

Chapter 6: Vibrant Region

Below is a summary of written comments received on [PDS 17-2021](#) between May 2021 and July 15, 2021, related specifically to District and Secondary Plans, Urban Design, and the Archaeological Management Plan (AMP).

Where text is bolded under 'Regional response', revisions will be occurring to draft policy. Where the 'Regional response' box is highlighted in blue, revisions will be considered.

Comments received verbally through municipal meetings and Public Information Centres (PIC) are not summarized below. Video recordings, presentations, as well as Regional responses to comments not addressed at the June PICs can be found at the Region's website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx>)

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region's website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>)

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.2	Brock District Plan: Secondary Plan already exists. Is it necessary to add additional policy?	It is Staff's position to keep policy direction in the plan. Staff will consider modifications to refer to the Council-endorsed District Plan.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3	An alternative to Secondary Plans is the block planning process, which puts it in the landowner's hands and expense. This resolves servicing issues as well. Staff	Thank you for your suggestion, staff will review and consider.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				recommends that this be included as an option.	
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3.10	This policy needs to be clarified. The language "and is not yet in effect" is the issue. If the Secondary Plan is not in effect, why would development applications be processed?	This language was included to provide flexibility.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3.9	Secondary Plans will incorporate the City's Urban Design Guidelines. The Region's Urban Design Guidance and Guidelines will be considered where appropriate. Incorporating two sets of guidelines leads to duplication and confusion. Consider including a clause stating the municipalities UDG will take precedence if the municipality has their own or capacity to create them or the Region's UDG are only applicable in absence of local UDG.	Staff have revised this policy to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.4	The City will consider policies where necessary that are in	Noted - will be considered through conformity review. There is flexibility in the "should" for SP policies. Shall for SGAs.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				adherence to the requirements of Provincial policy.	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.4.2 6.1.4.3	This can be considered but should not be required. Municipalities already have zoning and official plan provisions in these areas for a reason. Why would they require additional Secondary Planning? Who will be paying for the secondary plans?	Shall for 6.1.4.2 - for SGAs, Should for all others. Local municipalities have the ability to fund secondary plans through their development charges.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	In consideration of the robust requirements for technical studies, the Town encourages the Region to continue or reinstate its funding program to support the preparation of Secondary Plans, whether performed by in-house staff or by a consultant.	Local municipalities have the ability to fund secondary plans through their development charges.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	The document indicates that 'Secondary Plans are tool for implementing District Plans'. Please clarify, where the Region undertakes a District Plan, if a Secondary Plan is also required, and if so, what agency will be	Secondary plans are an amendment to the local official plan. They should be prepared by the local municipality. Where a secondary plan is following a district plan, they should be following the vision and objectives of the district plan.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				responsible for the preparation of the Secondary Plan.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	With the Region taking on this new role of approving Secondary Plans Terms of Reference, the Town has concerns regarding the Region's capacity to process such reviews in a timely manner	The Guide is meant to assist locals with the preparation of TOR, similar to the work plans that development planning is preparing as part of the MOU. This is also referenced in the MOU. The intent is that the Region would review or work with the LAM on the development of the TOR
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Identify provisions for 'urban design direction' when municipalities already have urban design guidelines in place and provide clarification with respect to the need for additional study.	Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Clarify if the Region will undertake Secondary Plans to implement regional planning priorities, or if this responsibility will fall to the local municipality	Local municipalities have the ability to fund secondary plans through their development charges.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3.7	Consider rewording Policy 6.1.3.7 to 'may' rather than 'will', as appropriate for the unique situation. Also, please make provisions for	It is staff's position is to keep language as is. Scoping of the studies would be determined in accordance with policy 6.1.3.3.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				recent studies that have already been undertaken, and that these studies do not need to be repeated.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Staff is requesting clarification with respect to the requirement that all UAB expansions must complete a secondary plan including those those lands that will be brought online through the Land Needs Assessment. The Town has a number of smaller sites that have been advanced to the Region that based on size, may not warrant a full secondary plan process.	Thank you for your comment. Staff will review and consider the potential to use a block planning process.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Staff recommends setting a hectare threshold and/or reviewing each location on a case-by-case basis.	It is staff's position not to have a size threshold. The guidance document may provide assistance in considering thresholds on a case-by-case basis.
