
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 13-2020

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

Date: October 14, 2020

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Rino Mostacci, Commissioner, Planning and Development

Commissioner Comments, Planning and Development Services

Community and Long Range Planning

Current Status of Operations

The Province has released the “*Land Needs Assessment*” which is a methodology that is used to calculate the lands needs as part of the Regional Official Plan. Between now and the end of the year the Provincial population and employment numbers to 2051 will be applied to the Land Needs Assessment to determine land requirements, population distribution and employment distribution, infill and greenfield density targets across the region. As this work is carried out, there will be meetings with all of the Local Area Municipality Planning Departments to refine the allocations.

Online consultation for the Regional Official Plan has been initiated. To date there has been consultation with Local Area Municipality Planning Departments, meetings with stakeholders and Public Information Centres with an emphasis on the environmental policy options that were presented to Planning and Economic Development Committee/Council. Regional Planning Staff also delivered a presentation to the NPCA on the ROP/environmental work plan. This round of consultation will continue through to November followed by a report to Planning and Economic Development Committee/Council, which will provide detail of the consultation.

Policy Planning staff have had discussion with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to provide an update on the progress of the Regional Official Plan. In

discussion MMAH has indicated that the process to date has been comprehensive and that there are no areas of concern.

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.

For the months of July and August the following development volumes were received by the department:

July:

- Planning Applications (includes zoning, subdivision, site plan etc.) - **27**
- Engineering Applications (includes servicing reviews, site plan, etc.) - **18**
- Private Septic Applications - **44**
- Pre-consultations – **36**

August:

- Planning Applications (includes zoning, subdivision, site plan etc.) - **42**
- Engineering Applications (includes servicing reviews, site plan, etc.) - **14**
- Private Septic Applications - **44**
- Pre-consultations – **46**

Application volumes in August have continued the steady increase experienced since April. Volumes returned to and, in some cases, exceeded “normal” pre-pandemic levels. In fact, overall application volumes in August represent a 30% increase in comparison with the same period in 2019 with planning applications experiencing a 133% significant increase (42 versus 18). This resurgence supported by the ability of local area municipalities and the NEC to clear up backlogs that resulted from the early stages of the pandemic. Also, virtual public meetings have become the norm, which allows planning applications to continue advancing through the approval process.

Infrastructure Planning & Development Engineering

Current Status of Operations

Development Engineering

We are continuing to respond to development applications with engineering comments, legal agreements for road works, and processing ECA's under the Transfer of Review program for new sanitary and storm sewers. Additionally, we are continuing with Stormwater Management (SWM) review, Transportation review/meetings, and W&WW review/meetings as it relates to development applications and inquiries. We are working on the SWM Guidelines Project with WOOD Consulting Engineers and assessing schedule/deliverables to adapt to current situation.

Infrastructure Planning

We are developing the RFP for the 2021 Water & Wastewater (W&WW) Master Servicing Plan (MSP) Update project in consultation with W&WW team. The target release imminent to ensure work can be completed by end of 2021 as essential input for the Development Charges Background Study and By-law update.

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

Development Industry Liaison

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

Private Sewage/Septic Systems Program

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

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Planning and Development Services