
Subject: Development Applications Monitoring Report - 2020 Year End

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, June 16, 2021

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 24-2021 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and,
2. That a copy of Report PDS 24-2021 **BE CIRCULATED** to Local Area Municipalities, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Niagara Home Builders Association, Niagara Industrial Association, local Chambers of Commerce and School Boards.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to inform Regional Council of 2020 development application activity in Niagara Region.
- Regional Development Planning and Engineering staff reviewed 595 development applications in 2020.
- Regional Development Planning and Engineering staff provided comments for 552 pre-consultation meetings in 2020.
- The Region received \$1,353,810 in review fees for development applications in 2020 (54% increase from 2019 fees).

Financial Considerations

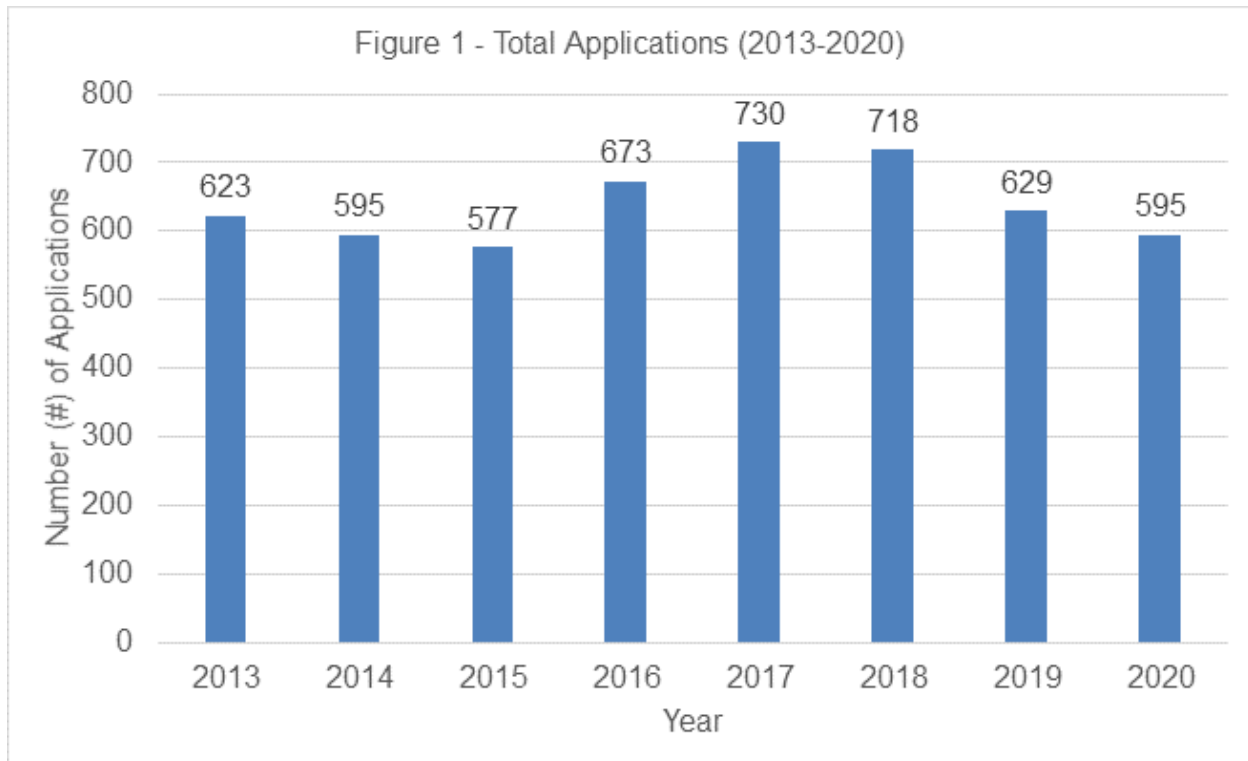
There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Analysis

Development Applications

Regional Development Services staff reviewed 595 development applications in 2020, representing a 5% decrease from 629 applications in 2019. Figure 1 illustrates the number of applications considered by Development Planning and Engineering staff from 2013 to 2020. These development applications are circulated to the Region based on Provincial legislation requirements and the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Region and Local Area Municipalities for planning in Niagara. The decrease appears to be attributed to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and

adapting to the online format during the initial lockdown. The first full month after the lockdown (April 2020) there was a drop in applications, followed by a steady recovery in application volumes during subsequent months.

