Network

Within the agricultural system, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as regional infrastructure and transportation networks; on-farm buildings and infrastructure; agricultural services, farm markets, distributors, and primary processing; and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities. (*PPS*, 2020)

Agri-Tourism Uses

Those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation (*PPS*, 2020).

Airports

All Ontario *airports*, including designated lands for future *airports*, with Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF)/Noise Exposure Projection (NEP) mapping. (*PPS*, 2020)

Archaeological Resources

Includes artifacts, archaeological sites, marine archaeological sites, as defined under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The identification and evaluation of such resources are based upon archaeological fieldwork undertaken in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Areas of Archaeological Potential

Areas with the likelihood to contain archaeological resources. Criteria to identify archaeological potential are established by the Province. The *Ontario Heritage Act* requires archaeological potential to be confirmed by a licensed archaeologist.

Brownfields

Undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant. (*PPS*, 2020)

Built Form

The function, shape, and configuration of buildings, as well as their relationship to streets and open spaces.

Built-Up Areas

The limits of the developed *urban areas* as defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of measuring the minimum intensification target in this Plan. Built-up areas are delineated in **Schedule B**.

Climate Change

Changes in weather patterns at local and regional levels, including extreme weather events and increased climate variability. (Based on the *PPS*, 2020 and modified for this Plan)

Combined Sewers

A sewer designed to convey both sanitary sewage and storm water through a single pipe to a sewage treatment plant.

Community Infrastructure

Lands, buildings, and structures that support the quality of life for people and communities by providing public services for health, education, recreation, socio-cultural activities, security and safety, and affordable housing.

Compact Built Form

A land-use pattern that encourages the efficient use of land, walkable neighbourhoods, mixed land uses (residential, retail, workplace and institutional) all within one neighbourhood, active transportation, proximity to transit and reduced need for infrastructure. Compact built form can include detached and semi-detached houses on small lots as well as townhouses and walk-up apartments, multistorey commercial developments, and apartments or offices above retail. Walkable neighbourhoods can be characterized by roads laid out in a well-connected network, destinations that are easily accessible by transit and active transportation, sidewalks with minimal interruptions for vehicle access, and a pedestrian-friendly environment along roads to encourage active transportation.

Compatible

A development, building and/or land use that can co-exist or occur without conflict with surrounding land uses and activities in terms of its uses, scale, height, massing and relative location.

Complete Communities

Places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities. Complete communities are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Complete Streets

Streets that are planned to balance the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit-users, and motorists, and are designed for the safety of people of all ages and abilities (Based on *Growth Plan*, 2020 and modified for this Plan)

Complete Streets Design Manual

Guidelines developed as part of the Niagara Region's Transportation Master Plan which define Regional Road typologies and provide guidance on the implementation of complete streets elements that fall within the public right-of-way.

Community Housing

Housing owned and operated by non-profit housing corporations, housing co-operatives and municipal governments, or district social services administration boards. Community housing providers offer subsidized or low-end-of market rents.

Community Hubs

Public service facilities that offer co-located or integrated services such as education, health care and social services.

Conserved

The identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained. This may be achieved by the implementation of recommendations set out in a conservation plan, archaeological assessment, and/or heritage impact assessment that has been approved, accepted or adopted by the relevant planning authority and/or decision maker. Mitigative measures

and/or alternative development approaches can be included in these plans and assessments.

Cultural Heritage Resources

Built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people. While some cultural heritage resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation. (*Greenbelt Plan*, 2017)

Designated Greenfield Areas

Lands within *urban areas* but outside of built-up areas that have been designated in an official plan for development and are required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan. Designated greenfield areas do not include excess lands, and are identified in **Schedule B**.

Development

The creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures requiring approval under the *Ontario Planning Act*, but does not include:

- a) activities that create or maintain *infrastructure* authorized under an environmental assessment process; or
- b) works subject to the *Drainage Act*.

(Based on *PPS*, 2020 and modified for the *Growth Plan*)

Employment Areas

Areas designated in an Official Plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities. (*PPS*, 2020)

Employment Land

Lands that are designated in local official plans or zoning by-laws for employment uses. Employment lands may be within and outside of employment areas.

Excess Lands

Vacant, unbuilt but developable lands within settlement areas but outside of built-up areas that have been designated in an Official Plan for development but are in excess

of what is needed to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan.
(*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Freight-Supportive

In regard to land use patterns, means transportation systems and facilities that facilitate the movement of goods. This includes policies or programs intended to support efficient freight movement through the planning, design and operation of land use and transportation systems. Approaches may be recommended in guidelines developed by the Province or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives.
(*PPS*, 2020)

Frequent Transit

A public transit service that runs at least every 15 minutes in both directions throughout the day and into the evening every day of the week.

Fringe Lands

Fringe land is the area between the agricultural/rural countryside and the built-up city/suburbs. It can further be described as the edge of the urban region where patterns of building development and non-development interweave. The urban fringe is often an area with contrasting land uses and compatibility conflicts. Urban design can play a role in mitigating conflicts and transitioning land uses in these fringe areas.

Green Infrastructure

Natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrologic functions and processes. Green infrastructure can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, stormwater management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces, and green roofs. (*PPS*, 2020)

Greyfield Sites

Previously developed properties that are not contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict, or vacant.
(*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Hamlets

Small, *rural settlements* that are long-established and identified in official plans. These communities are serviced by individual private on-site water and/or private wastewater services, contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development and are subject to official plan policies that limit growth.

Higher Order Transit

Transit that generally operates in partially or completely dedicated rights-of-way, outside of mixed traffic, and therefore can achieve levels of speed and reliability greater than mixed-traffic transit. Higher order transit can include heavy rail (such as subways and inter-city rail), light rail, and buses in dedicated rights-of-way. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Individual On-Site Sewage Service

A sewage disposal system, other than a holding tank, that is designed and constructed in accordance with applicable Provincial requirements and owned, operated, and managed by the owner of the property upon which the system is located.

Individual on-site water service

An individual, autonomous water supply system that is designed and constructed in accordance with the Ministry of the Environment Guidelines or other guidelines approved by the municipality and owned, operated, and managed by the owner of the property upon which the system is located.

Infrastructure

Physical structures (facilities and corridors) that form the foundation for development. Infrastructure includes: municipal services, septage treatment systems, stormwater management systems, waste management systems, electricity generation facilities, electricity transmission and distribution systems, communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities. (*PPS*, 2020)

Intensification

The development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- a) redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfields;
- b) the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- c) infill development; and
- d) the expansion or conversion of existing buildings. (*PPS*, 2020)

Interface

The physical relationship between two or more uses, such as, a building and street. It is the intent of urban design to reinforce this relationship and increase its impacts positively on the public realm.

Lateral Connection

The point at which a sewer or water line coming out from homes and businesses connects to the municipal sewer or water line.

Legal or Technical Reasons

Severances for purposes such as easements, corrections of deeds, quit claims, and minor boundary adjustments, which do not result in the creation of a new lot (*PPS*, 2020).

Low and Moderate Income Households

In the case of ownership housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of the income distribution for the regional market area; or in the case of rental housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of the income distribution for renter households for the regional market area. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Low Impact Development

An approach to stormwater management that seeks to manage rain and other precipitation as close as possible to where it falls to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution. It typically includes a set of site design strategies and distributed, small-scale structural practices to mimic the natural hydrology to the greatest extent possible through infiltration, evapotranspiration, harvesting, filtration, and detention of stormwater. Low impact development can include, for example: bio-swales, vegetated areas at the edge of paved surfaces, permeable pavement, rain gardens, green roofs, and exfiltration systems. Low impact development often employs vegetation and soil in its design, however, that does not always have to be the case and the specific form may vary considering local conditions and community character. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Major Facilities

Facilities which may require separation from sensitive land uses, including but not limited to airports, manufacturing uses, transportation infrastructure and corridors, rail facilities, marine facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries, energy generation facilities and transmission systems, and resource extraction activities. (*PPS*, 2020)

Major Goods Movement Facilities and Corridors

Transportation facilities and corridors associated with the inter- and intra-provincial movement of goods. Examples include: inter-modal facilities, ports, airports, rail facilities, truck terminals, freight corridors, freight facilities, and haul routes and primary transportation corridors used for the movement of goods. Approaches that are freight-

supportive may be recommended in guidelines developed by the Province or based on municipal approaches that achieve the same objectives. (*PPS*, 2020)

Major Institutional Uses

Major trip generators that provide essential services for every stage of life and benefit from being close to urban services and amenities. Generally, major institutional uses are considered post-secondary institutions (i.e., colleges, universities, and trade schools), health care facilities and research centres (i.e., hospitals); and corporate government headquarters.

Major Office Use

Freestanding office buildings of approximately 4,000 square metres of floor space or greater, or with 200 jobs or more. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Major Retail / Major Commercial Uses

Large-scale or large-format stand-alone retail stores or retail centres that have the primary purpose of commercial activities. (based on *Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Major Transit Station Areas

The area including and around any existing or planned higher order transit station or stop within a settlement area; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. Major transit station areas generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk. (*PPS*, 2020)

Major Trip Generators

Origins and destinations with high population densities or concentrated activities which generate many trips (e.g., urban growth centres and other downtowns, *major office* and *office parks*, *major retail / major commercial*, *employment areas*, community hubs, large parks and recreational destinations, post-secondary institutions and other *public service facilities*, and other mixed-use areas). (based on *Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Marine Facilities

Ferries, harbours, ports, ferry terminals, canals and associated uses, including designated lands for future *marine facilities*. (*PPS*, 2020)

Mineral Aggregate Operation

- a) lands under license or permit, other than for wayside pits and quarries, issued in accordance with the *Aggregate Resources Act*;

- b) for lands not designated under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, established pits and quarries that are not in contravention of municipal zoning by-laws and including adjacent land under agreement with or owned by the operator, to permit continuation of the operation; and
- c) associated facilities used in extraction, transport, beneficiation, processing or recycling of mineral aggregate resources and derived products such as asphalt and concrete, or the production of secondary related products. (*PPS*, 2020)

Minimum Distance Separation Formulae

The formulae and guidelines developed by the *Province*, as amended from time to time, to separate uses so as to reduce incompatibility concerns about odour from livestock facilities. (*PPS*, 2020)

Multimodal Transportation System

A *transportation system* which may include several forms of transportation such as automobiles, walking, trucks, cycling, buses, rapid transit, rail (such as commuter and freight), air and marine. (*PPS*, 2020)

Municipal Comprehensive Review

A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper-or single-tier municipality under section 26 of the *Ontario Planning Act* that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Municipal Water and Wastewater Systems/Services

Municipal water systems/services are all or part of a drinking-water system:

- a) that is owned by a municipality or by a municipal service board established under section 195 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001;
- b) that is owned by a corporation established under section 203 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001;
- c) from which a municipality obtains or will obtain water under the terms of a contract between the municipality and the owner of the system; or
- d) that is in a prescribed class of municipal drinking-water systems as defined in regulation under the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, 2002.

And, municipal wastewater systems/services are any sewage works owned or operated by a municipality. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation and modified for this Plan)

Natural Heritage Features and Areas

Features and areas, including significant wetlands, significant coastal wetlands, other coastal wetlands, fish habitat, significant woodlands and significant valleylands, habitat of endangered species and threatened species, significant wildlife habitat, and

significant areas of natural and scientific interest, which are important for their environmental and social values as a legacy of the natural landscapes of an area.

