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**Subject:** Consultation Response and Further Policy Development

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

**Report date:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021

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## **Recommendations**

1. That Report PDS 36-2021 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That a copy of Report PDS 36-2021 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

## **Key Facts**

- This report outlines responses to consultation received on draft Niagara Official Plan (NOP) policies included in the Joint Consolidated Draft Report PDS 17-2021, being Growth Management, Infrastructure, Transportation, District and Secondary Planning and Urban Design.
- It highlights future consultation to take place regarding Natural Environment System and Agricultural mapping changes.
- A timeline for completion and adoption of the NOP is provided.
- A draft Introduction Chapter (Chapter 1) attached as Appendix 4.2 establishes the context and framework for the NOP.
- The Pillar Statements and Directives outlined in the draft Introduction (Chapter 1) were developed from extensive public input and Council consultation.

## **Financial Considerations**

Council approved the resources to complete the new NOP over a five year period as part of the 2017 Budget Process, predominantly funded through Development Charges.

## **Analysis**

This report has four parts:

1. Responding to consultation received from the release of the May PDS 17-2021 Report;
2. Consultation moving forward;

3. Niagara Official Plan timelines; and,
4. Further policy development being Chapter 1, Introduction.

### **1. Responding to Consultation Received**

In the Joint Consolidated May Report (PDS 17-2021), detailed information was provided on the purpose of an Official Plan, the importance of a new Official Plan and the Pillar Statements and Directives. Also included for further consultation were draft policies pertaining to Growth Management and supporting draft policies on Infrastructure, Transportation, District and Secondary Planning and Urban Design for the Niagara Official Plan.

Consultation input received on the Joint Consolidated May Report has been through two venues. Input received at Public Information Centres provided by questions and some comments, and the often more detailed written submissions on the draft policies contained in the Report.

#### **June 2021 Public Information Centres**

As mentioned in Report PDS 32-2021- Update on Niagara Official Plan-Further Draft Policy Development, five virtual Public Information Centres were held in June, with each session focusing on policy topics from a different chapter of the NOP. There were 238 attendees, and 204 questions and comments submitted. The majority of questions were answered live by staff during the webinar, however, answers to questions left unanswered at the webinars due to lack of time or available information, have been posted to the NOP website. Further, recordings of the PIC webinars are also posted on the Region's website.

Report PDS 32-2021 provided an update of the key themes/questions from the PICS for reference. For the Committee's reference, the updates are attached as Appendix 1.

#### **Received Submissions**

As mentioned in Report PDS 32-2021, there were 73 written submissions received on the draft growth management policies, settlement area boundary requests and employment conversions. Key themes from this consultation were outlined in Report PDS 32-2021 and are made available for the Committee's convenience as Appendix 2. [Comments](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/commenting-may-july.aspx) (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/commenting-may-july.aspx>) received on the Joint Consolidated May Report can be found by clicking the link above.

In addition, there were numerous written submissions received relative to land needs, allocations and settlement (urban) area boundary expansions. These were outlined in Report PDS 33-2021.

The NOP website also has a [Settlement Area Boundary Review \(SABR\) mapping and commenting tool](https://navigator.niagararegion.ca/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb1c2537526b44a4a275372e76e10939)

(<https://navigator.niagararegion.ca/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb1c2537526b44a4a275372e76e10939>). This can be found by clicking the link above. The last day for providing comments through the SABR mapping and commenting tool is October 1, 2021.

Staff will be providing recommendations on these requests in late Fall.

All the written submissions received on the Joint Consolidated May Report and referred to in Reports PDS 32-2021 and PDS 33-2021 are summarized in Appendices 3.1 to 3.5. These Appendices also outline action to be taken. There are numerous revisions being made and contemplated to all policy sections of the Plan based on public input. Where staff are considering making policy changes the text is coloured blue and where staff have decided to make policy changes the text is bolded.

It is important to note that the revisions are in response to the draft policies presented in the Joint Consolidated May Report. Further revisions will be made as the consultation and policy development moves forward.

After the Committee considers this Report, it will be placed on the NOP website.

## **2. CONSULTATION MOVING FORWARD**

As the Committee is aware, staff have had ongoing consultation with the public local municipal planning staff, local Councils, stakeholder groups and Indigenous groups. This consultation will continue.