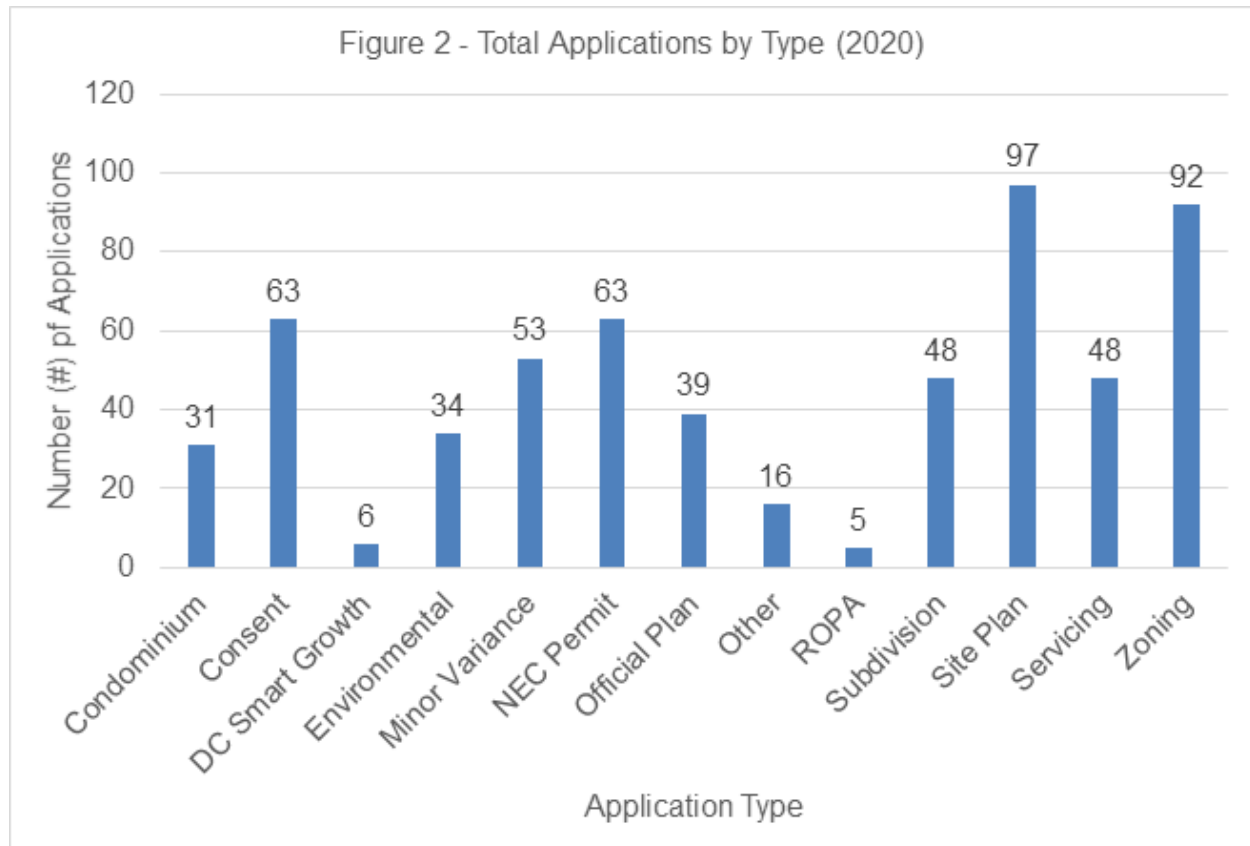


Staff expects the volume of development applications to be higher in 2021, as the trends in the fourth quarter of 2020 showed an uptake in applications by 17% compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. A look at Q1 2021 application volumes (202) reinforces this continuing trend as a 36% increase in volumes was experienced in comparison with 2020 (148). In addition, April 2021 volumes (76) was 55% above 2020 levels (49).

Additionally, the Planning and Development Services has the ability to waive its review function on certain types of minor development applications in local municipalities. This represents an effort to increase efficiency in the planning review function in Niagara and is a result of changes to the MOU.

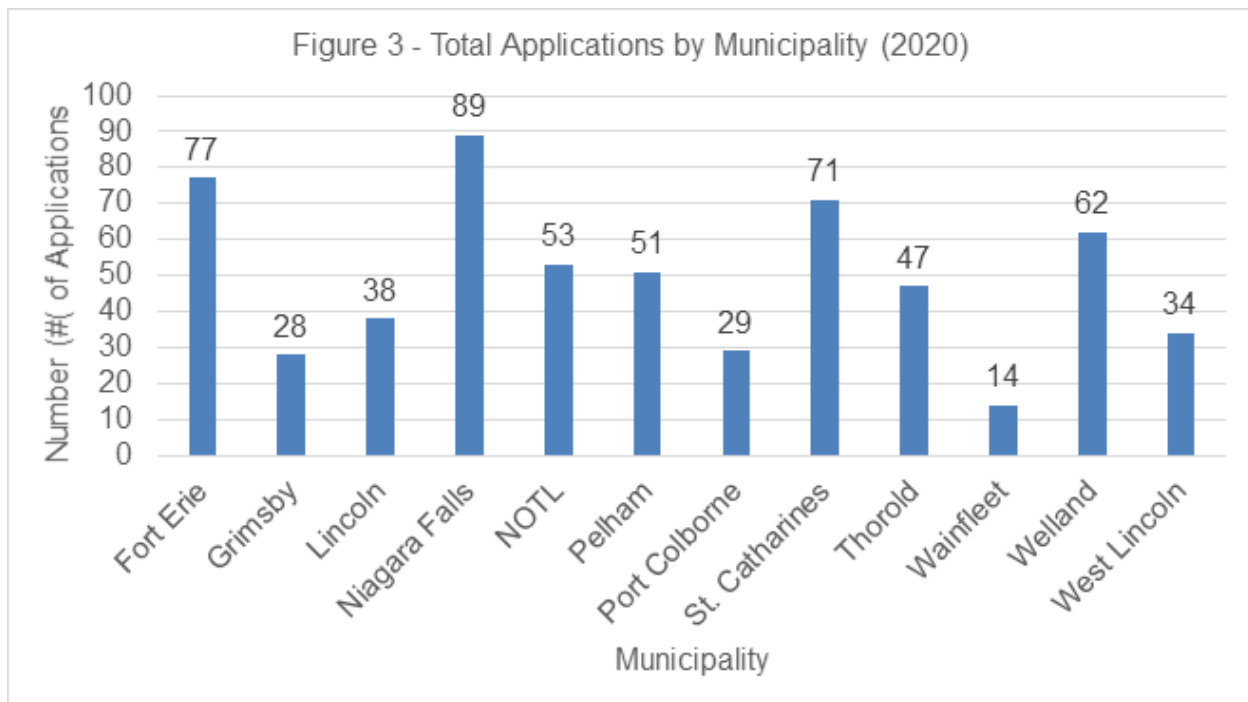
Figure 2 below provides the breakdown of development applications, by type, reviewed by Regional staff in 2020. Some complex development proposals often require multiple planning approvals. As an example, subdivision and condominium applications may also need amendments to the municipal Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law to facilitate the development. The categories with the most applications considered by Regional

