
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.

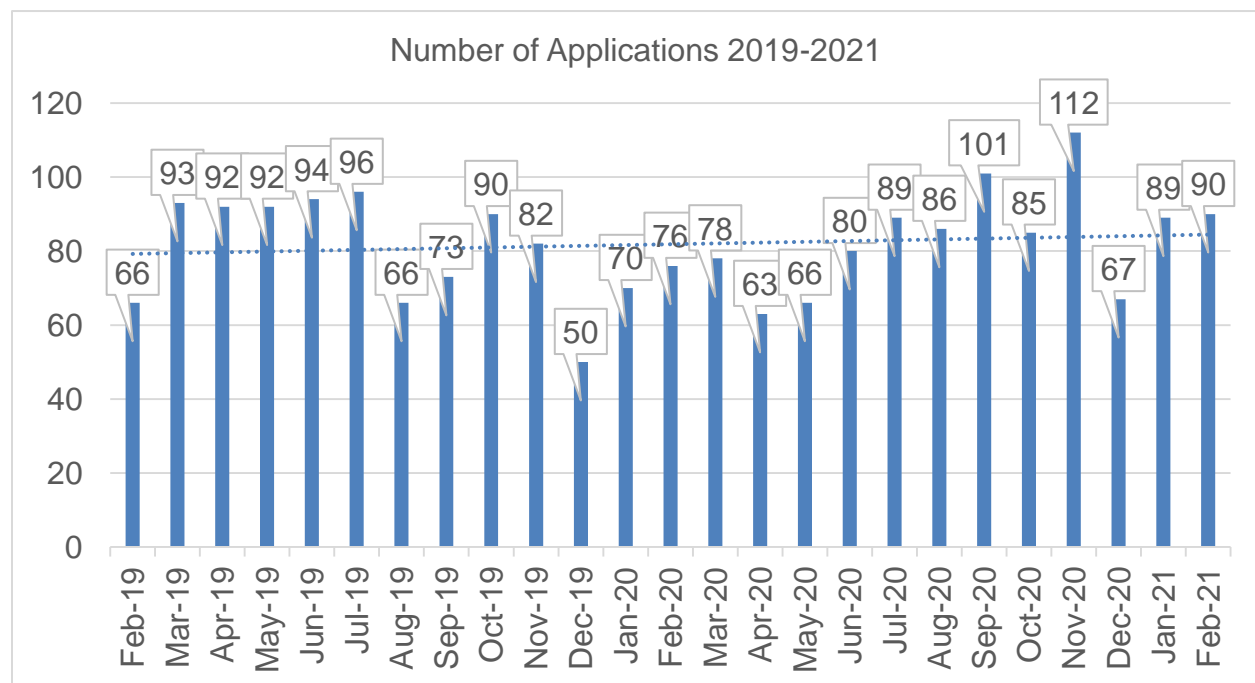
The following development volumes were received by the department during February and March 2021 (2020 data shown in brackets; April data was not complete at the time of writing this memo and will be reported on in June):

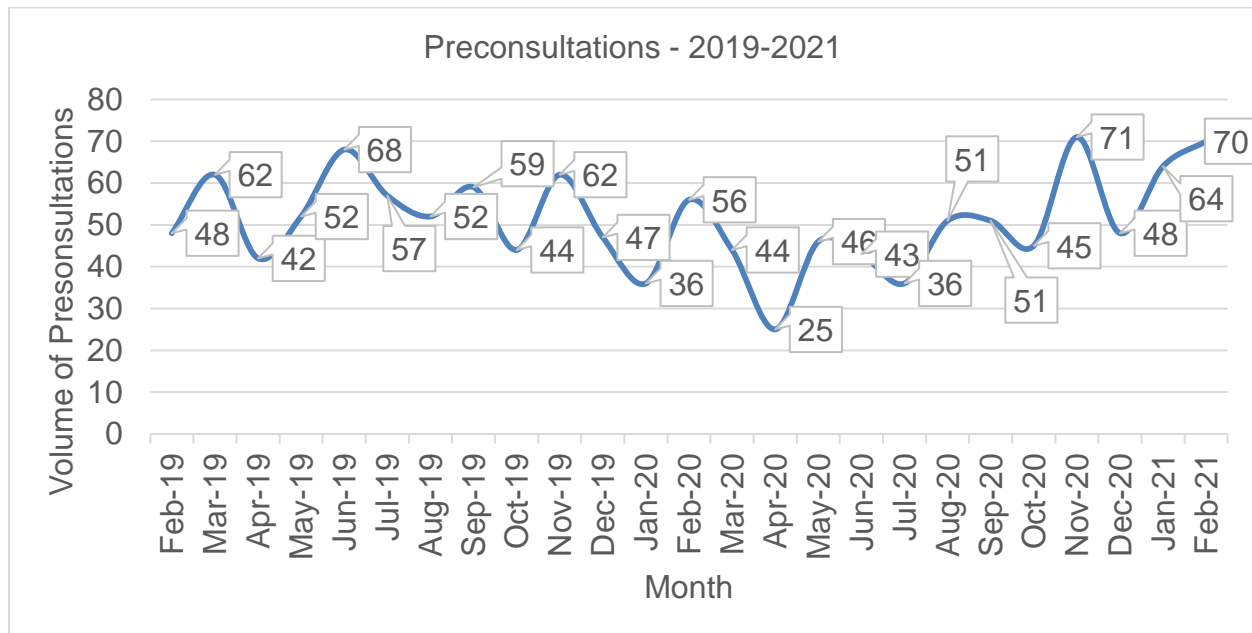
February

- 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:

