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**Subject:** Niagara Official Plan - Consultation Details & Revised Framework

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

**Report date:** Wednesday, March 11, 2020

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## **Recommendations**

1. That Report PDS 9-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That a copy of Report PDS 9-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

## **Key Facts**

- This report is a follow up to Report PDS 1-2020 and provides further details on consultation that has occurred to date and additional consultation that will occur and that will contribute to the preparation of draft policy.
- A revised Consultation Timeline Framework is provided which adds local Council workshops, two Public Information Centres (PICs), online surveys and social media engagement.
- Preliminary vision statements and higher level directives, which have been derived from input received to date, have been drafted and will be presented for input as part of the additional consultation outlined above.
- To supplement this report a presentation will be made to the Planning and Economic Development Committee highlighting the contents of the Niagara Official Plan website.

## **Financial Considerations**

Council approved the resources to complete the Niagara Official Plan over a 5 year period as part of the 2017 Budget Process, predominantly funded through Development Charges.

## **Analysis**

This Report follows up on Report PDS 1-2020 which summarized the public/stakeholder consultation gathered to date on the Niagara Official Plan with a focus on the consultation received at the four Public Information Centres in November 2019. At this

meeting the Commissioner of Planning and Development indicated a report would be provided to the Planning and Economic Development Committee highlighting the consultation in further details such as the amount of consultation with Area Planners, local Councils, stakeholder groups and public, as well as provide an overview of the Niagara Official Plan website.

Gathering input from the public and stakeholder groups is an important component of the preparation of the Niagara Official Plan. Another important component is to involve those who will be making recommendations on Plan's adoption and ultimately implementing the Plan. Therefore considerable effort is made to involve Area Planners and local Councils in the process.

### **Consultation To Date**

Consultation details are organized by category in Appendix 1 relative to local Council meetings, meetings with Area Planners, Planning Advisory Committee meetings, workshops with stakeholder groups, indigenous consultation and Public Information Centre (PIC) sessions. However, the following are key consultation detail highlights:

- The key themes that the public identified as being important to address were identified through Imagine Niagara (October 2013 – June 2014). This outreach involved 4,000+ survey responses, 3,700 comments through community events. The results were identified in Appendix 1 of Report PDS 1-2020 and confirmed through much of the Public Information centres carried out in November 2019.
- Throughout 2017, one on one meetings took place with local municipal planners to discuss policy planning issues in general relative to the Regional Official Plan.
- In February 2018, individual meetings took place with local planners to gather input to frame the priority background studies.
- A Special Meeting of Council was also held in July 2018 to hear input on the need for a new Official Plan and what planning matters it could address. A more detailed summary of public comments was provided in Appendix 2 of Report PDS 1-2020.
- Throughout the summer of 2019, there were individual Meetings with local municipal planners and in some cases Economic Development staff to discuss: growth scenarios; urban boundary expansion; and employment land conversion.

- There have been over 15 Area Planners meetings, from 2017 to 2020, where the new Niagara Official Plan, related background studies and related provincial policies have been discussed.
- The Region's Planning Advisory Committee has met six times so far, starting September 2018 providing comments on background work and directives to inform the new Official.
- There have been four meetings with NPCA staff on the Natural Environment Work Program and a presentation to the NPCA Board on September 18, 2019.
- In 2019, eight specific workshop sessions took place with stakeholder groups relative to either the Natural Environment, Housing or Employment Lands Work Plans.
- During 2019 there were two Public information Centre sessions on the Natural Environment Work Program and four on the Official Plan process and background work.
- Staff have travelled to consult with Indigenous groups. There have been eight different meetings in 2019.
- A Climate Change Discussion paper was released in November 2019 for comment. The following groups were contacted to provide input: Climate Change Working Group; Area Planners; stakeholder groups; Indigenous groups; Planning Advisory Committee; subscribers for updates to the Official Plan; Brock University and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

### **Refinements to Consultation Timeline Framework**

The Consultation Timeline Framework was approved by Council in March 2019. At that time staff indicated that adjustments might be made as the Niagara Official Plan project proceeds. In light of considering the consultation to date, staff have made refinements by adding the following consultation steps during the end of second quarter/beginning of third quarter 2020:

- Workshops with Mayors, Local and Regional Council members to inform on growth allocations, land needs and natural environment options and discuss related issues.

