
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 7-2020

Subject: COVID-19 Response and Business Continuity in Planning and Development

Date: July 15, 2020

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Rino Mostacci, Planning and Development

Commissioner Comments, Planning & Development Services

Planning and Development Services Staff are working remotely – all core and essential services continue to be delivered. We are processing development applications and providing inspection services within expected timelines, working on master servicing plans and making progress on key long range planning programs. As well we are maintaining working relationships with our private sector partners and continue to find solutions and offer support as needed. Staff are also supporting the Regional EOC and the implementation of “*Open Niagara*”.

Of particular note, on Wed., June 17 at 5:00 pm Planning & Development staff successfully hosted a virtual Open House for the Regional Woodland By-law update. Staff delivered a presentation which was followed by a question and answer period in a panel discussion format. We had approximately 70 attendees participate and responded to 28 on-line questions. This was a very encouraging first official public engagement session for a Regional planning matter. We look forward to refining our ability to achieve meaningful public input and consultation utilizing similar formats and technology. Clearly the days of the traditional in-person public/town hall meeting are likely over and we will be working with community and private sector stakeholders to create new and effective public engagement platforms.

Community and Long Range Planning

Current Status of Operations

Long Range and Community Planning

The Province announced draft “*Amendment 1*” to 2019 Growth Plan and draft revised “*Land Needs Assessment*”. These draft documents are open for comment in the ERO until July 31, 2020 and are being reviewed to determine compatibility with the Regional Official Plan.

Area Planners meetings are continuing on a monthly basis. Topics of discussion include response and adaptation to planning services during COVID, holding of public meetings, volumes of applications received and updates to Provincial Growth Plan and Regional Official Plan.

Development Planning & Approval Services

Current Status of Operations

Development Planning

Development Planning & Approval Services continues to adapt to ensure the delivery core development review functions including: review and comment on all development applications from a Provincial and Regional perspective, coordinating and analyzing internal review/comments from Urban Design, Environmental Planning and Development Engineering for a “one-window” Regional response.

For the month of May the following development volumes were received by the department:

- Planning Applications (includes zoning, subdivision, site plan etc.) - **38**
- Engineering Applications (includes servicing reviews, site plan, etc.) - **28**
- Private Septic Applications - **26**
- Pre-consultations - **52**

Environmental Planning

On **Wednesday, June 17 at 5:00 pm** staff successfully hosted a virtual Open House on the Regional Woodland By-law update. The meeting began with a presentation and was followed by a question and answer period in a panel discussion format. There were approximately 70 attendees at the virtual open house and 28 questions were asked following the presentation. As part of the update staff are encouraging residents and stakeholders to partake in an on line survey. The online survey can be accessed at the following link until June 30th.

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/culture-and-environment/woodland-bylaw-review/default.aspx>

Following the public engagement process staff will present an updated Woodland by-law for Council approval in late summer.

Infrastructure Planning & Development Engineering

Current Status of Operations

Development Engineering

We are continuing to respond to development applications with engineering comments, legal agreements for road works, and processing ECA's under the Transfer of Review program for new sanitary and storm sewers. Additionally, we are continuing with Stormwater Management (SWM) review, Transportation review/meetings, and W&WW review/meetings as it relates to development applications and inquiries. We are working on the SWM Guidelines Project with WOOD Consulting Engineers and assessing schedule/deliverables to adapt to current situation.

Infrastructure Planning

We are continuing with the development of the RFP for the 2021 Water & Wastewater (W&WW) Master Servicing Plan (MSP) Update project in consultation with W&WW team. The target release for the RFP is in September to ensure work can be completed by end of 2021 as it is an important input for the Development Charges Background Study and By-law update.

We are leading the Baker Road Pollution Prevention and Control Plan and additional flow monitoring work. We are coordinating with local municipalities (West Lincoln, Lincoln and Grimsby) for this project. We continue to work with LAMs on previously approved CSO Projects and projected cash flow demands. The 2020 CSO Project Approval report is scheduled for the July PEDC Committee.

Development Industry Liaison

We are continuing with the review of the potential build out scenarios for the urban areas of Niagara in collaboration with planning group. This must be completed to be part of the 2021 W&WW MSP update to better understand the potential servicing implications and supporting infrastructure for build out. We are leading the development application process for the Linhaven and Gilmore LTC Redevelopment Projects and coordinating with St. Catharines, MTO, and other review parties to ensure that site plan application can be approved and the timelines associated with this project remain on track (Government funding is tied to this as well). Participating with Development Industry meetings (NHBA) to understand impacts and restrictions from COVID to residential development industry and housing stock.

Private Sewage/Septic Systems Program

The Private Sewage System group (responsible for Part 8 of the Ontario Building Code) is continuing to receive and respond to septic permit applications, inspections, development applications, special requests and complaints.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner, Planning and Development Services