Based on feedback from Planning and Economic Development Committee, staff will be advising individual property owners where Regional mapping changes may have an impact on the development potential of their property. In this regard staff will contact property owners directly relative to the following:

- Where lands will be changed from Rural to Agricultural unless the properties are already designated or zoned Rural; and,

- Where a new natural heritage feature, being a feature not currently mapped in the Regional Official Plan, is identified on a property in the urban area and is not a feature directly identified by the Province such as a provincially significant wetland.

As previously mentioned to the Committee, staff have been discussing technical boundary adjustments to the urban area boundaries with local planning staff. These refinements are being done in accordance with criteria and will not result in significant impacts on development potential. As a result, Staff will not be consulting individual property owners on these technical refinements.

This Fall, staff will update the Committee on all the draft policy sections that have undergone revisions as a result of consultation, highlighting any key changes in policy direction. This would include the Introduction, growth management policies and supporting draft policies on Infrastructure, Transportation, District and Secondary Planning and Urban Design, as well as Source Water Protection, Excess Solis, Petroleum and Mineral Resources and Monitoring.

Once a complete draft consolidated Official Plan is provided to Planning Committee at the end of the year there will be the normal continued public consultation with stakeholder groups and the public. Public consultation will be via three open houses and the formal public meeting required under the Planning Act.

### **3. NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN TIMELINES MOVING FORWARD**

The chart below outlines the general timeline for the NOP. Staff intend to have a draft Consolidated Official Plan for consultation for the end of the year. The statutory public meeting date identified in March is in association with 90 review period of the Province. Open Houses will be scheduled prior to the public meeting.



## 4. FURTHER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

### Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Introduction, being Chapter 1 establishes the planning context in Niagara, the Plan's legislative basis, process for planning in a two tiered system and the Niagara Official Plan structure and frame work. The Introduction also contains Pillar Statements setting the Vision for Niagara and direction for the manner in which Niagara will grow. These were developed after substantial consultation with the public and Council. The Executive Overview for this Chapter is attached as Appendix 4 and the draft Introduction is attached as Appendix 5. The Draft Introduction will be provided for consultation in the same manner as previous policy sets.

### Alternatives Reviewed

There are no alternatives to this report. This report is for information purposes providing an update on consultation and action being taken on certain draft policy sections, consultation moving forward, Official Plan timelines, and a draft Introduction Chapter for consultation.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

The Niagara Official Plan will support the following Strategic Priority Objectives:

### **Objective 1.1: Economic Growth and Development**

- Enhance integration with local municipalities' economic development and planning departments to provide supports and improve interactions with businesses to expedite and navigate development processes.
- Forward thinking approach to economic development in Niagara through long term strategic planning and leveraging partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

### **Objective 1.4: Strategically Target Industry Sectors**

- Define Niagara's role in tourism including areas such as sport, eco, agricultural and culture tourism.

### **Objective 2.3: Addressing Affordable Housing Needs**

- Retain, protect and increase the supply of affordable housing stock to provide a broad range of housing to meet the needs of the community.

### **Objective 3.2: Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship**

- A holistic and flexible approach to environmental stewardship and consideration of the natural environment, such as in infrastructure, planning and development, aligned with a renewed Official Plan
- Drive environmental protection and addressing climate change such as through increasing waste diversion rates and reducing our carbon footprint

### **Objective 3.3: Maintain Existing Infrastructure**

- Sound asset management planning to ensure sustainable investments in the infrastructure needed to support existing residents and businesses, as well as future growth in Niagara.

## Other Pertinent Reports

- Joint Consolidated May Report [PDS 17-2021](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx)  
(<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx>)
- PDS 32-2021 Update on Niagara Official Plan - Further Draft Policy Development
- PDS 33-2021 Niagara Official Plan: Land Needs Assessment and Settlement Area Boundary Review Update

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## Appendices

- Appendix 1 June 2021 Public Information Centre Key Themes
- Appendix 2 Themes Emerging from Feedback on Joint Consolidated May Report
- Appendix 3.1 Chapter 2: Growing Region
- Appendix 3.2 Chapter 3: Sustainable Region
- Appendix 3.3 Chapter 4: Competitive Region
- Appendix 3.4 Chapter 5: Connected Region

Appendix 3.5 Chapter 6: Vibrant Region

Appendix 4.1 Executive Overview

Appendix 4.2 Chapter 1 – Introduction (Draft)