- Two extra PICs to be held at Regional Headquarters on key options, directives/initiatives anticipated to be incorporated in to draft policy.
- Public surveys to gather input on key options, directives/initiatives anticipated to be incorporated in to draft policy. These surveys will be promoted through social media in an attempt to reach people and different demographics who do not attend traditional PICs. Other social media platforms will be explored if the survey responses are not satisfactory.

A revised Consultation timeline framework is attached as Appendix 2.

### **Preliminary Vision Statements and Higher Level Directives**

Planning staff have developed preliminary vision statements and higher level directives for the main sections of the Niagara Official Plan in consideration of all the public input received. Appendix 3 outlines the vision statements and directives relationship to public feedback and Council's Strategic Plan. Planning staff anticipate making these available for public comment during the next public input sessions for the Niagara Official Plan.

### **New Niagara Official Plan Website**

In coordination with the Region's Communications department, a website has been established to support all stages of development of the Niagara Official Plan and provide a platform for staff to share with and gather information from the public and stakeholders. The website is in a constant state of update as work is completed and compiled in support of the Plan's development process. The layout of the website is integrated with the "Making our Mark" branding aesthetic previously developed with the Communications team at the commencement of the project. The website provides a user-friendly platform with options for users to learn about the process of developing the Plan, view materials produced as part of the background work, provide feedback, and subscribe to circulated updates on the Plan's progress.

All submissions made through the website are sent to an email inbox monitored by the Official Plan team members. As Public Information Centres (PICs) are planned, dates and notices are posted at the top of the website homepage. Once the events have occurred, all materials are immediately made available for viewing through the webpage. Additionally, links to topic area specific project pages are also featured on the

website, to allow users to easily find information relevant to certain topic areas such as growth management, rural and natural systems, and archaeology. Contact information is provided on these pages as well.

### **Alternatives Reviewed**

There are no alternatives to this report which provides further consultation details to Report PDS 1-2020 and highlights additional consultation, relative to options and key policy directives, to add to the Consultation Timeline Framework approved by Council in March 2019. Vision statements and high level directives are preliminary and are drafted to receive public input.

### **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

The Niagara Official Plan is important to address Council's priority as a Sustainable Engaging Government. The Plan will address Council's other priorities, being: Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth; Healthy and Vibrant Community; and Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning.

### **Other Pertinent Reports**

PDS 1-2020 New Niagara Official Plan-Public Consultation Summary  
PDS 33-2019 Growth Management Program Update for New Official Plan  
PDS 9-2019 New Official Plan Consultation Timeline Framework  
CWCD 421-2019 New Niagara Official Plan Updates

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**Appendices**

Appendix 1	External meetings and consultations	Page 6
Appendix 2	Consultation Timeline Framework	Page 12
Appendix 3	Alignment of Draft Vision and Directives	Page 13

## Appendix 1 –

### Niagara Official Plan: External Meetings and Consultations

#### Meetings with Local Planners: Planning Issues for new Niagara Official Plan

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Municipality</b>
September 15, 2017	Niagara-on-the-Lake
September 28, 2017	Fort Erie
September 29, 2017	Niagara Falls
September 29, 2017	Thorold
October 12, 2017	West Lincoln
October 12, 2017	Pelham
October 16, 2017	Lincoln
October 16, 2017	Grimsby
October 17, 2017	Welland
October 29, 2017	St. Catharines
November 3, 2017	Wainfleet

\*September 15, 2017 Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

\*October 19, 2017 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

#### Area Planners Meetings

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
July 24, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal Comprehensive Review</li> <li>• Niagara Official Plan</li> <li>• Growth Plan – Employment Lands Strategy</li> </ul>
August 25, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Policy</li> <li>• Greater Golden Horseshoe – Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System</li> </ul>
October 27, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Official Plan Update – Employment Areas and Employment Lands Strategy</li> </ul>
November 17, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Needs Methodology</li> <li>• Growth Plan – Agricultural Impact Assessment and Natural heritage System</li> </ul>
January 26, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Needs Assessment</li> <li>• Process for Individual Urban Boundary Expansion Requests</li> <li>• Urban Structure</li> <li>• Employment Lands Strategy</li> </ul>

