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**Subject:** Growth Management Program Update for New Official Plan

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

**Report date:** Wednesday, September 11, 2019

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## Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 33-2019 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That Report PDS 33-2019 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

## Key Facts

- This Report provides an update on the status of the Growth Management Program (GMP) for the new Regional Official Plan. No specific approvals are sought at this time.
- The last GMP update was provided to the previous Council through PDS 21-2018.
- In PDS 21-2018, Council was informed of interrelated background studies (Urban Structure, Employment Strategy, and Housing Strategy) to inform the Regional land needs assessment and the local municipal growth allocations.
- Since then, the Province amended the *Planning Act*, released a new *Growth Plan*, and proposes changes to the Provincial Policy Statement. The Region has modified its GMP to reflect this new Provincial direction, but has maintained the same core program of completing the above-noted studies for the new Official Plan.
- The attached report, Growing Region – Summer 2019 Status Report, sets out the work performed to date on these studies.
- Most of the information identified in this Report and the attached Status Report has been shared in meetings with local planning staff and, separately, with local Councils as part of the Region's Official Plan presentations in Spring 2019.
- The Region is hosting four Official Plan open houses in November 2019. Key information in the Status Report will be shared at those open houses.

## **Financial Considerations**

The studies set out in this Report are critical to the development of the new Regional Official Plan. Costs associated with the GMP can be accommodated within the Council approved Regional Official Plan project budget.

## **Analysis**

### Background: Niagara 2041 Growth Strategy

Growth must be proactively planned, strategically positioned and actively managed to create exceptional communities and positive market conditions for a competitive Region.

In 2015, the Niagara 2041 Growth Strategy was endorsed by Regional Council. It outlined the components of the Municipal Comprehensive Review, Transportation Master Plan and Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan – a coordinated response to plan for Niagara’s forecasted growth based on integrated land use planning and infrastructure investments (see PDS 34-2015).

Niagara 2041 provides an urban vision that positions Niagara competitively in the Greater Toronto/Hamilton Area by supporting communities that optimize current and future infrastructure investment. These communities would be efficient and sustainable in terms of compactness, transit supportiveness and energy use.

### Current Growth Management Program

The GMP must implement Provincial policies, including those of the revised *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019* (Growth Plan).

The Growth Plan forecasts that Niagara Region will grow to 610,000 people and 265,000 jobs by 2041. This is an increase of 150,000 people and 74,000 jobs between 2016 (the last Census year) and 2041. The Growth Plan, and Niagara 2041, identify that the majority of this growth will be urban, and in a more compact, dense, and mixed-use form than has historically occurred in Niagara.

The GMP advances the strategic growth vision set out in Niagara 2041; the Region seeks to allocate population and employment growth to areas of market demand, with consideration to the supply of developable land in different areas.

To do so, and to conform to or be consistent with the Growth Plan and other provincial policies, the Region is preparing a series interrelated background studies. These studies will inform the land needs assessment that allocates population and

employment growth to the local municipalities. Details on this work program was outlined in PDS 3-2018, PDS 21-2018, PDS-C 7-2018.

The studies include:

- *Urban Structure*, to illustrate how the Region will focus growth into Strategic Growth Areas that maximize the Region's investments in public transit, infrastructure and community services.
- *Employment Lands Strategy*, to identify and protect the Region's Employment Areas, ensuring a sufficient, marketable supply of industrially designated land to support current and future economic activity.
- *Housing Strategy*, to determine what type of housing is required to meet the needs of Niagara's current and future residents.

The attached Status Report sets out the work performed to date on these studies, each of which remain in draft form. Key highlights of this material will form the basis of information shared at the November Official Plan open houses.

### Consultation & Engagement

The GMP includes significant consultation and co-operation with local municipalities. The background studies identified above will reflect that consultation.

Over the summer of 2019, Regional staff met, individually, with senior planning staff of the local municipalities to outline the status of these studies and to discuss draft population and employment allocations for the land needs assessment.

### Next Steps

Regional staff will continue to work on the growth management program through the balance of 2019 and into 2020. Regional staff intend to bring forward the results of the background studies and the land needs assessment for Council's endorsement.

## **Alternatives Reviewed**

The work being undertaken is required by Provincial policy and is critical to the development of the Region's new Official Plan.

Niagara's growth would be unmanaged if it had no urban structure, employment strategy, housing strategy, and land needs assessment. Additionally, these studies are needed to ensure a co-ordinated approach with the Region's investment in infrastructure, community services, and transit, amongst other things.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

A new Regional Official Plan will assist in implementing Council's Strategic Priority of Innovation, Investment and Entrepreneurship. The three background studies informing and in support of the GMP are critical to the development of the new Regional Official Plan.

## **Other Pertinent Reports**

PDS 34-2015 Niagara 2041: Establishing a Growth Strategy  
PDS 37-2016 Niagara 2041 Growth Strategy: Local Municipal Growth Allocations  
PDS 40-2016 Regional Official Plan Update  
PDS 41-2016 Co-ordinated Policy Review Proposed Revisions  
PDS 41-2017 High Level Official Plan Process Framework  
PDS-C 7-2018 Update on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs Proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment  
PDS 9-2018 Official Plan Consultation Strategy  
PDS 21-2018 MCR Update: New Regional Official Plan and Growth Management Program

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## **Appendices**