Natural Heritage System

A system made up of natural heritage features and areas, and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. The system can include key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other natural heritage features and areas, lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, associated areas that support hydrologic functions, and working landscapes that enable ecological functions to continue. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Niagara Economic Gateway

The total geographic area of the local municipalities a part of the Gateway Economic Centre or Gateway Economic Zone.

Normal Farm Practices

A practice, as defined in the *Farming and Food Production Protection Act*, 1998, that is conducted in a manner consistent with proper and acceptable customs and standards as established and followed by similar agricultural operations under similar circumstances; or makes use of innovative technology in a manner consistent with proper advanced farm management practices. Normal farm practices shall be consistent with *the Nutrient Management Act*, 2002 and regulations made under that Act (*PPS*, 2020).

Office Parks

Employment areas or areas where there are significant concentrations of offices with high employment densities. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

On-Farm Diversified Uses

On a farm; secondary use; limited in area; includes, but is not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses and value-added uses; compatible with surrounding agricultural operations.

Place-Making

The purposeful planning, and design of buildings, public realm, and transportation systems to achieve attachment to a place.

Planned Corridors

Corridors or future corridors which are required to meet projected needs, and are identified through this Plan, preferred alignment(s) determined through the Environmental Assessment Act process, or identified through planning studies where the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, Metrolinx, or Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) or any successor to those Ministries or entities, is actively pursuing the identification of a corridor. Approaches for the protection of planned corridors may be recommended in guidelines developed by the *Province*. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Prime Agricultural Area

Areas where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using guidelines developed by the Province as amended from time to time. A prime agricultural area may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province (*PPS*, 2020).

Prime Agricultural Land

Means *specialty crop areas* and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection (*PPS*, 2020).

Province

The Province of Ontario or the relevant Minister of the Provincial government.

Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs)

Areas defined by the Minister in consultation with affected municipalities for the purpose of long-term planning for job creation and economic development. *Provincially significant employment zones* can consist of *employment areas* as well as mixed-use areas that contain a significant number of jobs. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation)

Public Realm

The publicly owned places and spaces that are accessible by everyone. These can include municipal streets, lanes, squares, plazas, sidewalks, trails, parks, open spaces, waterfronts, public transit systems, conservation areas, and civic buildings and institutions.

Public Service Facilities

Lands, buildings and structures for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health and educational programs, long-term care services, and cultural services. Public service facilities do not include infrastructure. (*PPS*, 2020)

Public Works Projects

Construction projects, such as roads, highways or dams, bridges and waterworks financed by public funds and constructed by or under contract with the Region or local municipality for the benefit or use of the public.

Rail Facilities

Rail corridors, rail sidings, train stations, inter-modal facilities, rail yards and associated uses, including designated lands for future rail facilities. (*PPS*, 2020).

Redevelopment

The creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing communities, including brownfield sites.

Regional Market Area

An area that has a high degree of social and economic interaction. The boundaries of the Niagara Region will serve as the regional market area for the purposes of assessing housing market conditions. (*PPS*, 2020 and modified for this Plan)

Residence Surplus to a Farming Operation

An existing habitable farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation). (*PPS*, 2020).

Resilience

Definition to be added.

Rural Areas

A system of lands within local municipalities that may include rural settlements, rural lands, prime agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and resource areas. (*PPS*, 2020)

Rural Lands

Lands which are located outside settlement areas and which are outside prime agricultural areas. (*PPS*, 2020)

Rural Settlements

Existing hamlets that are delineated in Schedule B of the Niagara Official Plan. These communities are serviced by individual private on-site water and/or private wastewater systems, contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development and are subject to Official Plan policies that limit growth. All settlement areas that are identified as hamlets in the Greenbelt Plan, or as minor urban centres in the Niagara Escarpment Plan are considered rural settlement areas for the purposes of this Plan, including those that would not otherwise meet this definition. (*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation and modified for this Plan)

Sense of Place

The emotional attachments, meanings and identities people develop or experience in particular locations and environments. It is also used to describe the distinctiveness or unique character of a place.

Sensitive Land Uses

Buildings, amenity areas, or outdoor spaces where routine or normal activities occurring at reasonably expected times would experience one or more adverse effects from contaminant discharges generated by a nearby major facility. Sensitive land uses may be a part of the natural or built environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to: residences, day care centres, and educational and health facilities. (*PPS*, 2020)

Settlement Areas

Urban areas and *rural settlements* within *local municipalities* (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are:

- a) built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and
- b) lands which have been designated in an Official Plan for development in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated.

(*Growth Plan*, 2020 Consolidation and modified for this Plan)

Sewage Works

Any works for the collection, transmission, treatment and disposal of sewage or any part of such works but does not include plumbing to which the *Building Code Act*, 1992 applies. For the purposes of this definition: Sewage includes, but is not limited to drainage, storm water, residential wastes, commercial wastes and industrial wastes.

Significant

In regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest. Processes and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Smart City

Definition to be added.

Specialized Housing Needs

Any housing, including dedicated facilities, in whole or in part, that is used by people who have specific needs beyond economic needs, including but not limited to, needs such as mobility requirements or support functions required for daily living. Examples include, but are not limited to, long-term care homes, adaptable and accessible housing, and housing for persons with disabilities such as physical, sensory or mental health disabilities, and housing for older persons. (Based on the *PPS*, 2020 and modified for this Plan)

Specialty Crop Area

Areas designated using guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time. In these areas, specialty crops are predominantly grown such as tender fruits (peaches, cherries, plums), grapes, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops, and crops from agriculturally developed organic soil, usually resulting from:

- a) soils that have suitability to produce specialty crops, or lands that are subject to special climatic conditions, or a combination of both;
 - b) farmers skilled in the production of specialty crops; and
 - c) a long-term investment of capital in areas such as crops, drainage, infrastructure and related facilities and services to produce, store, or process specialty crops.
- (*PPS*, 2020).

Specialty Crop Guidelines

Guidelines developed by the Region or Province, as amended from time to time (Developed from the *PPS* definition of specialty crop area and modified for this Plan).

Stormwater master plan

A long-range plan that assesses existing and planned stormwater facilities and systems and outlines stormwater infrastructure requirements for new and existing development within a settlement area. Stormwater master plans are informed by watershed planning

and are completed in accordance with the environmental assessment processes under the *Environmental Assessment Act* 1990, as amended.

Strategic Growth Areas

Within settlement areas, nodes, corridors, and other areas that have been identified in Schedule B to be the focus for accommodating intensification and higher-density mixed uses in a more compact built form. Strategic growth areas include urban growth centres, major transit station areas, and other major opportunities that may include infill, redevelopment, brownfield sites, the expansion or conversion of existing buildings, or greyfields. Lands along major roads, arterials, or other areas with existing or planned frequent transit service or higher order transit corridors may also be identified as strategic growth areas. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Subwatershed

An area that is drained by a tributary or some defined portion of a stream.

Sustainable

Definition to be added.

Sustainable Design

The design of the urban environment that is resilient to the impacts of climate change, (achieves complete communities, low impact development, active transportation, and complete streets, reduces consumption of non-renewable resources, minimizes waste, supports energy conservation and efficiency, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and improves air quality), and reduces or eliminates other negative environmental impacts.

Transit-supportive

Relating to development that makes transit viable and improves the quality of the experience of using transit. It often refers to compact, mixed-use development that has a high level of employment and residential densities. Transit-supportive development will be consistent with Ontario's Transit Supportive Guidelines. (*Growth Plan*, 2020)

Transportation System

A system consisting of corridors and rights-of-way for the movement of people and goods, and associated transportation facilities including transit stops and stations, cycle lanes, bus lanes, high occupancy vehicle lanes, rail facilities, park-and-ride lots, service centres, rest stops, vehicle inspection stations, inter-modal terminals, harbours, and associated facilities such as storage and maintenance.

Urban Agriculture

Within *urban areas*, agricultural production of food and non-food products accessory to the principle use of a property. Examples of urban agriculture include community, school, and rooftop gardens, ground-based outdoor community and urban market gardens, urban livestock, and hydroponic farms.

Urban Areas

Lands located within a defined boundary as identified in Schedule B. Urban areas are made up of built-up areas, designated greenfield areas and excess lands and does not include *hamlets*.

Utility

Any system, works, plant, pipeline, or equipment providing a service necessary to the public interest including but not limited to electric power generation and transmission, stormwater management, water supply, sewage treatment and disposal, waste management, communications and telecommunications, and oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities.

Waste Disposal Sites

The application of untreated septage, the storage, treatment, and discharge of tailings from mines and waste disposal sites as defined under Part V of the *Ontario Environmental Protection Act*, 1990 with respect to Source Water Protection.

Waste Management

Waste management includes the activities and actions required to manage waste from its inception to its final disposal. This includes the collection, transport, treatment, and disposal of waste, together with monitoring and regulation of the waste management process.

Wastewater Treatment Plant/Facility

The part of a sewage works that treats or disposes of sewage but does not include the part of the sewage works that collects or transmits sewage.

Wastewater Services

Any works provided by the municipality for the collection, lateral connection, transmission, and treatment of sewage that are connected to a centralized wastewater treatment facility.

Water Budget

An accounting of the inflow to, outflow from, and storage changes of water in a hydrologic unit.

Water Services

Any works provided by the municipality for the distribution, lateral connection, transmission, and treatment of drinking water.

Watershed Planning

Planning that provides a framework for establishing goals, objectives, and direction for the protection of water resources, the management of human activities, land, water, aquatic life, and resources within a watershed and for the assessment of cumulative, cross-jurisdictional, and cross-watershed impacts. Watershed planning typically includes: watershed characterization, a water budget, and conservation plan; nutrient loading assessments; consideration of the impacts of a changing climate and severe weather events; land and water use management objectives and strategies; scenario modelling to evaluate the impacts of forecasted growth and servicing options, and mitigation measures; an environmental monitoring plan; requirements for the use of environmental best management practices, programs, and performance measures; criteria for evaluating the protection of quality and quantity of water; the identification and protection of hydrologic features, areas, and functions and the inter-relationships between or among them; and targets for the protection and restoration of riparian areas.

Appendix 18.1 - EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW (SABR)

At the time of adopting a new Official Plan, the Region can expand or adjust settlement boundaries. Outside of a new Official Plan, there are limited opportunities to do so.

The Region has 3 draft criteria processes included in this section, covering:

- Urban Area Boundary Expansions, for urban areas;
- Rural Settlement Boundary Expansions, for areas designated as rural settlements or hamlets; and
- Technical Mapping Update, to fix mapping errors and similar matters.

Key considerations are as follows:

- The Region has exclusive jurisdiction to make decisions over settlement area boundaries.
- The need for a settlement area boundary expansion is determined through the Land Needs Assessment (LNA), described in **Appendix 3.2**, which sets out the amount of the land required to accommodate growth for each local municipality.
- The draft criteria to evaluate boundary expansions is based on the requirements of the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (“PPS”) and *Growth Plan*. The Region’s decision on expansions must conform to, or be consistent with, those documents.
- The Region is considering all boundary requests received from private owners and local Council endorsed preferences.
- In order to ensure responsible growth, the Region must review the entire settlement area boundary of a candidate municipality to determine the most appropriate location for expansion.
- **The criteria included is draft. The Region will receive feedback for consideration. No boundary recommendations are made at this time.**

Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Archaeology		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employment		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aggregates		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural Heritage incl.		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Systems Options		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watershed Planning		



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 17-2021	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change

The *Growth Plan* directs where and how growth will occur in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Concentrating development within urban areas and prioritizing intensification will ensure more efficient use of land. The *Growth Plan* requires municipalities review its available land within existing urban boundaries to more efficiently direct investment and development.