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Natural Environment</li> <li>• Aggregates</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> </ul>
March 16, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Environment Framework</li> <li>• Agriculture Framework</li> <li>• Climate Change Framework</li> <li>• Watershed Planning</li> <li>• MNR Species at Risk</li> </ul>
June 22, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenbelt Alternative Land Use Analysis</li> <li>• Urban Boundary Expansion Requests</li> </ul>
September 28, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Official Plan – Open Houses</li> <li>• Secondary Plans</li> <li>• 2016 Census Population</li> </ul>
January 25, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Official Plan Amendment – Exemptions from Approval</li> <li>• Niagara Official Plan Update</li> <li>• Rural Lots</li> </ul>
March 22, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Official Plan Consultation Strategy</li> <li>• Growth Plan Comments</li> </ul>
July 11, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Growth Plan – Employment Land Conversion and Urban Expansion Criteria</li> </ul>
July 26, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Official Plan Update</li> <li>• Employment Land</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Urban Strategy</li> <li>• Land Needs</li> <li>• Natural Environment</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Aggregates</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> </ul>
September 27, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Official Plan – Public Information Centres</li> <li>• Employment Land Strategy and Regional Official Plan Amendment 16</li> <li>• Provincially Significant Employment Zones</li> </ul>

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
January 24, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Niagara Official Plan – Update on Consultation</li> <li>• Employment Land Strategy and Regional Official Plan Amendment 16</li> </ul>

### **Meetings with Local Municipal Planners**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
February 2018 (Various Dates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Meetings with Local Municipal Planners to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key Issues Relative to Framing of Background Studies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
June 27, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Niagara Parks Commission Senior Staff to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Background Studies for Official Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Summer 2019 (Various Dates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Meetings with Local Municipal Planners (and in some cases Economic Development) to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Growth Scenarios</li> <li>○ Urban Boundary Expansion</li> <li>○ Employment Land Conversion</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### **Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority Meetings**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
February 2018	Meeting with NPCA Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
June 6, 2019	Meeting with NPCA Senior Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
June 13, 2019	Meeting with NPCA Technical Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
July 23, 2019	Meeting with NPCA Technical Staff – Natural Environment Work Program
September 18, 2019	Presentation to NPCA Board – Natural Environment Work Program

### **Local Council Presentations**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Municipality</b>
May 22, 2018	Pelham
May 29, 2018	Wainfleet
June 4, 2018	Niagara-on-the-Lake

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Municipality</b>
June 5, 2018	Thorold
June 12, 2018	Welland
June 18, 2018	Fort Erie
June 19, 2018	Niagara Falls
June 25, 2018	Port Colborne
July 9, 2018	Lincoln
July 23, 2018	West Lincoln
August 13, 2018	St. Catharines
September 11, 2018	Grimsby
April 15, 2019	St. Catharines
April 23, 2019	Fort Erie
May 6, 2019	Grimsby
May 7, 2019	Thorold
May 13, 2019	Niagara-on-the-Lake
May 14, 2019	Niagara Falls
May 27, 2019	Port Colborne
May 28, 2019	Wainfleet
June 3, 2019	Pelham
June 10, 2019	West Lincoln
June 11, 2019	Welland
June 17, 2019	Lincoln

### **Workshops/Sessions**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
March 25 and 26, 2019	Niagara Housing Data Consultation Sessions with Local Municipal Planners
May 3, 2019	Natural Environment Workshop with Development Community, Consultants, and Local Planning Staff
May 16, 2019	Natural Environment Workshop with Agricultural Community
May 16, 2019	Natural Environment Workshop with Environmental Stakeholder Groups
June 6, 2019	Housing Database/Market Analysis and Scenario Development Workshop with Area Planners and Local Municipal Staff
October 8, 2019	Employment Strategy Municipal Workshop with Area Planners
October 10, 2019	Employment Strategy Industry Workshop with Industry Stakeholders

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
February 25, 2020	Employment Area Strategy Update and Q/A Session with Industry Stakeholders

### **Public Information Centres**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
May 30, 2019	Natural Environment – Public Information Centre (West Lincoln)
June 6, 2019	Natural Environment – Public Information Centre (Welland)
November 6, 2019	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Thorold)
November 7, 2019	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Niagara Falls)
November 13, 2019	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Grimsby)
November 14, 2019	Niagara Official Plan Background Initiatives – Public Information Centre (Fort Erie)

