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**Subject:** Growth Management Survey Results

**Report to:** Planning and Economic Development Committee

**Report date:** Wednesday, December 9, 2020

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## Recommendations

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

## Key Facts

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

## Financial Considerations

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

## Analysis

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

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

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

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

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

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

The survey results demonstrate the following:

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

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

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

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

### **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

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

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

### **Other Pertinent Reports**

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

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**Appendices**

Appendix 1            Growth Management Survey Results

Appendix 2            Comments Received on the Growth Management Survey