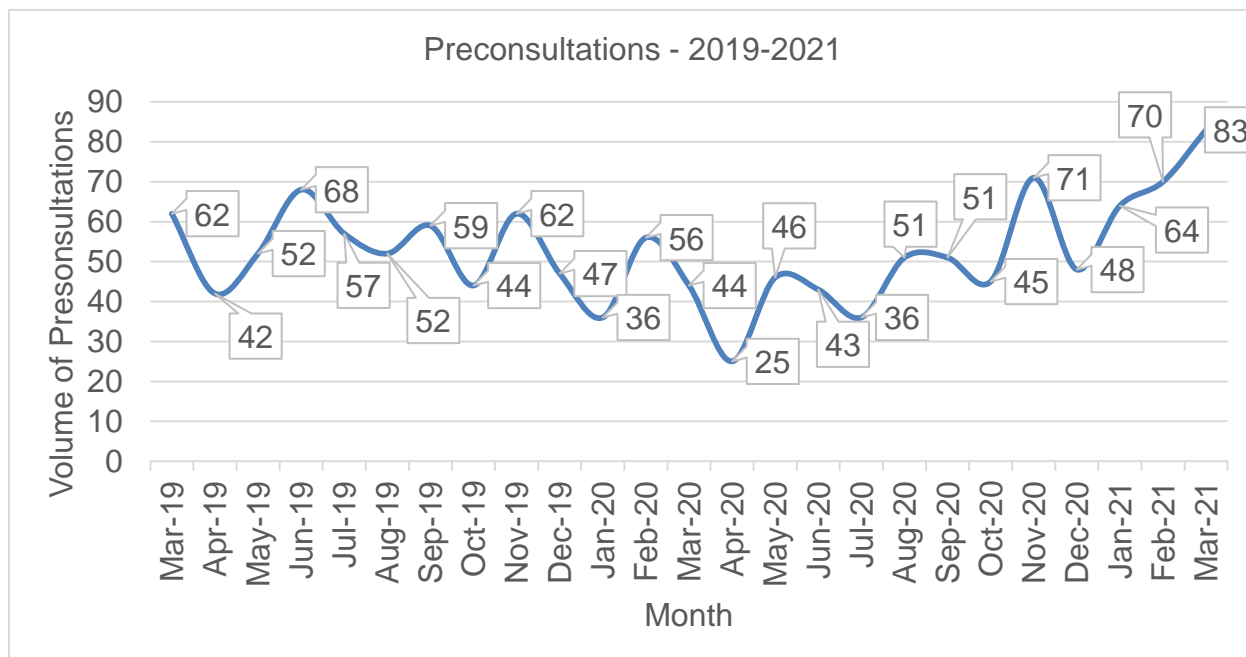
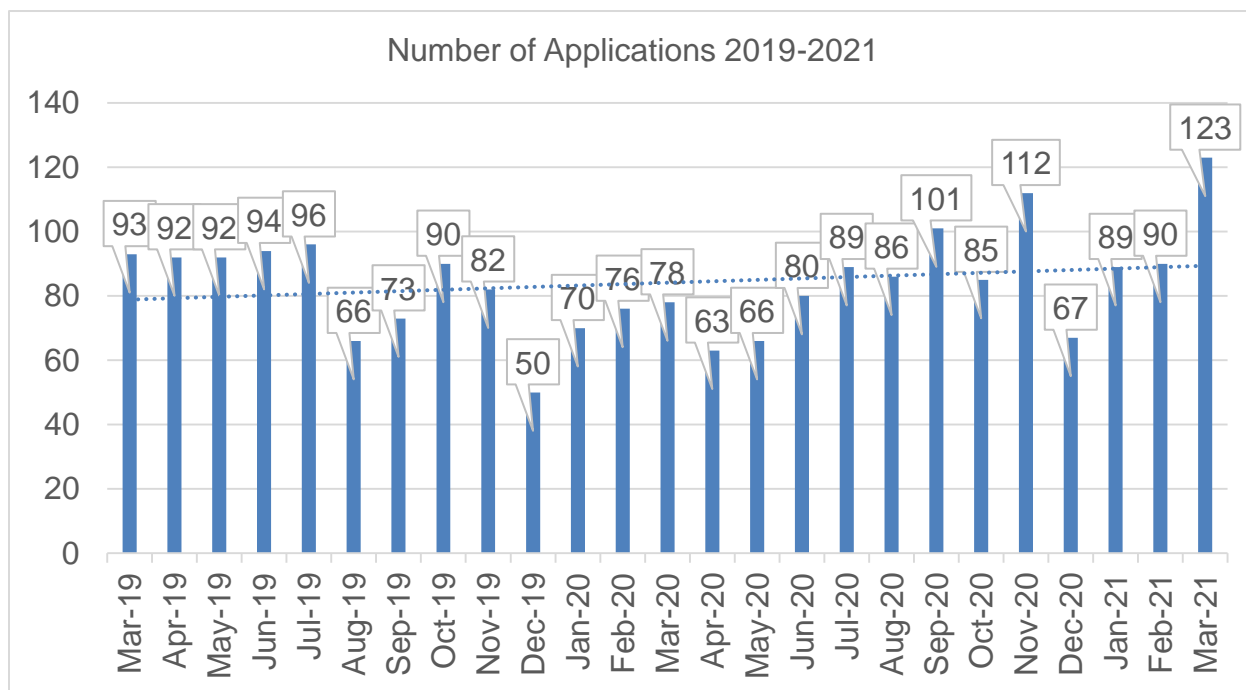
- a) March 2020 – Lockdown imposed mid-March resulted in beginning of volume decline due to pause in pre-consultation meetings
- b) April 2020 – First full month in lockdown resulted in lowest volume of 25 over past two years
- c) May 2020 – Volumes began return to normal levels as local area municipalities 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