The *PPS* requires that municipalities maintain the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through residential intensification and redevelopment.

Both the *PPS* and *Growth Plan* have specific policies directing how and when boundary expansions may occur. Primarily, settlement area boundary expansions occur through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (“MCR”) process. In Niagara’s case, the MCR is the new Niagara Official Plan.

The SABR process must be considered with the Regional Structure and LNA, amongst other Regional work. It cannot be considered independently.

The Regional Structure provides strategic growth areas where more significant growth will be directed, intensification rates for built-up areas where redevelopment and infilling will occur, and Designated Greenfield Areas where new growth on vacant lands can be planned comprehensively.

The land need of a municipality is determined using a LNA Methodology issued by the Province. Applying the Provincial methodology sets out the amount of land needed to accommodate the forecasted growth to 2051.

The LNA sets out whether a local municipality requires additional lands (or has excess lands) to accommodate forecasted growth.

If a municipality does not have enough land available to accommodate its growth, it may be eligible for an urban area boundary expansion.¹

¹ Regardless of need, expansions in to the Greenbelt Plan specialty crop area are not eligible for boundary expansions.

The above discussion relates to the threshold requirement of “need” for an expansion. If this need is met, a boundary expansion requires significant additional justification.

This additional justification is covered in the Region’s draft expansion criteria and process. The criteria is based on the policies of the *PPS* and *Growth Plan*.

In addition to the “need” test, the criteria includes consideration of the following, among others:

- existing and planned infrastructure and transportation capacity and proximity
- environmental constraints
- the agricultural area (including Minimum Distance Separation formulae and soil class)
- potential impacts to the agri-food network
- how the proposed additional lands will contribute to a complete community

As of writing, in March 2021, the Region has received approximately 42 urban area boundary expansion requests. These requests will be considered, along with the Region’s review of additional potential locations that may not have been requested.

The Region must review the full extent of urban area boundaries for municipalities that do not have enough land as identified through the LNA. This complete review ensures boundaries are expanded in the most appropriate location.

The urban area boundary expansion criteria and process is attached as **Appendix 18.2**. The draft was circulated to local municipal planners in February 2021 for review and feedback. Accordingly, some adjustments were made, as provided in the attached document.

The Region will continue to receive input on the draft criteria and will refine as needed following this Report.

The following is a guide to the Region’s SABR program over the coming months:

2021	Task
May	• Prepare process administration.
June	• Prepare mapping for municipalities eligible for Urban Area Boundary Review.

2021	Task
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize review team.
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and organize all requests. • Technical exercise to review applicable requests with review team. • Consultation with local municipal planning staff.
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive Local Council endorsements. • Any additional consultation with local municipal staff on findings and recommendations.
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize process and recommendations to be included in next Niagara Official Plan report.

In addition to the consideration of urban area boundary expansion discussed above, the Region has developed criteria for rural settlement (hamlet) boundary expansions, attached as **Appendix 18.3**.

Provincial policies sets out that rural settlement areas should not be the focus of growth and therefore rural settlement boundary expansions will be limited. As of writing, in March 2021, the Region has received approximately 22 rural settlement boundary expansion requests.

The Region is working with municipalities that will likely have a need for rural settlement area boundary expansions: Wainfleet and West Lincoln. These municipalities have rural settlement areas outside of the *Greenbelt Plan* area.

For Wainfleet, growth is primarily allocated to its rural settlement areas.

For West Lincoln, the majority of its growth will be directed to Smithville as its only urban area. A small portion of growth will be directed to its rural settlement areas.

The *Growth Plan* also includes policies that allow municipalities to consider a boundary expansion “in advance of” an MCR process, subject to specific criteria. Policies related to this process will be included in the NOP in conformity with the Growth Plan. These policies are found in the Regional Structure section in **Appendix 4.3**.

A municipality may also consider boundary adjustments outside of a MCR process where the result is no net increase in land within settlement areas.

Boundary expansions in advance of an MCR, and adjustments, require extensive study and justification. For this reason, they must be undertaken carefully and under precise circumstances.

The Region is currently in its MCR process. It has not received any of the above-noted requests and, should one be received, it would not process it since such request is not “in advance of” an MCR. All boundary requests can be processed as part of the existing MCR, i.e. the Official Plan process itself.

In addition to the settlement boundary expansions, the Region is considering technical mapping updates. This is needed to fix mapping errors to align Regional and local urban area boundary mapping.

The Region developed criteria for considering technical mapping updates. It includes a GIS-based mapping exercise to identify and fix the errors.

The technical exercise is not directly related to the SABR expansion process as it is not intended for growth management purposes. This is an administrative or housekeeping exercise, but as it deals with urban area boundaries, is being reported with SABR-related matters.

Regional staff are presently working with local municipal planning staff to complete this technical exercise. Additional information on the criteria and process are found in **Appendix 18.4.**

The Region will continue to accept requests for settlement area boundary expansion following this Report, up until July 2, 2021. Following this date, the Region will Report on the requests and will not review late requests for that Report.

Policies related to the SABR are included with the Regional Structure policies at **Appendix 4.3.**

DRAFT - NIAGARA REGION

MCR ASSESSMENT CRITERIA - SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW FOR URBAN AREAS

GENERAL NOTES

Where a need has been identified, the Region has prepared the Settlement Area Boundary Review Criteria to assess the urban area boundary and assist in determining the appropriateness and suitability of lands for boundary expansion. The Region's assessment tool is informed by the policies of the *Growth Plan* and *PPS*. It follows a qualitative assessment process for considering potential areas for urban area boundary expansions. The Regional review criteria is intended to screen potential areas using a two- step graduated advancement process.

Step 1 - is the initial screening and a precursor for advancement to Step 2.

Step 2 - is completed by an assessment team with the applicable expertise to review and make recommendation on the criteria.

Following Step 2 assessment, the Region will consolidate the qualitative information to assess the suitability and appropriateness of areas being considered for urban area boundary expansion.

Supportive planning documents may be voluntarily submitted as an accompaniment to a private landowner or a local municipal request for Regional staff's background and information. Supplemental submissions will be reviewed for context only by the assessment team during Step 2.

Staff will consider the results of the assessment, including any additional information submitted, and consult with local municipal staff prior to finalizing the outcome of the assessment.

Regional staff will receive local Council endorsed requests, as they represent the vision and preference for their community. Details of local Council endorsement will be provided to Regional Council in staff's recommendation report.

The outcome of this process will be a recommendation to Regional Council on the most appropriate location(s) for urban area boundary expansion(s) based on the conclusions of the assessment.

All recommendations, including private landowners, municipal staff or through Council endorsement, shall demonstrate consistency with the PPS and conformity to Provincial Plans.

Step 1 - Remove Unqualified Requests				
Primary Sorting	Primary Sorting Criteria			Notes
	Is the parcel or collection of parcels located within a local municipality that has an identified need in Niagara Region's Land Needs Assessment (LNA)?	Yes	No	<p>If YES to ALL of these questions, assessment may proceed to Step 2</p>
	Is the parcel or collection or parcels located outside of the Greenbelt Plan area? (1)	Yes	No	
	Is the parcel or collection of parcels contiguous with an existing Urban Area Boundary? (2)	Yes	No	
	The parcel or collection of parcels are located entirely outside of Specialty Crop Area?	Yes	No	

Step 2 - Site Level Analysis - Requests for Consideration							
Topic Area	Criteria	Criteria Response					Provincial Policy Relationship
Sanitary Servicing	What is the capacity to accommodate the parcel or collection of parcels at WWTP during the planning period?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG 2020 - 2.2.8.3 a) b) c), 3.2.6.1, 3.2.6.2 PPS 2020 - 1.1.1 g), 1.6.1.a)
	How easily can a sanitary servicing be made available to the lands?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	PPS2020 - 1.6.6.1 a)1 b)1 b)3
	When extending sanitary services, what is the level of impact on natural environment, including key hydrologic features and areas?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG - 2.2.8.3 d) e) PPS 2020 - 1.1.1 c) h)
	In relation to sanitary servicing, how feasibly can the parcel or collection of parcels support additional urban development in its Watershed through mitigating measures?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG - 3.2.6.2 c) d) 4.2.1.3

Topic Area	Criteria	Criteria Response					Provincial Policy Relationship
Municipal Water Supply	What is the feasibility of existing system capacity to accommodate the parcel or collection of parcels with municipal water supply during planning period?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG 2020 - 2.2.8.3 a) b) c), 3.2.6.1, 3.2.6.2 PPS 2020 - 1.1.1 g), 1.6.1.a)
	How easily can a water supply connection be made?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG 2020 - 2.2.8.3 a) PPS 2020 - 1.6.1.b), 1.6.6.1 b)3
	When connecting water services, what is the anticipated level of impact on natural environment, including key hydrologic features and areas?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG - 3.2.6.3 a) PPS 2020 - 1.6.6.1.b)4
	In relation to municipal water supply, how feasibly can the parcel or collection of parcels support additional urban development in its Watershed through mitigation or supplemental measures?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG - 3.2.6.3 a), 4.2.1.3
Transit and Transportation	How well can the parcel or collection of parcels access major transportation corridor such as Provincial Highway, Regional Road, rail or marine systems?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG 2020 - 2.2.8.3 a) b) PPS 2020 1.1.1 e)
	How feasibility can a local road network be incorporated for the parcel or collection of parcels, including consideration of environmental matters?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	PPS 2020 - 1.6.7
	What is the level of impact to existing road networks and level of service from the addition of the parcel or collection of parcels?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	PPS 2020 - 1.6.7.2
	What is the feasibility of extending transit services to the parcel or collection of parcels?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	PPS 2020 - 1.6.7.4
	What is the feasibility of extending active transportation facilities to the parcel or collection of parcels?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	PPS 2020 - 1.6.7.4

Topic Area	Criteria	Criteria Response					Provincial Policy Relationship
Environmental Protection and Natural Resources	In terms of Provincial Natural Heritage System, how much the parcel or collection of parcels are affected/impacted?	No NHS	Less than half shown as NHS	Approx. half shown as NHS	More than half shown as NHS	All shown as NHS	APTG - 2.2.8.3 d) e), 4.2.1.3 c)
	In considering the parcel or collection of parcels in the context of NHS constraints, and as part of the broader NHS, what level of feasibility would be represented on the parcel or collection of parcels in gaining access to fragmented development parcels (without existing R.O.W. frontage)?	Available. No NHS identified All lands accessible	Highly Feasible. Multiple options from adjacent lands	Feasible. Reliance on single adjacent property for access	Low Feasibility. Multiple properties in opposing direction required	Not Feasible. All shown as NHS	APTG - 1.2.1 PPS 2020 - 1.1.1 a), c), d)
	With respect to Watershed Planning and the overall health of the respective Watershed, what is the impact should the parcel or collection of parcels be added to the urban area and developed for urban use?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG - 3.2.7.1 , 3.2.7.2
	In consideration of potential mitigating measures for watersheds or sub watersheds, what is the level of feasibility related to introducing such measures as enhanced storm water management and increased infiltration opportunity to improve water quality?	Available	Highly Feasible	Feasible	Low Feasibility	Not Feasible	APTG - 2.2.8.3d), 3.2.7.1 , 3.2.7.2 PPS 2020 - 1.6.6.7, 2.2.1 i)
	With available information concerning species at risk, what level of impact would be experienced if the parcel or collection of parcels were to be added to the urban area and developed for urban purpose?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	PPS 2020 - 2.1.6, 2.1.7
	What is the impact of including the parcel or collection of parcels on topography and the ability to minimize significant earthworks that could interfere with hydrogeological function?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG - 3.2.7.2 c), 4.2.9.3 PPS 2020 - 3.2.3

