



NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN

Appendix 5 - PDS 41-2021

Boundary Changes from Technical Adjustments to Urban Settlement Areas

Settlement Area Boundary Review

Niagara Region
December 2021

GROWING REGION



Settlement Area Boundary Review - Technical Adjustments

In preparing the NOP, the Region identified small mapping discrepancies between Regional and Local urban settlement area boundaries, or between developed parcel boundaries. The Region seeks to fix these discrepancies through the NOP, termed Technical Adjustments.

This section outlines the Technical Adjustment Review process, which was conducted in consultation with local municipalities and the Niagara Escarpment Commission (“NEC”).

The intent of the review is to ensure alignment between regional, local and to the best practical extent possible, NEC mapping moving forward. Technical adjustments do not to increase or decrease development potential in a material way.

To guide the Technical Adjustment Review, the Region developed a process and criteria. The criteria is based on three primary principles detailed below.

This information was released for comment as part of PDS 17-2021 in May 2021 as Appendix 18.4. No comments were received on the criteria.

Principles

The following principles guide the technical mapping criteria:

- No new settlement areas are created;
- The overall area of an urban area may be increased or decreased to satisfy the technical criteria as described in this document. An attempt is made to not remove lands with reasonable development potential; and
- Boundaries along the Great Lake shorelines and the Niagara River have not been adjusted since these boundaries follow the shoreline, and may naturally adjust from time to time.

Criteria

As noted, the criteria were released for public comment and shared with local staff in May 2021. No comments were received and the criteria was finalized on this basis.

The Region used the following six criteria to review the technical mapping updates for each settlement area boundary (urban area boundary):

1. Where urban area boundaries marginally exceed or fall short of a parcel boundary, a technical change will be applied by aligning the urban area boundary to the parcel line.

2. Urban area boundaries will be extended in a case where an existing boundary splits a fully serviced developed parcel with limited additional development opportunity. The portion of the parcel outside of the urban area boundary will be incorporated into the urban area, if the size of the area is comparable or lesser in size to the parcel area within the boundary.
3. Where the urban area boundary splits a parcel, and that parcel has a significant amount of land outside of the urban area boundary, the urban area boundary will be drawn to align with the rear parcel line of smaller adjacent lots within the urban area.
4. Where adjacent parcel boundaries are not present to assist in defining the urban area boundary, the limit of existing development or associated planning approval (e.g. local municipal zoning, registered subdivision approval), will be retained as the definitive urban area boundary. If there are no existing developments or associated planning approvals within the area of boundary misalignment, and the Region's existing boundary extends greater than the local boundary, the Region's existing urban area boundary will be retained.
5. Urban area boundaries may be adjusted to reduce the boundary, if the boundary follows the back of predominantly existing developed parcels and the lands that will be removed are likely not to be developed due to environmental constraints or are of a size and orientation/configuration that would not provide any new development opportunity.
6. Where local Official Plan boundaries have been adjusted to add or remove individual parcels along the periphery of the urban area to account for the presence or absence of servicing infrastructure, the local urban area boundary will be used as the definitive boundary, subject to modifications to allow precise alignment with parcel boundaries.

Boundary Adjustment Summary

Regional staff reviewed all urban area boundary data and prepared draft technical adjustment recommendations based on the criteria developed.

Following this, the Region consulted with local municipalities and met with those local municipalities where technical amendments were suggested.

Recommendations were then circulated to Provincial agencies including the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. To date, the Region has had two meetings with the Niagara Escarpment Commission and dialogue is ongoing. The Region will continue working with Provincial agencies to identify and address any issues raised during the Provincial review. Further refinements will be made through the formal Provincial review of the NOP.

Application and Local Conformity

Using the criteria developed, the mapping adjustments have been applied through a GIS-based mapping exercise. All recommended technical adjustments have no significant impact on developable lands and are minor in nature. The resulting urban area boundary layer will be applied in relevant schedules of the NOP when the final draft is presented.

Once finalized, the updated digital urban area boundary mapping layer will be provided to local municipalities for inclusion during the local conformity exercise to ensure that urban area boundaries align with and conform to the Niagara Official Plan.

Detailed Mapping Available Upon Request

As part of this review, the attached Region-wide map has been prepared to identify the general areas where urban settlement boundary adjustments were made. A number is assigned to a general area to indicate it has been examined through the technical review and a change was made.

Detailed mapping is available upon request for specific areas or properties. Requests may be made through the Region (makingourmark@niagararegion.ca). Requests should identify the number on the Region-wide map and provide the address of the specific properties of interest.

Urban Area Boundary Technical Mapping Update Areas

