

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
<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 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**.