staff were Site Plans (97), closely followed by Zoning By-law Amendments (92), and Consent (i.e. severances) and Niagara Escarpment Commission Development Permits (both 63).



The distribution of applications circulated to the Region by local municipalities during 2020 is shown on Figure 3. This information indicates relatively high levels of development activity in several communities. The municipalities with the most applications circulated to the Region were Niagara Falls (89), Fort Erie (77), St. Catharines (71), and Welland (62). As stated previously, application volumes were lower in 2020 compared to recent years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the third and fourth quarters of 2020 saw a significant increase in volume.

Regional staff were also involved in reviewing several complex development applications in 2020, as highlighted in Appendix 1 of this report. This often requires review that is more extensive and can affect a broad range of issues (i.e. environmental impacts, traffic impacts and urban design considerations, etc.).



Pre-consultation Meetings

Development Services staff attend regular pre-consultation meeting sessions two days each month in each local municipality. These meetings are to determine complete application submission requirements and assist in the processing of applications. The COVID-19 pandemic required planning staff at the Region and the local municipalities to pivot to an online meeting format starting in April 2020. Developers, property owners, local staff and agencies were able to participate in these virtual pre-consultation meetings.

In 2020, Regional staff attended 552 pre-consultation meetings, which is an 11% decrease from the 2019 total (see Figure 4). This is likely a result of a pause in pre-consultations at the beginning of the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, while municipalities adopted to the online format. Pre-consultation volumes increased in the third and fourth quarters of 2020 and, generally, the number of pre-consultation meetings is an indicator of future development applications. Accordingly, staff expect development application numbers to increase in 2021.

