
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 28-2021

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

Date: April 14, 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

On previous occasions, Staff have reported on a “Joint Report”, which will cover all Official Plan matters.

That Report is proceeding at the next PEDC meeting, on May 12. Previously, we advised that this would proceed in April; however, this was moved to the following meeting to allow additional time for public review of Natural Heritage System (NHS) materials.

This is the department’s largest project and is proceeding in a work-from-home setting with regular group meetings. Without a modern Official Plan, the Region is at a competitive disadvantage to other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area.

In addition to the aforementioned NHS materials, the Joint Report will provide information on the Regions’ land needs assessment (i.e. population and employment forecasts) and other matters. Draft Official Plan policies will be provided for many sections. In the months that follow, the Region will seek feedback on these matters from the public, LAMs, and interests’ groups.

In March and April, Regional staff hosted individual meetings with local Planning Directors and local Councilors. The purpose of those meetings was to provide a preview of key matters that will arise in the Joint Report and to get initial feedback. There will be ongoing opportunities for public feedback on Official Plan matters, particularly since the

May Joint Report material is being provided for information only (except as it relates to the NHS).

A tremendous amount of work has gone in to preparing the Joint Report so that it can be shared and considered for feedback. Other than natural heritage system options, staff will ask for the Joint Report materials be received by Council. No decisions will be sought. This is to allow the information to be circulated for ongoing consultation, followed by further reporting in summer and fall 2021.

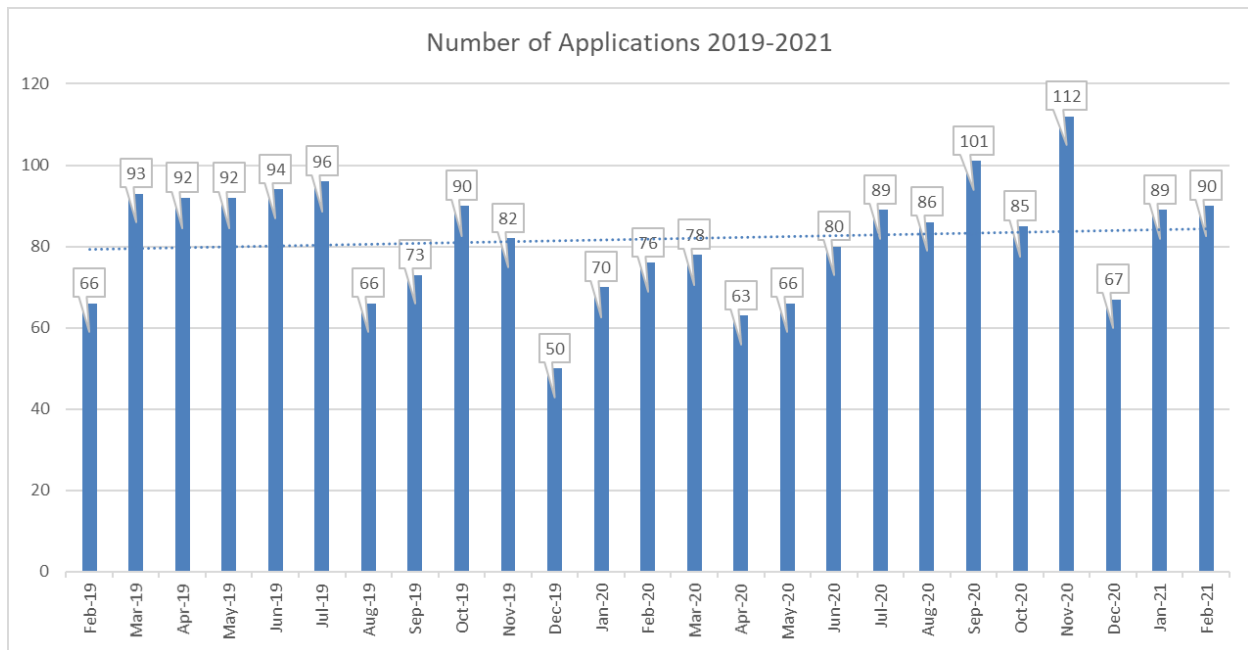
Development Planning & Approval Services

Current Status of Operations

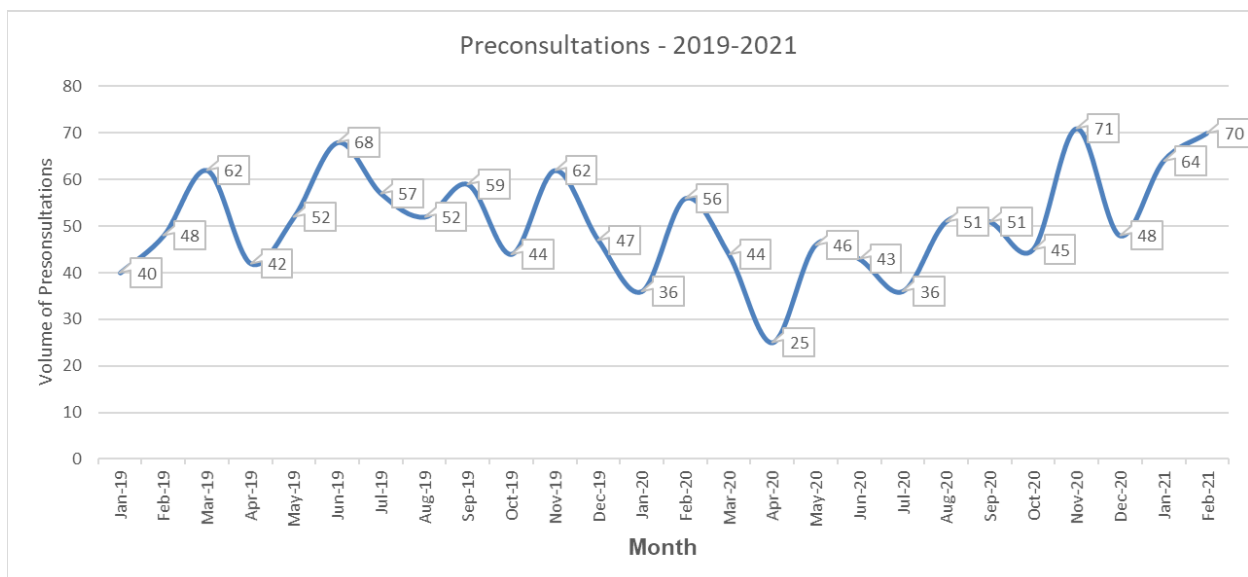
Development Planning & Approval Services continues to adapt to ensure the delivery of core development review functions including: review and comment on all development applications from a Provincial and Regional perspective, coordinating and analyzing internal review/comments from Urban Design, Environmental Planning and Development Engineering for a “one-window” Regional response. The following development volumes were received by the department during February 2021 (March data was not complete at the time of writing this memo):

- 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 (90 excluding pre-consultations) represents an 18.4% increase from the February 2020 (76 applications) and is shown in the graph below.



Pre-consultations experienced a 25% increase from the February 2020 volume (70 development proposals) and is shown in the graph below.



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 assessing schedule/deliverables to adapt to current situation. 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, on April 21 we are planning to have our Notice of Commencement/Public Information Centre #1 virtually on the project website. We will have our first major coordination and consultation meeting with W&WW team and Local Municipalities on April 8. 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 leading 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 application can be approved and the 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, MES, BUP
Acting Commissioner Planning and Development Services