### **Planning Advisory Committee Meetings**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
September 12, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and Introductions</li> <li>• Planning Areas of Responsibility</li> <li>• Planning Advisory Committee – Points of Interest</li> <li>• Official Plan Framework and Document Structure</li> <li>• Official Plan Themes – Key Priority Background Studies</li> <li>• Urban Structure</li> </ul>
November 14, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Workshop Overview</li> <li>• Natural Environment</li> <li>• Urban Structure</li> <li>• Secondary Plans – Content and Performance Measures</li> </ul>
March 20, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial Planning Policy Restructuring</li> <li>• Update on Employment Lands Strategy</li> <li>• Performance Measures/Urban Structure and Secondary Plans</li> </ul>
August 14, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Strategy</li> <li>• Draft Vision and Directives</li> </ul>
October 23, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeological Management Plan</li> </ul>

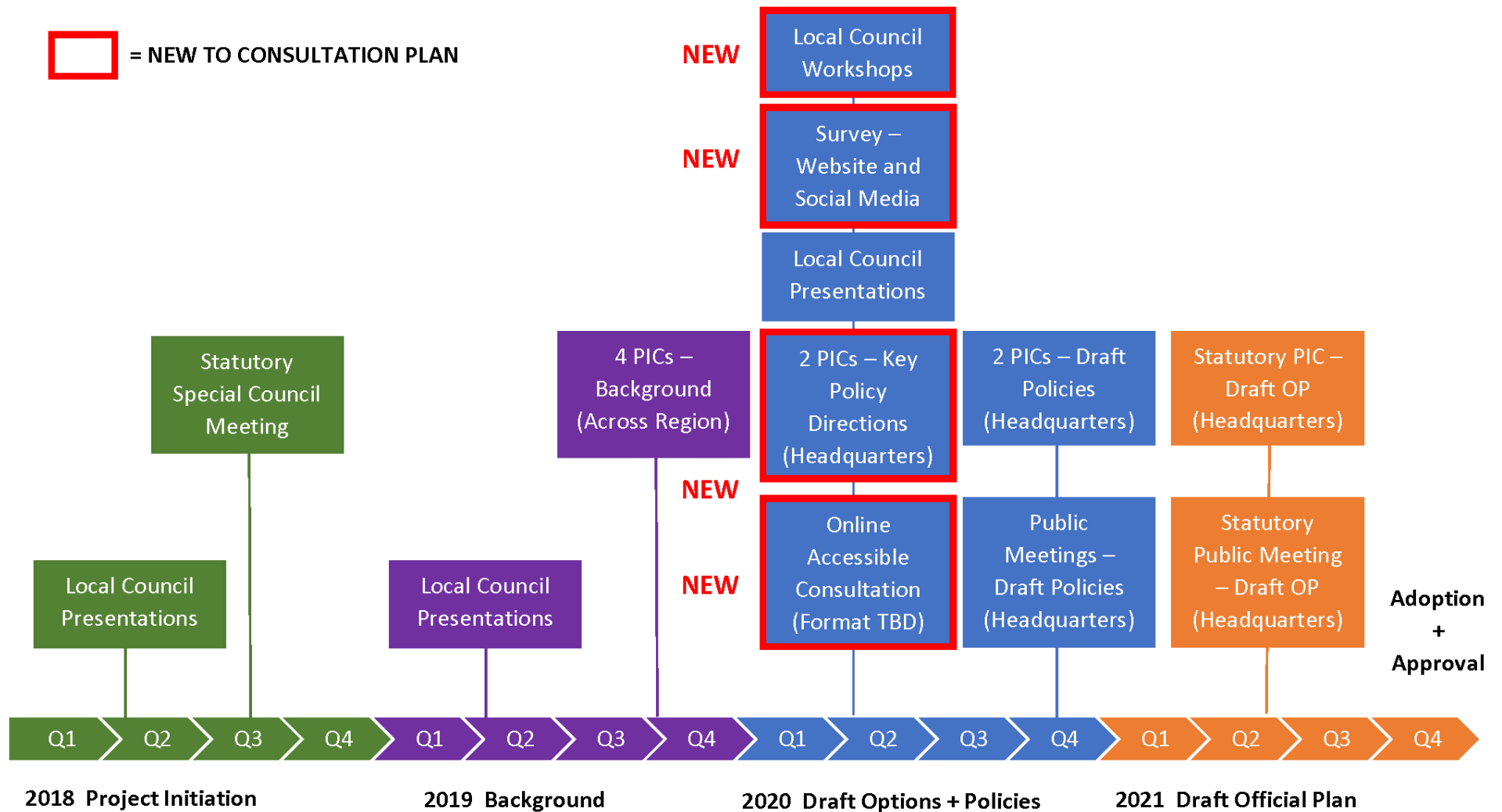
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Official Plan Topic(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment Lands Strategy</li> <li>• Vision and Directives</li> <li>• Proposed Provincial Policy Changes</li> </ul>
January 15, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate Change</li> <li>• Official Plan Consultation Feedback</li> </ul>