Topic Area	Criteria	Criteria Response					Provincial Policy Relationship
Agriculture Agri-Food Network	As defined by the PPS, using the range provided, how best are the parcel or collection of parcels described?	Completely Rural	Mix of Mostly Agricultural Area and Rural	Agricultural Area Completely (Class 4-7)	Agricultural Area Completely (Class 1-7)	Agricultural Lands Completely (Class 1-3)	APTG 2.2.8.2 f) PPS 2020 1.1.3.8, 1.1.5, 2.3.5.1
	What is the level of impact on active livestock operations and MDS setbacks by including the parcel or collection of parcels in the Urban Area?	Outside any Setback	Setbacks Impact less than half	Setbacks Impact half	Setbacks Impact more than half	All within Setbacks	APTG 2.2.8.3 g)
	What is the impact to the broader Agri-Food Network if the parcel or collection of parcels were Urban Area?	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG 2.2.8.3 h)
Aggregate Resources	In terms of distance/separation of sensitive land use, and in the context of Ministry D6 Guidelines, what level of impact on existing or planned Aggregate (Stone and Sand & Gravel) operations can be expected if the parcel or collection of parcels were added to the existing Urban Area Boundary? (Within 300m being Critical and beyond 1000m being Negligible)	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG 4.2.8 PPS 2020 - 2.5.1, 2.5.2.4, 2.5.2.5
Growth Management	Does including the parcel or collection of parcels meaningfully contribute to a complete community? (2,3)	Highest Contribution	Higher Contribution	Modest Contribution	Lower Contribution	Little to No Contribution	APTG - 2.2.8.3, 4.2.1.3 c) PPS 2020 - 1.1.3.8
	Does inclusion of the parcel or collection of parcels represent a favourable way to achieve the outcome of the Region-identified land needs?	Most Favourable	Higher Favourability	Favourable	Lower Favourability	Least Favourable	APTG - 2.2.8.3, 4.2.1.3 c) PPS 2020 - 1.1.3.8
	What are the planning impacts on neighbouring or nearby lands by including the parcel or collection of parcels in the urban area? (2)	Negligible Impact	Minimal Impact	Modest Impact	High Impact	Critical Impact	APTG - 2.2.8.3, 4.2.1.3 c) PPS 2020 - 1.1.3.8

1. Any individual parcel or collection of parcels that are contained fully within the Greenbelt will not proceed any further in consideration and must be separated out. Individual parcels that are split with designation of being within and outside of the Greenbelt may proceed for further assessment.
2. Regional staff, within its purview, may consider additional lands not formally requested for expansion consideration, privately or municipally, that would have the effect of creating or improving a contiguous grouping of parcels adjacent to the existing Urban Area Boundary.
3. Smaller parcels that are characterized as rounding out of serviced urban area edge can be considered for inclusion that would collectively contribute to meeting complete community objectives.

Appendix 18.3

SABR - RURAL SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW PROCESS

SUMMARY

Rural settlements, also known as Hamlets, play an important role through the provision of housing, social, cultural and economic land uses serving the needs of rural residents within its settlement boundary and the surrounding Agricultural and Rural Areas.

The Region has exclusive approval authority over settlement area boundaries; both urban and rural. The Region may consider rural settlement boundary expansions through the Niagara Official Plan (municipal comprehensive review) process.

The *Growth Plan* directs the majority of growth be accommodated within urban areas. A small percentage of growth will be allocated outside the urban areas, directed primarily to rural settlements.

The *Growth Plan* policy for settlement areas sets out that settlement boundary expansions cannot occur within the *Greenbelt Plan* area. This restricts expansions in northern Niagara communities.

Provincial policy for rural settlement expansions differs from urban area boundary expansions; thus, the criteria and process outlined below are specific to rural settlements.

The following are the draft criteria that will be considered by Regional staff in assessing rural settlement expansion requests:

- Contribution to the rural character: rural settlements are generally lower density communities designed to support the surrounding agricultural and serve the historical development that has occurred in the community. Expansions for new development shall maintain and enhance the distinctive character, enhance the quality of life through appropriate design of commercial and public space areas, and promote greater economic vitality.
- Purpose of rural settlements to support the agricultural community: the rural settlement should have sufficient capacity to accommodate supporting farm-related uses and commercial uses to support the nearby agricultural and rural communities.
- Hydrogeological considerations: whether the expansion is rounding out an undersized lot or where the expansion is proposed for new lot creation, the size of the expansion should result in the ability for viable lots that will ensure adequate water supply and suitable for private waste disposal systems, subject to applicable requirements.



- Impacts to the Natural Environment System: the proposed expansion does not result in negative impact on the natural environment system.
- Impacts to the surrounding agricultural area: expansions should be located so as to minimize and mitigate to the extent feasible the impacts on nearby agricultural operations. This review will include expansion size, adjacent soil class, access, residual access and nearest constraint. This criteria will consider impacts to agricultural infrastructure and livestock facilities. Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) constraints will be considered through this criteria.
- Site-specific context: location considerations may be provided through supporting information or information provided through consultation with the local municipality.

In West Lincoln, the majority of forecasted growth will be directed to the urban area of Smithville. A small percentage of growth will be allocated to the rural settlements/agricultural area.

In Wainfleet, the majority of the growth will be allocated to its rural settlements with the Wainfleet Rural Settlement receiving the higher percentage of growth and a smaller percentage going towards others that can suitably to accommodate private servicing. An even smaller percentage may be allocated to the agricultural area.

The Region's Land Needs Assessment will determine the amount of growth to be directed to rural settlements.

Below is the draft process for consideration of Rural Settlement boundary expansions:

Step 1. Consider the details of expansion.

1. Determine the type of request:

- a) Technical adjustment (ex. property already developed and adjacent to current boundary)
- b) Minor rounding out (ex. adding the remainder of a property with minor development potential)
- c) Expansion request (ex. expanding the rural settlement for the explicit purpose of development)

2. Additional information is not required to be submitted to be considered through this process. If provided, review any additional information provided to support the request.

NOTE: Rural settlements within the *Greenbelt Plan* area cannot be considered for expansion.

Step 2. Prepare and review mapping with local municipality.

1. The Region will prepare mapping that demonstrates the ability to accommodate growth within the existing boundary to generate a potential inventory of available vacant land supply in each rural settlement. The mapping will include constraints that must be considered in determining developable lands within that vacant land supply, as well as the constraints surrounding the rural settlement boundary.

In particular, the following mapping layers will be added to the vacant land mapping:

- Any surrounding agricultural infrastructure, including livestock facilities (based on aerial photography)
- Soil conditions and classification
- Natural environment system constraints
- Any other contextual constraints identified through the review.

NOTE: The review of recent hydrogeological studies, and discussions with private septic services staff, will assist in determining the average lot size to be applied to the rural settlements to generate a potential inventory of lots that can be accommodated within the existing settlement boundary.

2. Once the vacant land supply and inventory projection is determined, the Region can establish if an expansion is needed to accommodate growth in rural settlements. If an expansion is required, the Region will consider the requests submitted, as well as the full extent of the rural settlement boundary, to determine the most appropriate location for expansion.
3. The Region will meet with local municipal staff to discuss the mapping, constraints and potential inventory for each rural settlement.

Step 3. Evaluate boundaries and expansion requests against the criteria.

The Region will further review the candidate areas against the evaluation criteria to determine the most appropriate location for expansion. This evaluation will be undertaken in consultation with the local municipal planning staff.

This step will result in generating preferred locations for potential expansion based on the distribution of the forecasted allocation determined through the Region's Land Needs Assessment.

At this time, local planning staff would report to their local Council with recommendations that reflect local interests related to which rural settlement areas should receive expansion and where the expansions are most appropriate for each, in relation the existing boundary. Local Council endorsement of preferred locations are targeting to be received by the Region in August 2021.

The results of the evaluation will be finalized by Regional planning staff, having considered the criteria and local Council preferred locations. Regional Planning staff will make recommendations to its Council as part of the Settlement Area Boundary Review component of the new Niagara Official Plan. The recommendation is planned with the release of a consolidated draft Niagara Official Plan in fall 2021.

Minor Rounding-Out

The process and steps outlined above describes the expansion process as part of a Municipal Comprehensive Review ("MCR"). In Niagara, the MCR is the Niagara Official Plan.

The *Growth Plan* now includes a policy which allows municipalities to consider a minor rounding out of a rural settlement boundary outside of the MCR, subject to specific criteria:

2.2.9.7. Notwithstanding policy 2.2.8.2, minor adjustments may be made to the boundaries of rural settlements outside of a municipal comprehensive review, subject to the following:

- a) the affected settlement area is not in the Greenbelt Area;
- b) the change would constitute minor rounding out of existing development, in keeping with the rural character of the area;
- c) confirmation that water and wastewater servicing can be provided in an appropriate manner that is suitable for the long-term with no negative impacts on water; and

d) Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS are applied.

In order to submit this request, the Region would require the interested party to make application for a Regional Official Plan Amendment to adjust the rural settlement boundary. The application would need to be supported by a number of studies including, but not limited to, a planning justification report, an agricultural impact assessment, an environmental impact statement and a hydrogeological study. Any other required studies would be determined through pre-consultation and dependent on the location, context and proposal.

Policies related to rural settlements and the minor rounding out are included in the Regional Structure section, **Appendix 4.3**.

Appendix 18.4

SABR - BOUNDARY TECHNICAL MAPPING UPDATES

SUMMARY

The Region has developed criteria to consider technical adjustments or changes to boundary mapping to better align Regional and Local urban area boundaries. The purpose of this process is to correct technical mapping errors where there are discrepancies between Regional and Local urban area boundaries.

The changes will be applied through a GIS-based mapping exercise. The resulting boundary layer will be applied in relevant schedules for the Niagara Official Plan when the final draft is presented.

After the Niagara Official Plan is adopted, the technical changes made through this review will be supplied to the applicable local municipalities for use during their conformity exercise.

This exercise is ongoing and involves input from local planning staff. Additional consultation with local planning staff will occur, as needed, until the exercise is complete.

As a technical exercise to ensure alignment of boundaries, this process is separate to that of the Settlement Area Boundary Review (SABR) criteria. The exercise is being reported in this section as it deals with the urban area boundaries for which the Region has sole jurisdiction over.

This technical adjustment process will not act in place of the SABR process (**Appendix 18.2**), which outlines urban settlement expansion as it relates to growth management.

This technical process may result in boundaries shifting for the addition or subtraction of certain lands, as outlined in the criteria. However, it is intended to be minor in nature and not result in a significant adjustment. Additionally, this technical change criteria is only being applied to the urban areas in Niagara.

Once the process is complete, the Region will report on the outcome through the final draft of the Niagara Official Plan.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles have been applied to the technical mapping update exercise:

- No new settlement areas are created.
- The overall area of an urban area may be increased or decreased to satisfy the technical criteria as described in this document. An attempt is made to not remove lands with reasonable development potential.



- Boundaries along the Great Lake shorelines and the Niagara River have not been adjusted since these boundaries follow the shoreline, and may naturally adjust from time to time.