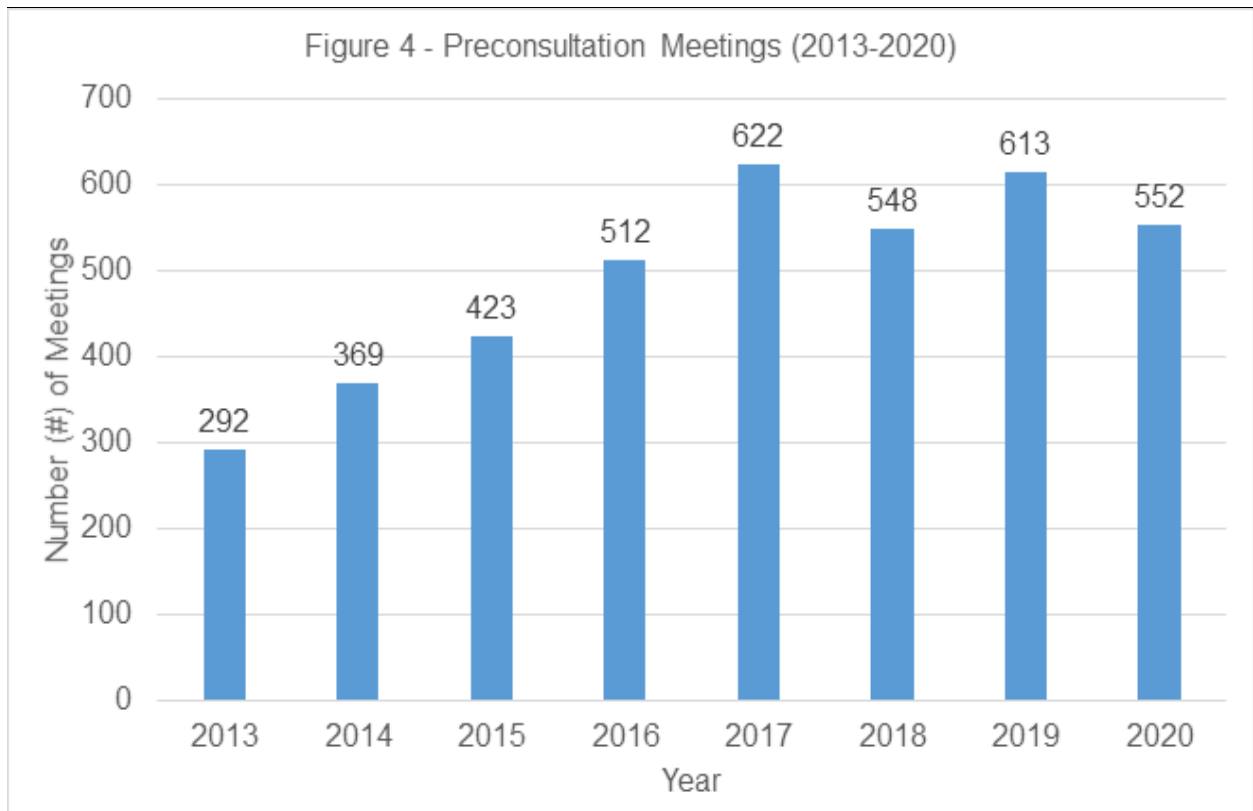
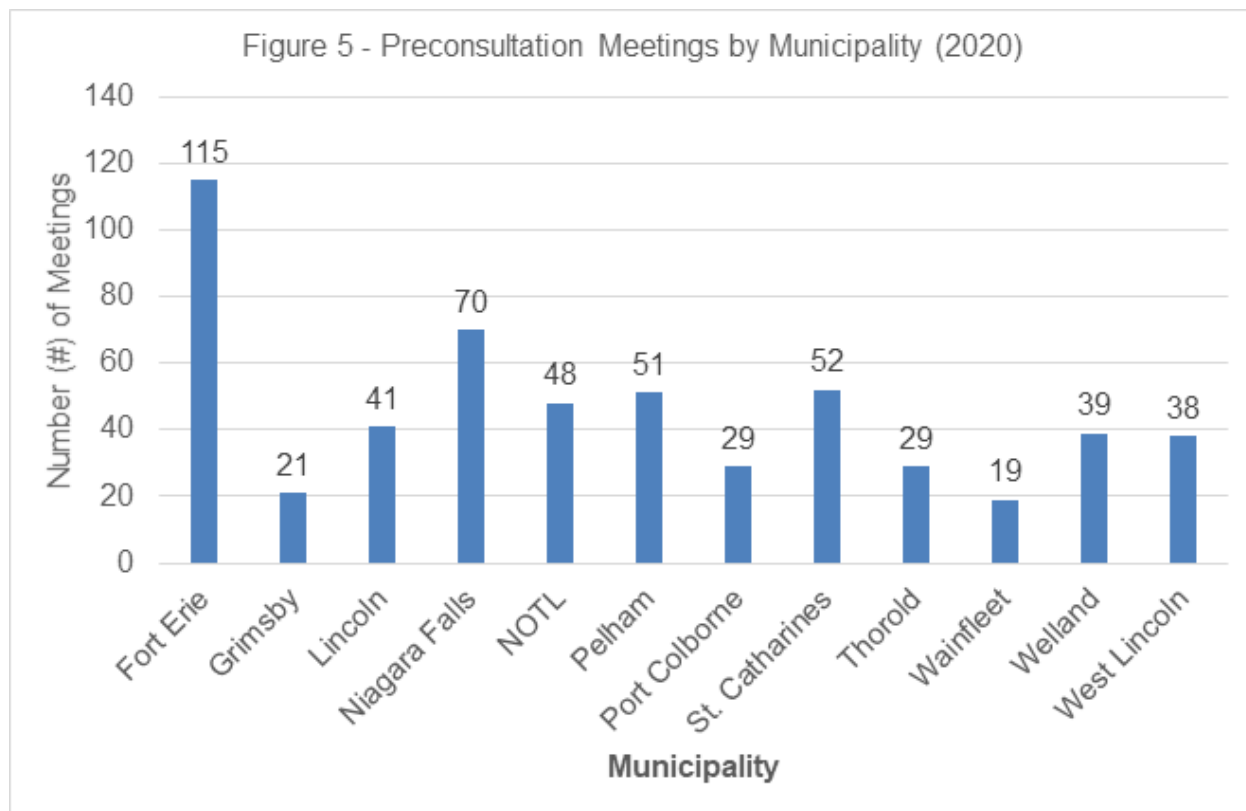


Figure 5 illustrates the number of pre-consultation meetings by municipality in 2020 that involved Regional staff. The municipalities with the highest levels of pre-consultation activity were Fort Erie (115) and Niagara Falls (70), followed by St. Catharines (52), Pelham (51), and Niagara-on-the-Lake (48).