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)	PA Circulated Agency		6.1 Brock District Policies	Reference to NEP and not the Greenbelt Plan - confirm the proper policy reference	Staff will consider comment and modify appropriately
Ministry of Municipal Affairs			6.1	Will these be incorporated? Please ensure the MMAH comments	Comment received.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
and Housing (MMAH)			Glendale District Policies	provided on ROPA 17 are reviewed and considered	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.5	The City will consider policies where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial policy.	Comment received.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.5.1 e)	e) most municipalities already have their own UDGs or the capability to create their own. Imposing two sets of UDGs for a Secondary Plan seems to create duplication and confusion. A clause should be included in this section similar to clause 6.2.5.2 b). Consider a clause stating the municipalities UDG will take precedence if the municipality has their own or capacity to create them or the Region's UDG are only applicable in absence of UDGs.	Staff have revised this policy to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2	<p>The evolution of Regional roads and streetscapes will promote a balanced approach to road design, which is known as Complete Streets. This approach ensures that the needs of motorists, transit users, cyclists and pedestrians are considered in the design conversation. Examples of enhancements to Regional roads and streetscapes can include sustainable design features, street trees, traffic calming design measures, street furniture, enhanced lighting, wayfinding and public art.</p> <p>Regional transportation staff have indicated numerous times in the past that there will not be traffic calming on their roads.</p>	Physical barriers alone do not create traffic calming on roads. There are many elements and enhancements contributing to complete streets that contribute to traffic calming. This will be addressed through the Complete Streets Manual.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2	This is an absolutely gross and disturbing position for their engineering staff to take considering engineers are	Comment received.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>responsible for upholding public safety above all else.</p> <p>There is no logical reason why the Region cannot simultaneously improve their roads to provide a more human-scaled design speed whilst also efficiently moving people, and not just 'vehicles'.</p>	
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.1	6.2.1.1 Excellence and innovation shall be promoted in architecture, landscape architecture, site planning, transportation engineering, streetscape design and overall community design to ensure built environments are attractive, walkable, safe, diverse, and functional.	Staff will consider modifications to this policy. Transportation engineering is addressed in section 6.2.2.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.4	6.2.1.4 The promotion of active transportation is to be achieved through the coherent, evidenced based, and collaborative design of streets, building interfaces and public spaces.	Staff are of the position to keep language as is.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2	f) the development of private and rear laneways to enhance pedestrian safety, encourage active transportation, and discourage vehicle-dominant streetscapes	Thank you for your suggestion, these comments will be considered as part of the update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.6 b)	iv. Prioritize and encourage rear laneway neighbourhood design on new development and redevelopment where limited driveway access is desired for safety & transportation reasons and positively calibrated urban design is welcomed and achievable.	Thank you for your suggestion, these comments will be considered as part of the update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.6	f) Innovative municipal zoning standards that enforce human-scaled neighbourhood design principles such as maximum front yard setbacks.	Zoning is a local municipal matter.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2.1	6.2.2.1 Regional road allowances shall be designed, in accordance with the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines, and Complete Streets Design Manual to be walkable by providing sidewalks and walking connections to local	Staff will consider modifications to this policy.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				streets, high quality bicycle facilities, trails, and destinations, where feasible.	
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2.2	considered? This should be a priority.	Staff have revised policy to clarify that alternative road designs will be considered as part of the Complete Streets Program.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2.8	d) give priority to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.	Staff will review and consider suggestion.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.4.1	The suburban neighbourhood models that are routinely approved do not create a sense of place. How can we create unique, authentic, memorable and vibrant places when we only allow cookie-cutter, detached housing to dominate development?	The Model Urban Design Guidelines do not support these types of development as described in your comment. An update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines will encourage the vision set forth in this policy set.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.5.1	c) Streets, building interfaces and public spaces are to be designed to enhance the public realm and promote active transportation by prioritizing the reduction of vehicle dependency through human-scaled architecture, reduced front yard	Thank you for your suggestion. The Model Urban Design Guidelines will provide additional detail.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				setbacks, large separations between pedestrians and road traffic...	