CRITERIA

1. Where urban area boundaries marginally exceed or fall short of a parcel boundary, a technical change will be applied by aligning the urban area boundary to the parcel line.
2. Urban area boundaries will be extended in a case where an existing boundary splits a fully serviced developed parcel with limited additional development opportunity. The portion of the parcel outside of the urban area boundary will be incorporated into the urban area, if the size of the area is comparable or lesser in size to the parcel area within the boundary.
3. Where the urban area boundary splits a parcel, and that parcel has a significant amount of land outside of the urban area boundary, the urban area boundary will be drawn to align with the rear parcel line of smaller adjacent lots within the urban area.
4. Where adjacent parcel boundaries are not present to assist in defining the urban area boundary, the limit of existing development or associated planning approval (e.g. local municipal zoning, registered subdivision approval), will be retained as the definitive urban area boundary. If there are no existing developments or associated planning approvals within the area of boundary misalignment, and the Region's existing boundary extends greater than the local boundary, the Region's existing urban area boundary will be retained.
5. Urban area boundaries may be adjusted to reduce the boundary, if the boundary follows the back of predominantly existing developed parcels and the lands that will be removed are likely not to be developed due to environmental constraints or are of a size and orientation/configuration that would not provide any new development opportunity.
6. Where local Official Plan boundaries have been adjusted to add or remove individual parcels along the periphery of the urban area to account for the presence or absence of servicing infrastructure, the local urban area boundary will be used as the definitive boundary, subject to modifications to allow precise alignment with parcel boundaries.

The technical mapping update process and criteria provides regional and municipal staff with a guide to align urban area boundaries and resolve any existing mapping errors. This technical analysis should reduce future instances where misalignment may be brought into question.

MEMORANDUM

ED 11-2021

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

Date: May 12, 2021

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: George Spezza, 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. We continue to lead the implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan in collaboration with the Economic Rapid Response Team (ERRT).

Service/Operational Changes

In April, Economic Development appointed Linda Sicoli to the permanent position of Economic Development Officer. Interviews were also held for the Manager, Trade and Investment position vacated by Tim Reynold's retirement. Bryan Blue who undertook a two month redeployment to the Linhaven Long Term Care Home, returned to the Economic Development Division on April 19th.

Marketing Support to Businesses

Ongoing projects remain a priority including launching the Business Directory, updating COVID Business Support page and working with the team to launch and promote the third Business Impact Survey. Preparation has begun to launch COVID resiliency stories once Public Health measures allow for photography to be done at the places of business safely. These stories will be featured on NiagaraCanada.ca.

Website Analytics:	Last 30 days:	Vs. Same time last year:
Visits	3,655	+1,881
Page views:	7,310	+1,292
Unique Visitors:	2,932	-1,590*
Returning Visitors:	167	+82

*Unique visitors have gone down because the audience is now Niagara Region heavy and their web pattern shows they return to the site for updates and information.

Most popular Pages:	Number of Views:
COVID Business Support	1,068
Tourism	599
Niagara Advantage	231
Key Sectors	227

Business Updates/Economic Recovery Plan

An update on the progress of the Economic Recovery Plan is included on the agenda for this Committee meeting, report ED 12-2021 Economic Recovery Plan Update 4. Although, it is important to continue to support local business, we are now starting to plan for the longer term and the development of a 10 year Economic Development Strategy. Letters of commitment have been received from the 8 municipalities with economic development offices. The development of the strategy will be a collaboration between all of these offices.

Tourism Adaption and Recovery Funding

The successful applicants are currently going through the process of registering with the Region as suppliers and receiving purchase order numbers. Once they have a

purchase order they can submit their invoice for the first 80% of their funding. A total of 168 applicants are receiving funding of \$2m.

ERRT Biweekly Update Calls

The ERRT Biweekly calls continue. Attendance is approximately 30 participants and the minutes are distributed to the entire group of just under 90. The last meeting was focused on mental health resources available to employers and employees, as well as the regular updates on the vaccination program and Public Health protocols.

Business and Economic Research and Analysis

Ongoing projects include: Niagara Active Economy research project with the Niagara Community Observatory; ICT Policy Brief, Niagara Community Observatory; Scenario Planning Prioritization Committee, Niagara Workforce Planning Board (draft report completed); ERRT COVID-19 Business Impact Survey – Part 3 (currently drafting final report and presentation); FDI program research and analysis looking at Niagara's position in FDI and trade from a data perspective (May 2021); conducting industrial base analysis for economic development strategy (June 2021).

Other projects include: Niagara Region COVID-19 Recovery Measurement Indicators (providing advice and information); Airport Economic Impact Assessment Project (providing advice and assistance); research and data provision for DC Background Study; and, updated Niagara Tourism Profile.

Business Development

Niagara Economic Development received three Industrial Development Charge Grant applications. This will result in the immediate retention of 25 existing jobs and the creation of 110 new jobs in the Niagara region.

Since the last report to committee a Gateway CIP application has been received, reviewed, and approved. The successful investment will result in \$1,520,000 in new construction and the creation of 30 new jobs to the Niagara region.

A successful advertising campaign was launched through the publication of a paid editorial in the Financial Post. The article, "Niagara is attracting world-class companies

that are priced out of larger centres” showcases a number of recent investments in Niagara as well as our competitive advantage compared to the Greater Toronto Area.

Trade and Investment

Effective March 31, 2021 the Manager of Trade and Investment retired from his position at the Niagara Region. In the absence of the past Manager of Trade and Investment, and until their replacement can be hired, the Manager of Business Development and Expedited Services will oversee this portfolio and respond to any new inquiries and continue working with existing clients.

Foreign Direct Investment (*FDi*) meetings are ongoing virtually, focused on the U.S. and EU markets. The lead generation contract for 10 qualified leads in the EU has come to a successful conclusion. We found strong leads in the EU that were receptive to Niagara Economic Development's value proposition and our strategic location. Two different lead generation consulting companies are working at the moment in separate markets in the U.S. in an effort to provide pre-qualified leads. The current status of Niagara Economic Development's (NED) lead generation work has 48 outstanding qualified leads due in the US. NED's lead generation consulting work has been postponed until May due to lack of staff resource within the department. The *FDi* work which was placed on hold for 15 virtual qualified lead meetings with the Hamilton Niagara Partnership in the State of Florida for the December-January period, has now been relaunched.

The Niagara Foreign Trade Zone Point continued to be active in April, with on-going meetings CanadaBW and the Canadian Border Services Agency.

Sector Support and Economic Development Support to Local Area Municipalities without Economic Development resources

- Partnered with the Grape Growers of Ontario on the project: Fostering Sustainability: Grape Processing from Soil to Shelf which will integrate the sustainable growth accreditation programs and create a public site to educate on sustainable winegrowing.
- Advisory support to LAM with inquiries and business, tourism and development initiatives.
- Project management support and business/EDO/FedDev engagement and response for Tourism Adaptation and Recovery fund.
- Moderated West Niagara Town Hall.
- Tourism Advisory Task Force for Niagara-on-the-Lake.

- Presentation to Transportation Committee to engage Economic Development to support tourism enhancement elements of Niagara Circle Route.
- Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance Working Group engagement.
- ConnectON Steering Committee.
- Local Food conference sessions (every Wednesday in March through OMAFRA)
- Support to Phase 2: Implementation of vaccine via Sub working group for agricultural and farm workers.

Operational Outlook

1 month

- All initial grant payments made to Tourism Adaption and Recovery Fund applicants. Project reporting ongoing.
- COVID-19 third Business Impact Survey analyzed and all reporting completed.
- Online regional Business Directory is 'live' and being promoted to businesses and organizations.
- Manager, Trade and Investment position recruitment completed.
- Implementation of Economic Recovery Plan on-going. Initial work started on development of a 10 year Economic Development Strategy.
- Review work practices depending on Niagara Region recommendations and Public Health advice.

3 months

- 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 be best utilized to maximize ongoing economic development programming.
- Longer term strategic economic development planning underway.
- Review work practices depending on Niagara Region recommendations and Public Health advice.

6 months

- Longer term strategic economic development planning continues and stakeholder consultations completed.

- Review work practices depending on Niagara Region recommendations and Public Health advice.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

George Spezza, Ec.D., CEcD
Director, Economic Development

Subject: Economic Recovery Plan Update 4

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, May 12, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Report ED 12-2021 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) with an update on the progress of the implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan.
- Information on individual actions is included regularly in the monthly COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Economic Development reports to PEDC.
- This report provides an overview of the progress of the Plan using shading to visually represent the stages of the implementation.
- Niagara Economic Development project manages the implementation of the plan in collaboration with the Economic Rapid Response Team (ERRT).
- The action items within the Plan are owned by the ERRT and require support from these members and business stakeholders across the region to complete.

Financial Considerations

All financial implications of implementing the Economic Recovery Plan are being funded by the operational budget of the Economic Development division or through applications to granting programs made available by the Provincial or Federal government.

Analysis

The Economic Recovery Plan was developed in collaboration with the ERRT and external stakeholders across the region. Although, Niagara Economic Development is providing leadership for its implementation and project management, support is required from the ERRT and business stakeholders across the region to advance and complete.

The actions in the Plan are organized under three pillars: Research and Information; Advocacy and Resilience. Each pillar has Immediate, Mid-Term and Long-Term actions. This time-line is intended to progress in alignment with the Province's Framework for Business Re-opening.

The first actions to be initiated were the Immediate and Mid-Term. Some of these actions are now completed but the majority, once started, are ongoing to continue to support Niagara's businesses. The Long Term actions were intended to be initiated when the Province provided direction that we are entering Stage 3. In July 2020 we reached Stage 2 Phase 3 but for now the Province has halted re-opening to control the increasing COVID-19 numbers.

Actions	Status/Progress	Notes
Students Going Digital: The Economic Impact on Niagara.	Completed	Report developed by the Niagara Workforce Planning Board and presented to PEDC in April.
Training and education for businesses, hosting online webinars.	Completed	NED invested in the expansion of the Small Business Enterprise Centre services in Niagara. They provided outreach to businesses through one on one consultations as well as webinars on topics to support businesses. NED assisted in the marketing of the webinars. Final report has been received with metrics.
Third Business Impact Survey. Conduct significant engagement with stakeholders representing tourism, manufacturing	Completed	The survey closed on April 16 th . Over 1,000 completed surveys were received. The analysis is underway.

Actions	Status/Progress	Notes
and agribusiness and Task Force members.		
Supply Chain replacement project.	Completed	The DISCORD App has been launched to address the supply chain issues of Niagara's 650 manufacturers, utilizing the Niagara Industrial Association as the platform host. It is anticipated this App will enhance our themes of "localization" and "connectivity" among Niagara's manufacturers, with this virtual drop-in centre.
Retain and develop OpeninNiagara tool to be a comprehensive online regional business directory tool with input from municipalities. Survey businesses for commonalities in supply demand locally. Identify essential supplies and support companies in sourcing Niagara/Canada.	Completed	Online business directory, based on Niagara Employment Inventory database now live and being promoted. It both supports the 'Buy Local' campaigns for residents and encourages strengthening business supply chains by sourcing local.
Provide regular research updates to stakeholders on general market conditions. Maintain a strong base of	On-going	Latest Economic Update report was provided to PEDC in April, including data on the effect of

Actions	Status/Progress	Notes
data on the local economy and businesses, available to stakeholders to inform decision making.		COVID-19 on the economy. Next update will be in the Fall 2021. Five presentations were made to stakeholder groups.
Promote and post new Federal and Provincial initiatives and announcements on the ERRT website page.	On-going	COVID-19 Business Support Site is continually updated. Information on government programs and protocols is added on an ongoing basis. ERRT email address is constantly monitored and questions answered.
Monitor development application activity upon re-opening of the economy including year over year analysis as indicator of economic growth post-pandemic.	On-going	Economic Update reports contain data on development and investment activity. Last specific report was ED 13-2020 COVID-19 Impact on Investment and Development in Niagara. Will continue to monitor post-pandemic.
<p>With Emergency Management and Public Health support businesses in re-opening in a safe and responsible way by sharing guidelines and protocols through update calls as needed.</p> <p>Work with Public Health to provide clear guidance on public safety/appropriate PPE for businesses</p>	On-going	Bi-weekly calls with a broad group of stakeholders provide regular updates on Public Health protocols and business support. Recently had a Q&A session with Dr. Hirji and a talk on mental health resources. Minutes go out to over 90 stakeholders

Actions	Status/Progress	Notes
		with a regular attendance of 30 on the calls.
Fed Dev Ontario – Tourism Adaption and Recovery Fund	On-going	Fed Dev approved an application to this grant fund to assist tourism dependent businesses with the impacts of COVID-19. An application and evaluation process was developed with the ERRT members. 168 applications have been approved and will shortly be receiving funding. NED developed and implemented a communications plan to promote the funding opportunity.
Recognize and showcase businesses that are successfully pivoting through the ERRT website and other channels.	Underway	The businesses have been identified but COVID-19 restrictions have made it difficult to get access to facilities to take photos.