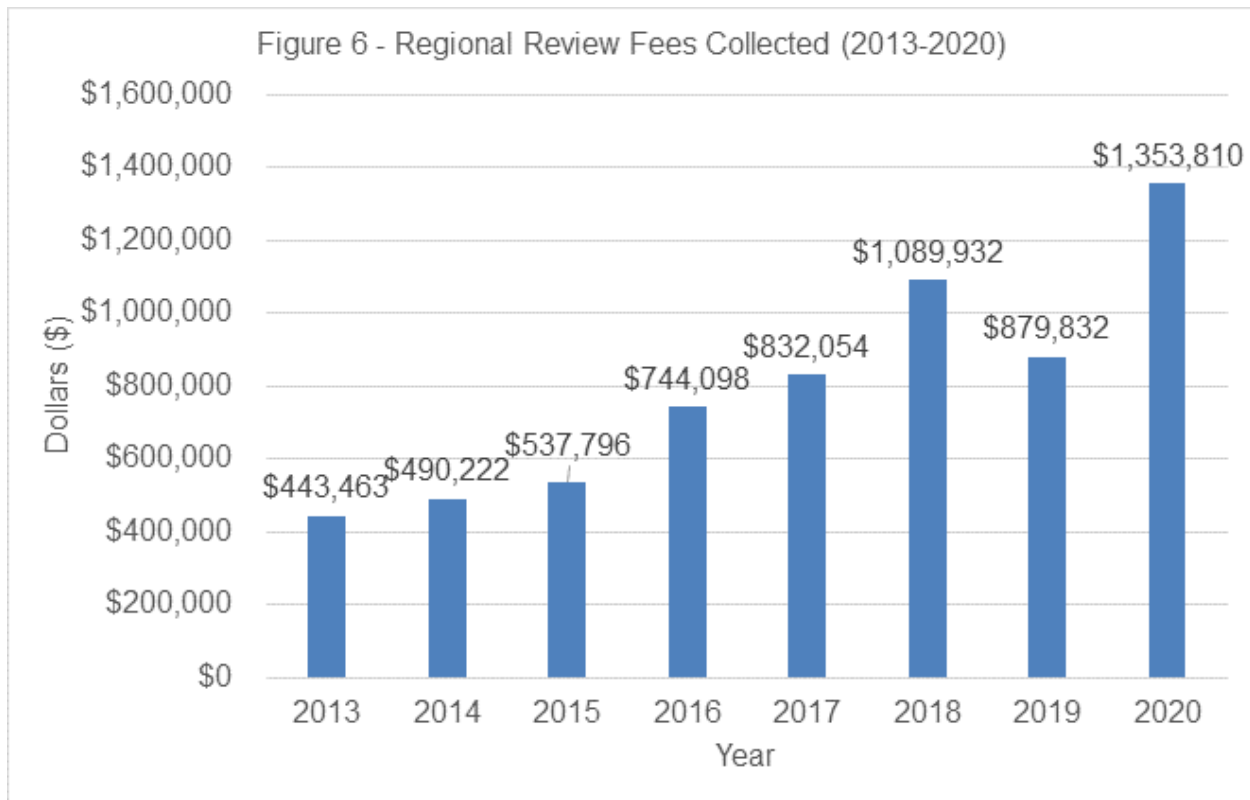


Regional Review Fees

Regional review fees are intended to offset Regional costs for the development review service. Figure 6 summarizes the fees collected between 2013 and 2020 for the Regional review of development applications. The 2020 total of \$1,353,810 represents an increase of 54% from 2019. This relates to an increase in the number of complex applications received (i.e. Regional Official Plan Amendments, Official Plan Amendments and Draft Plans of Subdivision/Condominium), which generally have higher review fees. As we expect the total volume and complexity of development applications to increase from 2020 to 2021, development review fees are also expected to increase.

The Region received a Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) application in March 2021 for an expansion to the Port Colborne Quarry and anticipate potentially receiving two additional ROPA applications in 2021 for a proposed new quarry and an expansion of an existing quarry. These applications are the most complex “development” applications, which are very time intensive to process with many technical studies that often require peer reviews to assist staff in areas in which the department does not have in-house expertise. The application fees approved by Regional Council reflect the

