

Niagara on-the-Lake Official Plan Background – Timelines and Regional Staff's Points of Engagement (2012 – 2020)

2012: The Town of Niagara on-the-Lake commenced a Community Vision process as a first phase in the OP project to guide the future development of the Town over the next 20 years. The process resulted in the formation of eight (8) strategic pillars and associated goals, which would be implemented through the Town's new Official Plan.

2013 – 2014: Following the development of the community vision, the Town commenced Phase 2 background work on the new Official Plan, including producing a series of issues papers and draft policy development for various introductory sections of the new OP. Regional Planning staff were provided the opportunity to comment on background papers during this phase of the OP project.

March 2015: The Town moved to the third phase of the project with a request for proposal for consulting services for a new Official Plan. Through the procurement process, Planscape was the successful proponent and awarded the contract.

November 2015: The Town circulated first draft of the Official Plan prepared by the consultant to the Region for comment. Regional and Town staff met to discuss high-level comments on the first draft OP.

March 2016: The Town circulated Draft 2 of the Official Plan to the Region for comment. A third draft was circulated to the Region for review and comment in June 2016.

Summer 2016: The Region circulated Draft 3 of the Town's OP to the Province through the One Window Planning Service to obtain comments from the respective ministries on Provincial conformity.

December 23, 2016: The Province provided written comment on Draft 3 of the OP to both the Region and Town, identifying concerns with the general organization of the Official Plan, issues with terminology, and a series of non-conformity matters with Provincial policies.

January 2017: Regional staff consolidated Provincial and Regional comments into a matrix detailing over 215 itemized non-conforming draft policies in the third draft of the local OP. The matrix was provided to the Town for its review and consideration.

January 23, 2019: Niagara Region was circulated Draft 5 of the Town's Official Plan with a request for comment by March 6, 2019. (An interim fourth draft version of the OP was not circulated to the Region for comment.)

February 13, 2019: In an effort to scope the review and meet the requested comment deadline, Regional staff requested the Town provide a "track changes" document for the over 350-page draft OP. Regional Planning also requested comment responses detailing how past Provincial and Regional comments provided in the Draft 3 comment matrix had been incorporated into Draft 5 of the Town's OP and how matters of non-conformity with Provincial and Regional policy had been addressed.

February 2019: The Town hosted an Official Plan Open House and Public Meeting, pursuant to the *Planning Act*.

March 6, 2019: Niagara Region Planning staff provided the Town with preliminary comments on Draft 5. Preliminary comments highlighted a letter in February 2019 from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and

Housing Minister, Steve Clark. The Minister's letter was sent to municipal Heads of Council advising of anticipated changes to the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, along with other provincial legislation and policies. The Minister's letter indicated that the upcoming changes may help to inform local actions and therefore, municipalities may wish to consider an interim "pause" on major planning documents (i.e. Official Plans and Zoning By-laws).

Regional staff re-iterated in both written comments and in-person meetings with Town staff the uncertainty of the changing policy context relative to completion of the Town's new Official Plan. Regional staff highlighted that the Town's OP would need to demonstrate conformity with all in effect Provincial plans and policies and the Region's Official Plan.

Regional Planning staff also discussed timing of the new Niagara Region Official Plan project and opportunities for coordinating these major planning projects to achieve policy conformity.

The Region is currently preparing the new Niagara Official Plan to guide growth and development in Niagara over the long-term and to conform to the suite of new policy documents released by the Province, including the 2014 PPS, the 2019 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the 2017 Greenbelt Plan and the 2017 Niagara Escarpment Plan. Regional staff is also reviewing existing Regional Official Plan policies against the proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement. In light of these recent and on-going policy changes, Regional and Town staff discussed the option and advantages of synchronizing the local and Regional Official Plan projects.

June 4, 2019: Niagara Region circulated Draft 5 of the Town OP to the Province for a One Window Planning Service review and comment.

August 1, 2019: The Town of Niagara on-the-Lake held a Special Council Meeting with an update on the Town's new Official Plan from their consultant, Planscape.

August 15, 2019: The Town held another Special Council Meeting on the new OP (Draft 5). During the meeting, more than 35 changes were made by resolution to this draft of the Official Plan. Town Council adopted the Official Plan with the changes to the document made during the Special Council meeting.

October 22, 2019: Town Council passed By-law No. 5180-19, being a By-law to adopt the new Official Plan under Section 17 of the *Planning Act*.

January 13, 2020: The Region received comments from the Province through the One Window Planning Services on Draft 5 of the Town's Official Plan. Provincial comments outlined a series of issues and concerns with the Plan's alignment and conformity to Provincial policies. Regional staff provided Town staff with an e-mailed copy of the province's comments on January 30, 2020. The Province had not circulated the Town a copy of the comments as they had done with the December 23, 2016 comments.

January 14, 2020: The Town forwarded the official record for the Niagara on-the-Lake Official Plan to the Region for review and approval.

January 30, 2020: The Town forwarded Region additional materials requested as part of the complete record package.

January 31, 2020: Region and Town Planning staff met to discuss the Town's Official Plan, including Provincial comments dated January 13, 2020 and concerns of the adopted Official Plan's non-conformity with Provincial policies and the Regional Official Plan.

February 13, 2020: Regional Planning staff circulated a letter to the Town acknowledging completeness of the OP record under subsection 7 of Ontario Regulation 543/06 (as amended) issued under the *Planning Act* and commencement of the review and approvals process.