Below is a high level overview of the action items from the Economic Recovery Plan. Actions in the Plan have been coded as to whether they are **Finished**, **Ongoing** or **Underway** illustrating the progress of its implementation. Actions that are not shaded have not yet been started.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION PILLAR	IMMEDIATE	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION PILLAR	Conduct a second COVID-19 economic impact (Business Impact) survey	Prepare a report on the second regional COVID-19 Business Impact survey results	On-going: Provide regular research updates to stakeholders on general market conditions, including local workforce changes, large expansion investments, business closures, etc. as available/released
	Maintain a strong base of data on the local economy and businesses, available to stakeholders to inform decision making	Identify vulnerable companies and sectors from the survey as a focus for municipal BR+E efforts	
	Promote and post new Federal and Provincial initiatives and announcements on the ERRT website page	Prepare and circulate sector- and municipal-specific reports from second COVID Business Impact survey	Conduct a third COVID-19 Business Impact Survey in Phase 3 to determine the status of recovery of businesses.
	Promote Provincial and Federal aid programs, including the Resiliency Help Desk at 1-866-989-1080 where businesses can access accountants or financial advisors	Monitor development application activity upon re-opening of economy, including year over year analysis as indicator of economic growth post-pandemic	
	Monitor and assess the impact of remote (online) education at Brock/Niagara College on Niagara's economy and business's employment needs	Recognize and showcase businesses that are successfully pivoting through the ERRT website and other channels	

		Provide regular/on-going updates to Regional Council on COVID-19 impact related activities, issues and efforts	
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RESEARCH AND INFORMATION PILLAR	IMMEDIATE	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
RESEARCH AND INFORMATION PILLAR		<p>Monitor activities and impacts in other comparable municipalities to benchmark Niagara and learn from best practices</p> <p>Host online webinars on topics relevant to supporting business</p> <p>With Emergency Management and Public Health, support businesses in re-opening in a safe and responsible way by sharing guidelines and protocols through update calls, as needed</p> <p>Survey businesses for commonalities in supply demand locally. Identify essential supplies and support companies in</p>	

sourcing Niagara/Canada
suppliers

ADVOCACY PILLAR	IMMEDIATE	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
ADVOCACY PILLAR	Continued alignment between Regional and LAMs' Government Relations strategies and advocacy efforts.	Strive for consistent application of bylaw enforcement across LAMs and the Region	Immediate and longer term: Advocate for changes to the Ontario Planning Act to allow existing CIP funding programs to support COVID-19 related relief efforts. For example: CIPs allowing for an enhancement of virtual a presence (e.g. website design)
	Advocate for alignment and longer-term repayment schedules for all deferral programs to allow businesses reopening to generate sufficient cash-flow	Advocate for COVID-19 relief programs to continue into 2021 for tourism and hospitality sectors, including but not limited to CERB, CEWS, and rent relief programs	
	Continue to provide research and anecdotal findings from Niagara businesses to the appropriate levels of government within relevant Ministries, as well as AMO, FCM, FedDev and the joint Ontario government committee	Advocate to keep COVID-19 relief programs in place for employees while they are in re-training or re-skilling process	Immediate and longer term: Advocate for accelerated broadband infrastructure investment in areas with limited/no service, working with SWIFT and other available programs
	Continue participating in the GTA and provincial recovery planning efforts to identify best practices and synergies across	Advocate for expedited planning approvals at the Provincial level including MTO, Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment Commission, etc.	Immediate and longer term: Continued advocacy for infrastructure investments for major/regionally significant projects and expediting those already in process

	<p>communities in recovery efforts</p> <p>Monitor Provincial direction and decisions on childcare services through communication with Niagara Region Children's Services department and communicate to ERRT for assessment on local impact</p>		<p>Support Planning departments in review of red-tape reduction efforts to increase speed for development to re-start</p> <p>Advocate for digitization of Region permits and applications, where possible, to assist business cost savings</p>
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RESILIENCE PILLAR	IMMEDIATE	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
RESILIENCE PILLAR	<p>Conduct significant engagement with stakeholders representing tourism, manufacturing and agribusiness and Task Force members.</p> <p>Expedite approval and coordination of use of public realm spaces by businesses to allow for distancing while supporting business resiliency</p> <p>Execute targeted business retention efforts (BR&E) led by the EDOs in the local area municipalities with specific strategies to assist businesses in distress</p>	<p>Work with Public Health to provide clear guidance on public safety and appropriate PPE for businesses</p> <p>Assist businesses in procurement of PPE by maintaining database on ERRT website and other tools</p> <p>Work with partners in workforce development – helping displaced workers find employment and deploy talent attraction initiatives to fill gaps</p>	<p>Monitor level of demand for office and retail space due to increased adoption of online technologies and work-from-home options by business. Creative thinking to repurpose use of any excess space made available.</p> <p>Supply chains have been strained. Seek opportunities for import replacement – sourcing new domestic suppliers, or</p>

	<p>Encourage “buy-local” promotion via Social Media, particularly Linked-In & www.openinniagara.com. and amplify existing or complementary buy-local initiatives across Niagara</p> <p>Strive for increased digitization of government services including but not limited to: digital business advisory/support services, consultations and webinars, pre-consultation meetings, online applications, virtual town hall meetings, etc.</p> <p>Assist businesses that need access to capital by partnering on the promotion of the Regional Recovery & Relief fund at Venture Niagara</p> <p>Maintain a listing of Niagara PPE suppliers on the ERRT website.</p>	<p>Identify programs/funds for workforce training/re-training/re-skilling for a more flexible and adaptive workforce and assist employers in accessing them</p> <p>Assist businesses in increasing their online presence – promotion of Digital Main Street and/or other resources to get gain virtual presence</p> <p>Review decision-making process to allow for expedited approvals on development initiatives to support business re-opening</p> <p>Monitor any future wave of business closures or bankruptcies that may occur when relief programs end.</p>	<p>supporting repatriation of manufacturing.</p> <p>Re-focus FDI strategies and messaging to opportunities post-COVID. Develop new tools to undertake investment attraction, including site selection virtually</p> <p>Retain and develop OpenInNiagara tool to be a comprehensive online, regional business directory tool with input from municipalities</p> <p>Include a portion in the Long Term Economic Strategy that addresses mitigation plans for future pandemic impact.</p>
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10 Year Economic Development Strategy

Initial discussions on the start of a new long term strategy were begun just as COVID-19 started. The strategy was put on hold and attention focused on the implementation of the Economic Recovery Plan. Although, we are still in the pandemic, work has now started again on the new strategy with the aim that it will come to PEDC in spring 2022.

Following a motion at PEDC in January 2020, this strategy will be developed collaboratively by all 9 economic development offices. Letters of commitment signed by the Mayors, CAO and Economic Development staff have been received from all 8 municipalities that have offices and the other four will be represented by a Regional team member. At the time of writing this report an initial meeting has been launched to address the supply chain issues of Niagara's 650 manufacturers and the initial EDOs meeting has been arranged at the beginning of May.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The ERRT Economic Recovery Plan supports Council Strategic Priority "Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth".

Other Pertinent Reports

- ED 11-2020 Economic Recovery Plan Update
- ED 15-2020 Economic Recovery Plan Update 2
- ED 5-2021 Economic Recovery Plan Update 3

Prepared by:

Valerie Kuhns
Associate Director
Economic Development

Recommended by:

George Spezza, Ec.D., CEcD
Director
Economic Development

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Subject: 2 Billion Trees, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) Request
For Information Submission

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, May 20, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Regional Council **APPROVE** the attached resolution in Appendix 1 to Report CAO 8-2021 endorsing the NPCA request for information for the “2 Billion Trees – Growing Canada’s Forests” initiative; and
2. That the Chief Administrative Officer **BE AUTHORIZED** to issue the letter of support for the project attached as Appendix 2 to Report CAO 8-2021.

Key Facts

- The federal government is currently accepting Request for Information (RFI) towards “2 Billion Trees - Growing Canada’s Forests” initiative
- The federal government is committed to planting 2 billion trees over the next 10 years as one of the ways to achieving their goal of net-zero greenhouse emissions
- NPCA is seeking Regional Council endorsement of their RFI submission to this initiative
- The deadline for the RFI submission is May 27, 2021

Financial Considerations

There is no financial commitment being made as part of the RFI submission.

If the submission were accepted, a 50% funding contribution from the applicant (NPCA) would be required. Details on the funding contribution will be determined at the time of project proposal and will be brought to Council for further consideration.

Analysis

The NPCA is leading this RFI, in collaboration with the 12 local municipalities and the Niagara Region. In addition, the submission will also include areas of Hamilton and Haldimand that are within NPCA watershed. The NPCA RFI is premised on the concept of planting 2 billion trees over a 10-year period throughout NPCA watershed.

The NPCA would be the lead agency for the project implementation and a representative from each municipality would be made available to assist.

The tree planting initiative would look at establishing new plantings on municipal lands, private lands, conservation areas and other partnerships. The project would allow the NPCA and Niagara municipalities to carry out a significant tree-planting program with cost sharing from the federal government.

Alternatives Reviewed

N/A

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The 2 Billion Trees project will support the following Strategic objective:

Objective 3.2: Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship

- Drive environmental protection and addressing climate change such as through increasing waste diversion rates and reducing our carbon footprint

Other Pertinent Reports

N/A

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P. Eng

Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Diana Morreale, Director Development Approvals.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Resolution to support the NPCA 2 Billion Trees RFI

Appendix 2

Draft Letter of Support

2 Billion Trees Initiative Resolution

WHEREAS the federal government has announced the “Growing Canada’s Forests” program as part of its 2 Billion Trees initiative, making substantial matching funding available to support reforestation efforts across the country;

WHEREAS this is a timely opportunity to attract federal investment towards implementing nature-based climate solutions in our communities through a strong and coordinated multi-partner approach across the Niagara Peninsula watershed;

WHEREAS the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) is convening partners and collaborators towards a 10-year planning program for a Request for Information submission in application to Growing Canada’s Forest Funding Program due May 27th 2021;

WHEREAS the NPCA has a well-established track record of reforestation with private and public landowners, non-governmental organizations, nature clubs, academic institutions and community groups, has the scientific know-how to identify land and tree species with the biggest ecological and climate benefits, and has partnerships in place to mobilize volunteers to plant and monitor trees;

WHEREAS the proposed opportunity aligns with the Municipal objectives, has the potential to provide multiscale benefits;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council **ENDORSE** the attached letter in support of NPCA’s Request for Information submission in application to Growing Canada’s Forests 2 Billion Trees initiative; and

THAT staff **CONTINUE** to collaborate with NPCA and other partners in identifying planting opportunities and programs aligned with municipal priorities to be included in the full funding application should the Request for Information submission as an expression of interest be successful.