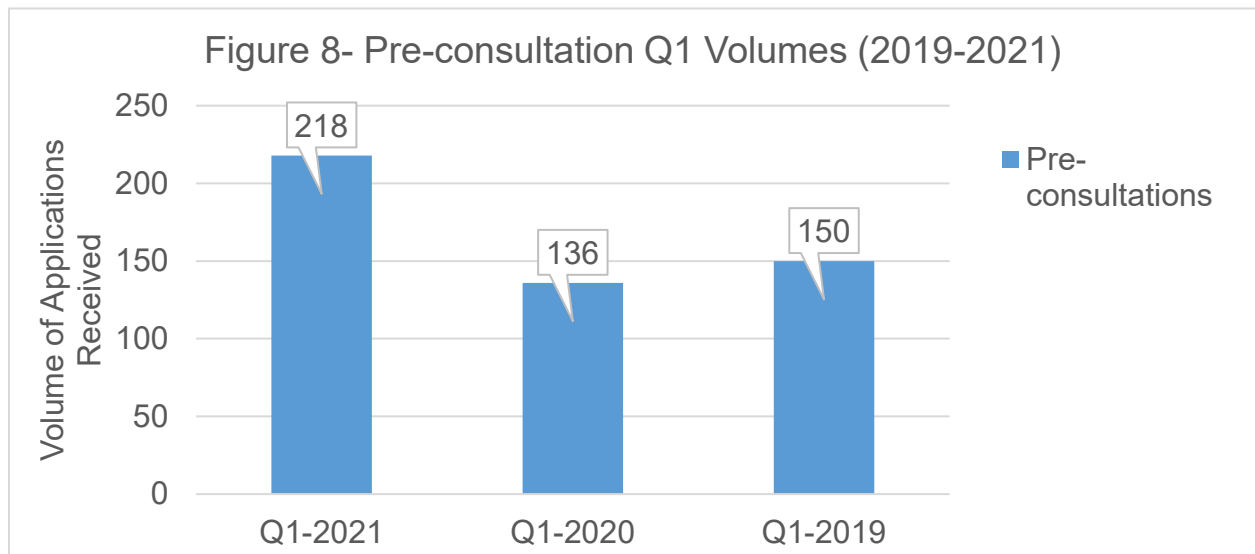
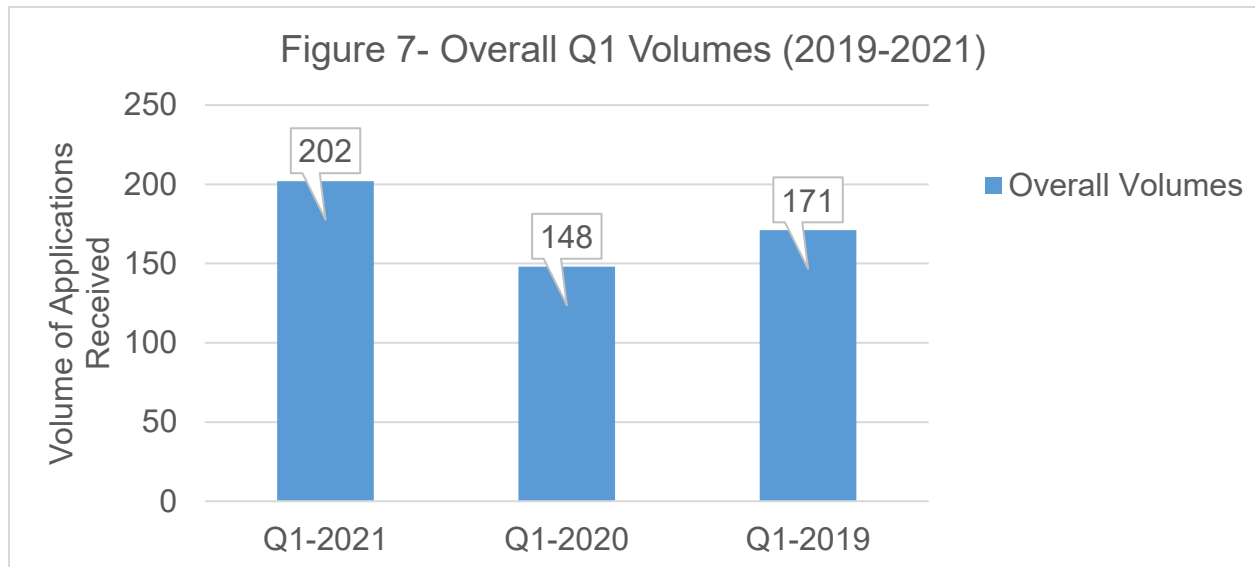
complexity and staff resources involved in reviewing quarry applications. As a best practice the Region, with participation of the affected local area municipality and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, has implemented a Joint Agency Review Team (JART) to share resources including a single peer reviewer for each technical study in order to maximize efficiencies.



2021 Outlook

As outlined earlier in this report, Staff anticipate an increase in application volumes in 2021 based on the first quarter metrics. Regional Development Services staff reviewed 202 development applications in Q1 of 2021, which is an increase of 36% compared to 148 applications in Q1 of 2020. Figure 7 illustrates the number of applications considered by Development Planning and Engineering staff in Q1 of 2019, 2020 and 2021. This increase is likely attributed to applications that were paused during the first and second wave of the pandemic, ongoing public health requirements/restrictions on the construction industry that allows for additional time to plan for development, and historically low interest rates.

As previously indicated, Staff expects the volume of development applications to continue to be high throughout 2021. The trends in pre-consultation volumes for the first quarter of 2021 show an increase in pre-consultation meetings by 60% compared to the Q1 of 2020 and 45% compared to Q1 of 2019. This is illustrated in Figure 8.



The increased level of development in recent years represents a “*new normal*” for the Region. Regional Development Planning has adjusted its approach and practices to be solution oriented and proactive. By providing ongoing support to our local Municipalities, the Region strives to realize complete community planning outcomes that encourage the best possible development throughout the Region.

Urban Design’s contribution to Development Applications

In addition to assisting in the review of development applications, the Urban Design and Landscape Architecture team also undertook several programs in 2020 that support the goals of achieving well designed built environments. These programs celebrated design excellence, provided synergies to development applications and improved development outcomes. The urban design team also assists local planning teams by providing urban design peer review to significant developments within those communities. To support local planning and urban design goals staff prepare design alternatives and contribute to the discussions with developers in support of local planning partners. In particular, the urban design team has collaborated in design charrettes to improve the design outcomes of development applications. The Urban Design review function within Development Planning is a key component to elevate the quality of development in Niagara and achieve industry leading results, reflecting positively on the Niagara brand.

Alternatives Reviewed

None.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report provides information on development application activity that contributes to strong economic prosperity throughout the communities within the Niagara Region. This relates to Council's Strategic Priority of Supporting Business and Economic Growth, as well as Sustainable and Engaging Government through ensuring high quality, efficient and coordinated core services.

Other Pertinent Reports

- [PDS 4-2020](#): Development Applications Monitoring Report - 2019 Year End

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Appendix 1: Current Major Development Applications

Planning and Development Services Staff participated in the review of a number of major development applications in 2020. A summary of some of these major development applications are provided in the table below.

Glossary of Acronyms:

“LOPA” means Local Official Plan Amendment.