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.5.2	Again, how do you create neighbourhood character and community identity when we allow “sameness” everywhere, where only one income category is able to own property throughout an entire neighbourhood?	The Model Urban Design Guidelines do not support these types of development as described in your comment. An update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines will encourage the vision set forth in this policy set.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.5.2	iv. Function as destinations and not thoroughfares, v. Prioritize calm traffic speeds that improve safety, make the public realm more comfortable, reduce noise, improve business vitality and improve property values.	Staff have revised policy to clarify that alternative road designs will be considered as part of the Complete Streets Program.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2	Based upon the Regional oversight and approval proposed in this section, the Town has significant concern relative to the practicality, the Regions capacity to process such requests/reviews/applications in a timely manner, and the implications on local concerns.	Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2	The Town of Fort Erie will have Town-wide urban design guidelines in place, by the time the NOP is approved. Please consider provisions for existing Urban Design Guidelines, and how this will be dealt with.	Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2	Staff are requesting clarification with respect to the requirement that Urban Design Guidelines are necessary for all municipal public infrastructure projects – be it a street, park, structure or other facility type. The Town is not supportive of this level of oversight and regulation, especially with no knowledge of what the updated and expanded Urban Design Guidelines will include	Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.3.2 b)	The Town is not supportive of preparing and submitting to the Region for approval, terms of reference for urban design guidelines and related studies, or of submitting for review and approval,	Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				urban design guidelines and studies, for every municipal project stated in Policy 6.2.3.2b.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.5.2 b)	In relation to Policy 6.2.5.2 b): Please clarify who the approval party is, as referenced in this section.	Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency	Lincoln	6.3	<p>Town Planning staff are of the opinion that the Archaeological Assessment requirement should include exemptions for minor construction/development in these areas. These could include swimming pools, and structures under a certain size or perhaps buildings that don't require footings but can be built on slabs or without significant excavation.</p> <p>Staff recommend as an alternative to archaeological assessment that a clause be included in the decision and/or building permit which states if archaeological resources are</p>	The following comments will be addressed at the September Area Planners meeting with Regional staff and the consultants for the Archeological Management Plan (AMP). The delegated review process will be rolled out for comment as part of the next key deliverable in the project and the framework will speak to Planning Act applications, screening for archaeological potential and treatment of non-Planning Act applications. The AMP will offer standardized wording for conditions and clauses to be included as part of the local administration process. This will ensure the wording is consistent across the Region.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				discovered during construction, the owner agrees to immediately cease construction and undertake an assessment (see email with more info).	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		6.3	Appendix 16 provides an overview of the proposed AMP. NEC staff support the continued development of the AMP as it is consistent with NEP policy in Part 2.10 which has the objective to conserve archaeological resources. The Appendix suggests that the AMP will be of assistance in reviewing Planning Act applications but we believe that it will also be helpful in the consideration of Niagara Escarpment Plan amendment and Development Permit applications under the Niagara Escarpment	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				Planning and Development Act that the NEC circulates to the Region for comment.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.3	<p>The Town has an Archaeological Master Plan that was prepared by ASI in 2003. Policies from this plan were incorporated into the Town's Official Plan and include Schedule D- Cultural Heritage Archaeological Zone of Potential and D1-Cultural Heritage Archaeological Zone of Sensitivity.</p> <p>These areas identify when the Town can request appropriate Archaeological studies when managing development applications and Staff will ensure that the mapping and policies brought forward by the Region will complement, support and enhance the existing Town policies.</p>	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				The Town will be undertaking an Archaeological Master Plan for the Southend area in late 2021.	
Wood.	Stakeholder		6.3	Looking for information on when the Archaeological Management Plan will be ready.	Staff are looking to have the AMP endorsed by Council in Q4 2021. Staff provided commenter with information hosted on the website.