[Date]

RE: Letter of Support for NPCA Growing Canada's Forest Program 2 Billion Trees

To whom it may concern

[Name of Municipality] is pleased to support the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) application to the Growing Canada's Forests program under the 2 Billion Trees initiative.

We recognize the value of creating resilient forests here in Niagara. We are part of the Carolinian zone, the most diverse and fragile ecoregion in Canada. The opportunity to implement nature-based climate solutions towards enhancing our unique forest and urban tree canopy is significant. This initiative will help strengthen our existing commitments to enhance natural areas and address climate impacts in our municipality.

We are committed to working with the NPCA in the coming months to identify suitable land within our municipality where we can restore and expand tree cover. We also intend to cost-share planting projects to scale our planting efforts with Federal funding support.

With more than 60 years of expertise, the NPCA is ideally positioned to successfully implement this project. Their emphasis on evidence-based conservation will ensure we leverage forestry best practices tailored to our unique geography. Meanwhile, their collaborative approach means efforts will be strategic and well-coordinated with the region's many stakeholders and partners.

As one of those partners, we look forward to working alongside the NPCA to plant, grow and maintain forests within our jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

[name]

[title]

Subject: Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) 2021 Annual Conference

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, May 20, 2021

Recommendations

1. That the advocacy issues identified in Report CAO 9-2021 **BE ENDORSED** as delegation requests during the 2021 AMO Conference; and
2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to request meetings with cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, senior ministry staff, and opposition party leaders to discuss regional advocacy issues during the AMO Conference.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview on the preliminary details of the 2021 Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference and seek endorsement on the regional advocacy issues requested to be addressed during the delegation meetings with senior provincial leaders
- The AMO Conference and AGM will be occurring virtually from August 15-18
- The virtual conference will continue to provide the opportunity for municipalities to meet with Ministers, Parliamentary Assistants, senior ministry staff, and Party Leaders via video conferencing on key policy issues
- Proposed ministry delegation issues consider the current provincial interest in economic recovery solutions, issues previously identified as regional priorities, probability of successfully securing a meeting with the appropriate ministry, and other opportunities to delegate to Ministers on Regional matters (OBCM/MARCO meeting)
- The AMO Conference will offer one of the few opportunities remaining to present it's priority issues to all government leaders before the June 2022 provincial election

Financial Considerations

As a result of the AMO Conference occurring virtually, it offers significant costs savings by eliminating travel, accommodation, and meal expenses. In addition, AMO is providing a reduced registration rate, which saves registrants almost 20% on the original registration fee.

Members of Regional Council who wish to be added to the list of AMO Conference registrants are advised to contact the Regional Clerk's Office.

Analysis

Due to ongoing public health measures, the Association of Municipalities' of Ontario Conference will be proceeding virtually from August 15-18, 2021. The Conference occurs annually and provides an opportunity to highlight key policy and advocacy issues to provincial Ministers, Parliamentary Assistants and party leaders. It is an opportunity for Niagara Region to:

- Advance issues;
- Highlight policy and program concerns;
- Access funding;
- Highlight the work taking place at the Region
- Propose or establish partnership on new Regional initiatives; and
- Build a profile and relationships with the provincial government

Despite its virtual nature, the key features of the Conference will still be available. Preliminary Conference program details, including the merits of on-demand concurrent sessions and plenary programming are available on AMO's website at www.amo.on.ca/program.

As the Provincial parties begin to prepare for the forthcoming June 2, 2022 election, the AMO Conference will provide one of the few remaining opportunities to connect directly with current and potential Provincial decision-makers on a number of key issues for the Region. Therefore, in addition to meeting with executive members of the Provincial Conservative Party, Niagara Region will also request meetings with the leaders of the Opposition to raise awareness of broad policy areas that require ongoing support from the government following the election.

Niagara Region will have two additional opportunities to raise awareness on key issues prior to the election: 1) during a proposed Fall virtual **Niagara Day(s)**; and 2) the **Rural Ontario Municipalities Association Conference** in January 2022.

Attendance at Municipal Delegations with Ministers

From Niagara Region's experience attending the 2020 AMO delegations, Councillor attendance during these virtual meetings with Ministers is relatively seamless so long as one of the two options for participating are met:

- Councillors would attend in-person at Regional Headquarters (limited capacity due to physical distancing requirements – 1 in-person Councillor per delegation meeting)
- Councillors attending a delegation meeting remotely are required to be registered AMO Conference attendees (Conference log-in information is necessary to access the Zoom platform)

Once scheduling information is made available from the Ministers Offices, staff will communicate meeting logistics to Conference-registered Councillors that have expressed an interest in one or more of the select advocacy issues. The Regional Chair's Office will invite expressions of interest to participate in delegations in late June.

Regional Councillors and staff attending delegations will receive a package containing briefing notes and other communications materials to prepare them for the meeting. Participants will also be invited to attend a webinar in the week prior to the Conference (August 9-13) to review the delegation materials and provide an opportunity to ask questions.

Alternatives Reviewed

Factors for determining the recommended AMO delegation issues

In addition to aligning issues with the priorities of the provincial government and the Region's Council Strategic Plan, the selection of proposed issues were based on following considerations:

- The issue is largely region-specific or are there other municipal organizations advocating on the same matter?
- Is the issue subject to a pending announcement between now and the Conference? Or is it anticipated that an announcement/updates related to the issue will be made during the Conference?
- Can other advocacy approaches be applied that would be more appropriate?
 - leveraging municipal or service associations on broader municipal issues, letter writing to raise awareness, connecting with senior public servants
- Is there potential for a partnership with the Province?

Summary of Proposed Delegations Issues

The proposed issues were identified through consultations with department senior leadership teams and subsequently confirmed by the corporate leadership team. These issues require immediate action to prevent further impacts on Regional operations and to expedite the progress of projects. Ongoing discussions are occurring on other Regional significant initiatives and is reason they may not be included. These conversations have or are being arranged independently from Conference (i.e. GO Transit extension, South Niagara Falls Waste Water Treatment Plant, etc.).

Recognizing that the region's local area municipalities will be undertaking their own delegations with provincial representatives and staff regarding their municipality's unique issues, the Region and 12 area municipalities are working together to ensure all of our respective issues are represented during the AMO delegations and that duplication or overlapping information is averted. Effective coordination is occurring to ensure unity on common issues, in part through joint delegations, that will demonstrate to the Province that our municipalities are collaborating effectively to build a stronger Niagara.

The number of delegation requests have been limited to six policy/projects areas to manage resources and minimize scheduling conflicts. In addition, the Province will only grant a municipality one meeting per Ministry. Generally the success rate for securing meetings with Ministers or their Parliamentary Assistants is 90-100%.

The following is the list of recommended advocacy issues discussion with Provincial Ministers:

1) Increasing Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ) in the Region (Minister of Economic Development)

Employment lands for manufacturing and heavy industry were established in Niagara in the 1960/70's. These areas no longer represent the location and infrastructure requirements needed to attract investment in new and expanding industries.

Employment land in the GTA is at a premium and in short supply. Niagara Region is the only area in the Greater Golden Horseshoe that has the combination of land, access to a 400 series highway and 4 border crossings to the US. A PSEZ in the Gateway Economic Zone will provide, preserve and promote strategic locations for new investment, contribute to the economic growth of the GGH and job growth in the Region.

ASK: Niagara Region is requesting that the Province, including the Ministries of Economic Development and Municipal Affairs and Housing, work with the Region to amend the Provincial PSEZ Map to identify designations along the QEW corridor between Niagara Falls and Fort Erie in conjunction with the Gateway Economic Zone in Niagara Region.

2) Ontario Marine Waterways Strategy to support the Marine sector (Minister of Transportation)

Currently, Niagara Region is not realizing the full economic potential of the Seaway because these assets have not been available. In addition, the manufacturing and service opportunities related to the maritime sector have largely been overlooked by the Province.

Niagara (and Ontario) is at competitive disadvantage as other Provinces with a Strategy are securing multi-billion dollar ship building and repair contracts from the Federal government while Ontario is disregarded albeit the Region has equal (if not more) capacity for the big contracts.

While other provinces have a Marine Strategy that has resulted in subsidies for this industry, there is no provincial strategy to support development in the maritime sector.

ASK: Requesting the Province develop an Ontario Marine Waterways Strategy that will generate more economic growth while ensuring Ontario remains competitive among its provincials and international counterparts

3) Critical Shortage of Registered Early Childhood Educators and previously forecasted funding reductions to municipalities for licensed childcare (Minister of Education)

The Region is currently experiencing a significant shortage of RECEs, which will only worsen without further planning to meet the demand that will be created through any expansion efforts. Competition with schools, and increasing requirements for formal education deters RECEs from accepting below living wage employment provided in licensed centres.

Without additional operational dollars to support service operators, Niagara Region anticipates that any expansion plans will not be feasible. The Province has indicated previously that there will be a reduction of funding to municipalities, which

will further strain the system but in the face of voiced commitments to expand the system funding will need to be enhanced rather than reduced.

ASK: Requesting the Ministry provide consistent, indexed funding to support competitive and appropriate wages to enable RECE recruitment and retention across the entire early years and child care system in Ontario

ASK: Maintain operational funding at 2021 levels at minimum to ensure the sustainability of service operators

ASK: Request that the Province include municipal partners (and specifically Niagara given the critical need for affordable childcare to support it post pandemic economic recovery) in its planning for the negotiations with the federal government regarding the proposed national childcare program and associated funding

4) Operational Funding for Bridge Housing Project (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing)

With the support of Provincial COVID Social Services Relief Funding, the Region dedicated funds to the capital costs of a Bridge Housing Project and a second supportive housing facility. In order to ensure the success of these initiatives, operating funding is required to sustain it.

ASK: Further to last year's meeting with the Minister, Niagara is requesting operational funds to support the Region's Bridge Housing Project and new supportive housing facility.

5) Niagara Long-term Care Redevelopment Projects – Update (Minister of Long-Term Care)

The long-term redevelopment projects of Linhaven and Gilmore Lodge are meeting the changing needs of residents in long-term care by balancing resident safety while enhancing residents' quality of life. These redevelopment projects are applying the WELL Building Standard™, the premier standard for buildings that support and advance human health and wellness.

ACTION: Extend a thank you for the capital investment received from the Province for these redevelopment projects

ACTION: Provide an update on the progress, milestones and future timelines of these projects

6) Modernization of emergency services dispatch (Solicitor General)

Emergency services in Niagara currently operate on a fragmented voice radio system that includes a provincial analogue system for EMS (in the process of being updated to a new digital platform – PSRN), a local digital systems used by Niagara police and half of the 12 local fire services and the other half (6) of our local fire services operating on an aging analogue system – what this means is that EMS, police, and fire are currently unable to easily communicate with each other which is not optimal for interoperability of emergency services.

ASK: The 6 remaining fire services operating on analogue will need to transition to the digital system; however it requires a capital investment of new hardware (radios) that is unaffordable to these municipalities. Requesting capital investments for this digital technology to ensure the seamless operation of all emergency service voice radio systems.