“LPAT” means Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

“PEDC” means the Region’s Planning and Economic Development Committee.

“RFP” means Request for Proposal.

“ROPA” means Regional Official Plan Amendment.

“SPA” means Site Plan Approval.

“ZBA” means Zoning By-law Amendment.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
Fort Erie	7 Central Avenue <u>Type:</u> SPA.	Compass Land Developments Ltd.	Application is for a 12-storey mixed use building with 217 residential units and 657m ² commercial space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LOPA and ZBA approved.• Site plan is in progress.
Grimsby	Fifth Wheel redevelopment <u>Type:</u> LOPA, ZBA, and Draft Plan of Subdivision.	Losani Homes.	Application is for 6 mixed use buildings with a total of 1,240 residential units and 46,000 ft ² of employment space; 36 townhouse units; 19,500 ft ² of commercial space; and 2.25 hectares of parkland and open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications were approved by the Town on December 7, 2020.• No appeals received - decision final.
Grimsby	West Lincoln Memorial Hospital	Hamilton Health Sciences.	Application relates to the comprehensive redevelopment of the existing hospital.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional comments were provided for Phase 1 of Site Plan.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
	<u>Type:</u> SPA.			
Grimsby	141-149 Main Street East <u>Type:</u> LOPA and ZBA.	Losani Homes.	Application relates to the redevelopment of the Cole's property for a 6-7 storey mixed use building, including commercial space on the ground floor and 215 residential dwelling units with a total of 254 parking spaces (225 underground spaces and 29 surface spaces).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional comments were provided for the initial application submission (February 2021).
Grimsby	Century Condos 6 Doran & 21-23 Main Street <u>Type:</u> LOPA and ZBA.	DeSantis Homes.	Application is for a 4-storey mixed use building with 92 residential units with 2 commercial units totaling of 463m ² on the first floor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appealed for non-decision (settlement pending). A comprehensive public Urban Design Charrette with Town, Region and Applicant was completed earlier this year. Site plan is in progress.
Grimsby	133 Main Street east <u>Type:</u> LOPA and ZBA.	Burgess Heritage Group Inc.	<p>Application is for a new 5-storey mixed use commercial and residential apartment building consisting of 148 residential units and 305 m² of ground-floor commercial area.</p> <p>The property designated under the Part IV Section 29 of the <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application was appealed for non-decision. LPAT hearing to be scheduled shortly.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
Grimsby	4 Windward Drive (Casablanca Inn) <u>Type:</u> LOPA and ZBA.	TRG Casablanca Inc.	<p>Application is for a 19-storey apartment building with 212 residential units, ground floor retail / restaurant commercial space, and a new hotel with conference and banquet facilities.</p> <p>Additionally, the existing hotel will be demolished and a new 12-storey apartment building with 208 residential units and ground floor retail commercial space will be constructed.</p> <p>The site will feature approximately 1,500 m² outdoor park area and will have a total of 909 parking spaces contained within 3 levels of underground parking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statutory Public Meeting has been held. • Regional comments were provided in March 2021 on the application's resubmission with respect to design/wind. • Application is still in progress at this time.
Lincoln	3221 North Service Road <u>Type:</u> ZBA.	LJM Developments. A.J. Clarke & Associates Ltd.	<p>Currently, the application is proposing 2 residential towers (25 and 28 storeys, respectively) that share a common 6-storey podium for a total of 510 residential units.</p> <p>The site is located outside of and abuts the Prudhommes Secondary Plan Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Region, Town, and Applicant are in the process of refining site and building design elements. • Regional comments on the 2nd submission were provided April 23, 2021. • A public urban design charrette is planned to be scheduled for spring / summer 2021.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
Lincoln	Prudhommes Landing Site Redevelopment <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision	FBH Ontario Inc.	Application is for approximately 1,173 residential units (consisting of a variety of single-detached, semi-detached, townhouse and apartment units), 3.92 hectares of open space, and 3.88 hectares of natural area within the Prudhommes Secondary Plan Area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town has approved the Draft Plan of Subdivision.
Niagara Falls	New South Niagara Hospital <u>Type:</u> SPA.	Niagara Health System.	Application relates to the Campus Planning for new Niagara South Hospital site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campus Plan was finalized in September 2019. Project was incorporated into Ministry of Health Functional Program Submission. Stage 1 of the Site Plan has been completed for issuance of RFP.
Niagara Falls	Riverfront Residential Community <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision.	GR (CAN) Investments Ltd.	Application is for an estimated total of 1,045 residential units (consisting of single-detached, semi-detached, townhouse and apartment units), 1.86 hectares of parkland and open space, and 17 hectares of natural area. Regional conditions of approval include servicing, natural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Plan and ZBA approved by City; ZBA appealed to LPAT. Developer proceeding to address conditions of draft approval for first phase.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
			requirements, site remediation, etc.	
Niagara Falls	Splendour Residential Development <u>Type:</u> LOPA, ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision.	Cobas Developments Inc.	Application is for 104 single-detached dwellings, 16 semi-detached dwellings, 148 townhouses, and 1 block for a future school(s) site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City has approved the Draft Plan of Subdivision.
