
Subject: Niagara Falls GO Station Area Zoning Update

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Recommendations

That Report PDS 10-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to update Planning and Economic Development Committee with respect to a land use planning project to be completed in partnership with the City of Niagara Falls to implement GO Hub and Transit Station Secondary Plan policies.
- Niagara Region and City of Niagara Falls collaborated to complete the GO Hub and Transit Station Secondary Plan in 2018.
- To fully implement the policies of the Secondary Plan and establish appropriate land use and built-form zoning regulations, an update to the local zoning by-law is required.
- Zoning is a local matter. However, Niagara Region through the GO Implementation Office, is collaborating with City of Niagara Falls to update the zoning around the GO Station.
- GO Implementation Office staff with support from Planning and Development Services staff will work with City of Niagara Falls staff to draft an amending by-law for zoning in a key priority area around the station.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial considerations with respect to this report. Work required to undertake the review is being done in-house by the current staffing complement. It is not envisioned that any consultants will be required. Any costs associated with public engagement would be the responsibility of the City of Niagara Falls.

Analysis

In June 2015 Niagara Region and the City of Niagara Falls executed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to develop and adopt a Secondary Plan for the City of

Niagara Falls GO Hub and Transit Station area. This project was undertaken to ensure that Niagara region would be prepared to take advantage of GO Train service and to demonstrate to the Province and Metrolinx that Niagara Region was committed to the project. Enabling land use policies that provide for appropriate densities to support transit service is a critical component of achieving sustainable levels of ridership which is the cornerstone for successful transit service. Typically, once Official Plan policies are in place the next step is to update the Zoning By-law to align the land use policies and zoning regulations. The Secondary Plan was adopted and approved in the summer of 2018.

The GO Implementation Office has agreed with the City of Niagara Falls that updating the zoning by-law to reflect the land use policies set out in the GO Station Secondary Plan is a critical next step in ensuring that the City of Niagara Falls is ready for development that will support GO Train service. Higher densities around the station is critical for transit sustainability; allowing for these densities by updating the zoning by-law removes a barrier to development in this priority area.

Zoning is a local planning function, therefore, all approvals will be the responsibility of the City of Niagara Falls. The role of Niagara Region staff is to provide assistance to the City of Niagara Falls in undertaking the work which will facilitate adoption of zoning regulations that implement the land use policies of the Secondary Plan. The work plan that has been agreed to includes preparation of a draft zoning by-law amendment, public engagement with the Downtown Business Association, and public engagement with the broader community.

Niagara Region staff will provide technical planning expertise with the GO Implementation Office Planning Lead being responsible for drafting the zoning amendment and assisting with public consultation as directed by the City of Niagara Falls Director of Planning. In addition, Niagara Region Planning and Development Services staff will provide urban design and 3D visualization assistance.

The zoning amendment will focus on the priority area of the downtown where the highest densities are planned. The current zoning of this area does not allow the uses and built-form anticipated by the Secondary Plan. The updated zoning will ensure a quality built environment that accommodates future businesses, residents, and tourists to the City of Niagara Falls.

Alternatives Reviewed

Niagara Region could choose to not offer planning assistance to the City of Niagara Falls for the zoning bylaw update but this would delay adoption of important zoning regulations that will guide and facilitate future growth around the transit station. The GO Implementation Office was specifically created to facilitate delivery of GO service to

Niagara, enabling land use regulations to promote transit oriented development are a key component of making Niagara Region ready for increased levels of GO service.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This project is directly related to Council Strategic Priority: Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning Objective 3.1 of Advancing Regional Transit and GO Rail Services.

Other Pertinent Reports

[PDS 24-2018—Official Plan Amendment No. 125 \(OPA 125\) Niagara Falls Transit Station Secondary Plan—City of Niagara Falls](#)

Prepared by:

Cheryl Selig, MCIP, RPP
Planning Lead
GO Implementation Office
Public Works

Recommended by:

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting, Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Ken Mech, Manager, Current Planning, City of Niagara Falls and reviewed by Diana Morreale, Director, Development Approvals; Matt Robinson, Director, GO Implementation Office.