ASK: The complete integration of the Provincial Safety Radio Network (PSRN) used by EMS with the local digital voice radio system used by local police and fire agencies. Niagara is prepared to be an early adopter of this model to assist the Province in broader implementation.

The following list of suggested advocacy issues for discussion with Party Leaders include:

1. Expansion of Broadband Infrastructure and Capacity
2. Increasingly the supply of Affordable Housing
3. GO Train Service Expansion
4. Infrastructure funding support for the South Niagara Falls Wastewater Treatment Plant
5. Connective Transportation Initiatives – North-South Escarpment Crossing/East-West Corridor

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The recommendations contained in this report directly support Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities by advancing the following strategic objectives:

Supporting Business and Economic Growth

Objective 1.1: Economic Growth and Development

Objective 1.4 Strategically Target Industry Sectors

Healthy and Vibrant Community

Objective 2.1: Enhance Community Wellbeing

Objective 2.3: Addressing Affordable Housing Needs

Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning

Objective 3.1: Advancing Regional Transit and GO Rail Services

Objective 3.2: Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship

Objective 3.3: Maintain Existing Infrastructure

Objective 3.4: Facilitating the Movement of People and Goods

Sustainable and Engaging Government

Objective 4.1 High Quality, Efficient and Coordinated Core Services

Objective 4.2: Enhanced Communication

Prepared by:

Gina van den Burg
Government & Stakeholder Relations
Specialist
Corporate Strategy and Innovation

Recommended by:

Natalie Early
Director, Corporate Strategy and
Innovation

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Team and reviewed by Daryl Barnhart, Executive Officer to the Regional Chair

NIAGARA'S AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND ACCESS TO UNTREATED WATER FOR IRRIGATION

WHEREAS agriculture plays a crucial role in Niagara's economy, contributing over \$1.4 billion to the Regional GDP;

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has identified agricultural lands in Niagara through the Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan with a vision to protect against their loss and support their viability;

WHEREAS Niagara farms play an important role in ensuring Ontario's food security;

WHEREAS Niagara farms also produce value add products which contribute to increased jobs and tax revenues;

WHEREAS climate change has resulted in more frequent cycles of drought-like conditions;

WHEREAS the Niagara Irrigation Committee, a working group of the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee, has determined growers are willing to invest in a more sustainable system for access to untreated water for irrigation;

WHEREAS agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation is supported by Provincial and Regional policies;

WHEREAS a system that relies on gravity is the most economical way to provide that water;

WHEREAS certain reservoirs and channels that are in the control of the Ontario Power Generation Corp (OPG) have been determined to meet the criteria of a gravity fed system;

WHEREAS the Irrigation Committee has met with the OPG at the staff level and was told there was no interest in entering into an agreement with growers for access to their infrastructure; and

WHEREAS the Agricultural Policy and Action Committee endorsed this initiative at its meeting held on April 23, 2021.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to request the Minister of Energy initiate a meeting with the Senior VP of Renewable Generation & Energy Markets at OPG, Mayor Sendzik, Irrigation Committee Chair Bill Schenck, and Agricultural Policy and Action Committee Chair Albert Witteveen to discuss the role of OPG power generation in developing an agriculture irrigation system for Niagara; and

2. That Regional Council **REQUEST** that staff support be provided to assist the Irrigation Committee in developing a Niagara Region Irrigation Water Utility Board.

WITHDRAWAL OF PROHIBITION ON OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

WHEREAS COVID-19 restrictions have had significant impacts;

WHEREAS many forms of socializing, recreation and sport have been curtailed;

WHEREAS the game of golf, tennis and boating can be enjoyed while maintaining proper social distancing.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Regional Council **REQUESTS** the Province of Ontario withdraw its prohibition on golfing, tennis and boating and any other outdoor recreational activities which can be enjoyed while maintaining proper social distancing; and
2. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to forward a copy of this resolution to the Premier of Ontario, local Niagara MPPs, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Ontario Big City Mayors, and all municipalities in Ontario.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

WHEREAS “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” is an annual international campaign, running from November 25 through December 10, that calls on the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls;

WHEREAS the pandemic has been linked to an alarming increase in rates of violence against women, domestic violence reporting and domestic homicides, also known as the shadow pandemic;

WHEREAS 1 in 3 women worldwide will experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner, and emerging data has shown that all types of violence against women and girls has intensified during the pandemic;

WHEREAS the supply of women’s shelter space has decreased due to public health measures while simultaneously there has been a 30 percent increase in the rates of gender-based violence;

WHEREAS indigenous women and girls, and racialized, minority and vulnerable communities are more likely to be the victims of assault.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Region actively **PARTICIPATE** in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence by flying a campaign flag in the International Plaza from November 25 to December 10, 2021;
2. That staff **BE DIRECTED** to develop a communication strategy to increase awareness of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign; and
3. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to circulate a copy of this motion to the local area municipalities.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

BY-LAW NO. <>

A BY-LAW TO ACCEPT, ASSUME AND DEDICATE PART OF TOWNSHIP LOT 141,
IN THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS AS PART OF REGIONAL ROAD NO. 20
(LUNDY'S LANE)

WHEREAS it is in the interest of Council for The Regional Municipality of Niagara to accept a road widening from 1992334 Ontario Limited;

WHEREAS it is deemed expedient to accept, assume and dedicate the lands hereinafter described as part of the public highway being Regional Road No. 20 (Lundy's Lane).

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Regional Municipality of Niagara enacts as follows:

1. That the following land be and the same is hereby accepted, assumed and dedicated as public highway forming part of the said Regional Road No. 20 (Lundy's Lane):

Part Township Lot 141, former Township of Stamford, now City of Niagara Falls, Regional Municipality of Niagara designated as Part 4 on Reference Plan 59R-16748.

2. That this by-law shall come into force and effect on the day upon which it is passed.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

James Bradley, Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk


Passed: < >



ILLUSTRATION SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF ROAD WIDENING
AT No. 7280 LUNDY'S LANE - REGIONAL ROAD 20
CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS

LEGEND:

 - DENOTES TERANET MAPPING

 - DENOTES SUBJECT PROPERTY

CAUTION:

- This is not a Plan of Survey

DISCLAIMER

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Niagara Region

Internal Use Only

Transportation Services
Surveys & Property Information
IR 21-129 Date: 2021-04-09

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

BY-LAW NO. <>

A BY-LAW TO ACCEPT, ASSUME AND DEDICATE PART OF LOTS 1, 2 & 3,
PLAN 85 AND PART LOT 1, PLAN 207, IN THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS
AS PART OF REGIONAL ROAD NO. 49 (McLEOD ROAD)

WHEREAS it is in the interest of Council for The Regional Municipality of Niagara to accept a road widening from Build Up Real Development Co Inc.;

WHEREAS it is deemed expedient to accept, assume and dedicate the lands hereinafter described as part of the public highway being Regional Road No. 49 (McLeod Road).

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Regional Municipality of Niagara enacts as follows:

1. That the following land be and the same is hereby accepted, assumed and dedicated as public highway forming part of the said Regional Road No. 49 (McLeod Road):

Part Lots 1, 2 and 3, Plan 85 and Part Lot 1, Plan 207, former Township of Stamford, now City of Niagara Falls, Regional Municipality of Niagara designated as Part 1 on Reference Plan 59R-16896.

2. That this by-law shall come into force and effect on the day upon which it is passed.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

James Bradley, Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk


Passed: < >



ILLUSTRATION SHOWING APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF ROAD WIDENING
AT No 6546 McLEOD ROAD - REGIONAL ROAD 49 AT WILSON CRESCENT
CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS

LEGEND:

 - DENOTES TERANET MAPPING

 - DENOTES SUBJECT PROPERTY

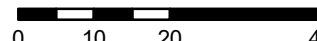
CAUTION:

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SCALE = 1:1,000

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Niagara Region

Internal Use Only

Transportation Services
Surveys & Property Information
IR 21-130 Date: 2021-04-09

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

BY-LAW NO. <>

A BY-LAW TO ACCEPT, ASSUME AND DEDICATE BLOCK 8,
PLAN 59M-487, IN THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS
AS PART OF REGIONAL ROAD NO. 98 (MONTROSE ROAD)

WHEREAS it is in the interest of Council for The Regional Municipality of Niagara to accept a road widening from Frank Grottola and Nancy Grottola;

WHEREAS it is deemed expedient to accept, assume and dedicate the lands hereinafter described as part of the public highway being Regional Road No. 98 (Montrose Road).

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Regional Municipality of Niagara enacts as follows:

1. That the following land be and the same is hereby accepted, assumed and dedicated as public highway forming part of the said Regional Road No. 98 (Montrose Road):

Block 8, Plan 59M-487, City of Niagara Falls, Regional Municipality of Niagara

2. That this by-law shall come into force and effect on the day upon which it is passed.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

James Bradley, Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

Passed: < >

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

BY-LAW NO. <>

A BY-LAW TO PERMIT LOWE'S STORE LOCATED AT
7959 MCLEOD ROAD IN THE CITY OF NIAGARA
FALLS TO BE OPEN ON CERTAIN HOLIDAYS FOR
THE MAINTENANCE OR DEVELOPMENT OF
TOURISM

WHEREAS subsection 4(1) of the *Retail Business Holidays Act*, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter R.30 (the "Act"), as amended, authorizes Regional Council to pass by-laws to permit retail business establishments in the Regional Municipality to be open on holidays for the maintenance or development of tourism;

WHEREAS Lowe's store, located at 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls has applied for such exemptions;

WHEREAS the application from Lowe's store is in compliance with the Act and regulations, including the Tourism Criteria as set out in Ontario Regulation 711/91;

WHEREAS Regional Council has considered the written material submitted in support of the application; and

WHEREAS a public meeting was held, and the appropriate notice as required under the Act was given.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Regional Municipality of Niagara enacts as follows:

1. That the business known locally as Lowe's store located at 7959 McLeod Road in the City of Niagara Falls is permitted to be open on all statutory holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.;

2. That this by-law shall come into force and take effect, subject to an appeal under subsection 4(3) of the *Retail Business Holidays Act*, on the thirty-first day after it is passed.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

James Bradley, Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

Passed: <date>

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

BY-LAW NO. < >

A BY-LAW TO ADOPT, RATIFY AND CONFIRM THE ACTIONS OF
REGIONAL COUNCIL AT ITS MEETING
HELD MAY 20, 2021

WHEREAS subsection 5 (3) of the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, Ch. 25, as amended, provides that, except if otherwise authorized, the powers of Regional Council shall be exercised by by-law; and,

WHEREAS it is deemed desirable and expedient that the actions of Regional Council as herein set forth be adopted, ratified and confirmed by by-law.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Regional Municipality of Niagara enacts as follows:

1. That the actions of the Regional Council at its meeting held May 20, 2021, including all resolutions or motions approved, are hereby adopted, ratified and confirmed as if they were expressly embodied in this by-law.
2. That the above-mentioned actions shall not include:
 - a) Any actions required by law to be taken by resolution; or
 - b) Any actions for which prior Local Planning Appeal Tribunal approval is required, until such approval is obtained.
3. That the Chair and proper officials of The Regional Municipality of Niagara are hereby authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to the above-mentioned actions and to obtain approvals where required.
4. That unless otherwise provided, the Chair and Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and the Clerk to affix the seal of The Regional Municipality of Niagara to all documents necessary to give effect to the above-mentioned actions.
5. That this by-law shall come into force and effect on the day upon which it is passed.

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

James Bradley, Regional Chair

Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk

Passed: < >