Niagara-on-the-Lake	Settler's Landing (Phase 2) <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision	Settler's Landing Estates Ltd.	Application is for 53 single-detached dwellings on a 4.1 hectare site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional comments were provided on December 23, 2020. Application has been Draft Approved by the Town and applicant is currently clearing conditions of Draft Approval.
Pelham	Forest Park Subdivision <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision	Sterling Realty (Niagara) Inc. Upper Canada Consultants.	Application is for the creation 77 lots for single-detached dwellings, 8 blocks for 86 street townhouse dwellings, 1 block for 280 multi-family residential units, 1 block for a park, 1 block for a stormwater management pond, 1 block for a relocated watercourse, and associated roadways on a 17.03 hectare property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application is in progress. Regional comments were provided for the 1st application submission on December 22, 2020.
Pelham	North Side of Summersides Boulevard and 1409,	Mountainview Homes (Niagara) Ltd.	Application is for the creation of 13 lots for single-detached dwellings, 7 blocks for 30 rear lane townhouse units, 10 blocks for 44 street townhouse units, 5 blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional comments were provided on October 1, 2020.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
	1411, 1413, 1415 and 1419 Station Street <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision	Upper Canada Consultants.	for 40 back-to-back townhouse units, and 1 block for a pedestrian walkway on a 4.46 hectare property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town hosted a statutory Public Meeting on November 23, 2020. Application is in progress.
Port Colborne	118 West Street <u>Type:</u> SPA.	Raimondo + Associates Architects Inc. Rankin Construction Inc. Southport Condos Inc.	Application is for a 9-storey mixed use building consisting of 74 residential units and 421m ² of ground floor commercial space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application is in progress. Regional comments were provided on November 10, 2020 for the 2nd application submission.
St. Catharines	Linhaven Long Term Care Facility Redevelopment (403 Ontario Street) <u>Type:</u> LOPA, ZBA, Draft Plan of Subdivision, and SPA.	Regional Municipality of Niagara.	<p>Application is to construct a 5-storey 256-bed long term care facility to replace the existing Linhaven Long Term Care facility.</p> <p>The existing Alzheimer Society of Niagara building will remain on-site. The development will be located adjacent to the existing Hospice Niagara building along Ontario Street and will include two interior courtyards that feature outdoor dining areas, landscaping, fitness stations, and shade structures. Site parking will be located at the rear of the site.</p> <p>The building will offer interior cafes, an auditorium, gym, library,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site plan is in progress. Regional comments were provided on the April 27, 2021 relating to the 4th application submission. There are no outstanding Regional requirements at this time.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
			and chapel, and dining areas on every floor.	
Thorold	Canada Summer Games Complex <u>Type:</u> SPA.	Games Operations, 2021 Canada Summer Games.	Application relates to the Canada Summer Games Building and Playing Fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site plan has been approved. • Construction is in progress.
Thorold	Artisan Ridge Phase 2 <u>Type:</u> Draft Plan of Subdivision	LANDx Developments.	Application consists of 123 single-detached and 40 townhouses and is a phase of the larger Artisan Ridge Subdivision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Plan of Subdivision has been approved by City.
Thorold	Legacy Port Robinson Estates (Phases 2 & 3) <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision.	Armstrong Planning. Legacy Communities. JTG Holdings Ltd. Maple Hill Developments Inc.	Application is for a total of 733 dwelling units that consists of 347 townhouse units, 80 semi-detached units, and 306 single-detached units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Plan of Subdivision and Zoning By-law Amendment Approved
Welland	Hunter's Pointe Golf Course Redevelopment <u>Type:</u> LOPA, ZBA, and Draft Plan of Subdivision.	2599587 Ontario Ltd.	Application is for 735 single-detached dwellings, 250 townhouses, 170 residential units and 60,000 ft ² of commercial space within proposed mixed use buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application was approved by the City and has been appealed. • LPAT hearing to be scheduled shortly.
Welland	John Deere – Dain West Subdivision	Empire Homes.	Application is for a mixed use subdivision that allows for a maximum development of 870 residential dwelling units (consisting of detached, semi-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional comments were sent April 26, 2021.

Municipality	Application	Developer	Details	Status
	<u>Type:</u> ROPA, LOPA, ZBA, and Draft Plan of Subdivision.		detached and townhouse dwellings), a 4 hectare mixed-use employment block, a stormwater management pond, an elementary school, parks and open space on approximately 74 hectares of land.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application was approved by City Council May 4, 2021. • LOPA 30 and ROPA 19 to be considered by PEDC on June 16, 2021.
West Lincoln	Northwest Corner of South Grimsby Road 5 and Regional Road 20 (South of CP Rail Line) <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision	Marz Homes (Smithville West) Inc. IBI Group.	Application is for approximately 224 residential units and a recreational trail on a 10.29 hectare property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application is in progress. • Regional comments were provided December 4, 2020 on the 1st submission of the application.
West Lincoln	Station Meadows West <u>Type:</u> ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision	P. Budd Developments	Application is for 68 lots of single-detached dwellings, 28 blocks for 163 freehold townhouse dwelling units, 3 blocks for 164 condominium townhouse dwelling units, 1 block for park space, and a multi-use trail block on a 14.84 hectare property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application is in progress. • Regional comments were provided for the 3rd ZBA and Draft Plan of Subdivision submission on May 4, 2021.