### **Meetings with Indigenous Groups**

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Indigenous Group and Topic(s)</b>
May 1, 2019	Six Nations Elected Council – Niagara Official Plan
May 1, 2019	Haudenosaunee Development Institute – Niagara Official Plan
May 7, 2019	Fort Erie Friendship Centre – Niagara Official Plan
May 29, 2019	Niagara Region Métis Council – Niagara Official Plan
June 5, 2019	Niagara Regional Native Centre – Niagara Official Plan
June 11, 2019	Mississauga of the Credit First Nation – Niagara Official Plan
August 21, 2019	Mississauga of the Credit First Nation – Regional Archaeological Management Plan
August 21, 2019	Haudenosaunee Development Institute – Regional Archaeological Management Plan

## Appendix 2 – Niagara Official Plan – Consultation Timeline

  = NEW TO CONSULTATION PLAN



Engagement with Area Planners, Indigenous Partners and Stakeholders Ongoing

### Appendix 3

#### Alignment of Draft Vision and Directives with Public Consultation Results and Council Strategic Plan

Draft Vision and Directives	Public Consultation Results Public Information Centres – Nov. 2019	Council Strategic Plan 2019-2022
<b>Draft Vision:</b>		
<b>EXCEPTIONAL</b> development and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in well-planned, high quality development in appropriate locations that improves our communities, while protecting what's valuable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 2.1- enhance community wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>DIVERSE</b> housing types, jobs and population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant focus on achieving a greater mix of housing types, including affordable housing, for individuals and families living, studying and working in Niagara</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 2.3- addressing affordable housing needs</li> </ul>
<b>THRIVING</b> agriculture and tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in leveraging the GO Train to boost tourism and advancing economic opportunities associated with agriculture and nature-based ecotourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 1.1- economic growth and development</li> <li>Objective 1.4- strategically target industry sectors</li> </ul>
<b>RESILIENT</b> urban and natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong emphasis on the importance of protecting the natural environment and enhancing resilience of urban areas to mitigate and adapt to climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 3.2- environmental sustainability and stewardship</li> </ul>
<b>Draft Directives:</b>		
<b>GROWING REGION</b> #1 Manage growth strategically and diversify the housing stock to accommodate all ages and incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in directing growth to appropriate locations supported by infrastructure and servicing, and achieving a greater mix of housing types to support affordability, such as semi-detached dwellings, row housing and apartment buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 2.3- addressing affordable housing needs</li> </ul>

Draft Vision and Directives	Public Consultation Results Public Information Centres – Nov. 2019	Council Strategic Plan 2019-2022
<b>VIBRANT REGION</b> #2 Elevate the livability and engaging qualities of communities, facilities and attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in proactive planning and design excellence that improves community livability, while celebrating Niagara's unique features and cultural assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 2.1- enhance community wellbeing</li> </ul>
<b>CONNECTED REGION</b> #3 Provide connections within and between communities and outside of the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong emphasis on the importance of infrastructure to support growth, and enhancing public transit and active transportation opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 3.1- advancing regional transit and GO rail service</li> <li>Objective 3.3- maintain existing infrastructure</li> <li>Objective 3.4- facilitating the movement of people and goods</li> </ul>
<b>COMPETITIVE REGION</b> #4 Plan and manage growth to position Niagara for economic prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant interest in managing resource extraction and rehabilitation wisely, as well as protecting employment lands and supporting economic opportunities through investments in transit and tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 1.1- economic growth and development</li> <li>Objective 1.4- strategically target industry sectors</li> </ul>
<b>SUSTAINABLE REGION</b> #5 Enhance the sustainability and resilience of Niagara's built and natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong emphasis on protection and enhancement of the natural environment and opportunities within urban areas to both mitigate and adapt to climate change to build resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 3.2- environmental sustainability and stewardship</li> </ul>