

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA
SMARTER NIAGARA STEERING COMMITTEE

REPORT 2-2009

Minutes of a meeting of the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee held on Wednesday, April 1, 2009 commencing at 5:14 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario.

ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Gabriel, Chair; Augustyn, Vice-Chair; Greenwood; Timms; Messrs. Barr, Ensslen; Gaylor; Lundrigan; Phillips; Ms. Landry, Ms. Stewart.

Staff: Mr. Robson, Commissioner Integrated Community Planning; Mr. Gummo, Associate Director, Comprehensive Community Planning; Mr. Miller, Planner; Mr. Ranjan, Transportation Engineer; Ms. Ricci, Legislative Assistant.

Working Group: Mr. Slepko; Ms. German.

Presenters: Mr. Brickell, VP, Smart Growth and Partnerships; Mr. Blake, Economic Development Officer.

Quorum

There being a lack of ordinary quorum at the meeting, the Committee Co-Chairs determined that the ordinary quorum for the meeting be reduced to seven members, pursuant to Section 22.10 of the Procedural By-law 96-2007.

PRESENTATION

10. **Welcome to Smarter Niagara**

Mr. Brickell, VP, Smart Growth and Partnership, along with, Mr. Blake, Economic Development Officer was present to provide Committee members with a tour of the Smarter Niagara website.

Mr. Brickell stated that he was extremely pleased with the site and that it is approximately 70-80% completed. He further stated that their target was to get 10% of last year's hits on the Niagara Canada site; he was pleased to announce that already in the first month they had exceeded that target.

Mr. Brickell mentioned that aesthetically it exceeds expectation, the site reduces the number of clicks needed to get to the information you need, developers and investors now have a place to go, and the community can now easily access important information such as Niagara 2031.

Mr. Landry then proceeded to take Committee members through actual sections of the site, all the while explaining its capabilities and benefits.

Highlights of the website tour were, in part, as follows:

- Web Page Sub-pages
 - Overview
 - Developers & Investors
 - Quality Design
 - Incentives
 - Niagara 2031
 - Quality of Life
 - News / Events / Awards
 - Key Contacts

Mr. Landry stated that the website was text based and interactive, had nearly 2,000 hits, would have G.I.S. capabilities and imbedded video/virtual reality pieces to it. He suggested that members should visit the Blog daily, as this would drive the site and list it further up on search engines when Smart Growth is requested.

In closing Mr. Landry advised Committee members that he would welcome any suggestions for added content, further development and/or news articles that Committee members would like to see posted.

Committee members congratulated Mr. Landry and stated comments such as; Bravo, Fabulous, Great Job, perfect educational piece for Smart Growth Principles and that it was great to see all of the information in one area!

Next steps were, in part, identified as follows:

- Go to Area Planners for review
- Smarter Niagara Website presentation to Regional Council
- Organize a formal launch; perhaps at a Smart Growth Summit

Councilor Gabriel, on behalf of Committee members, thanked both Mr. Brickell and Mr. Landry and advised that staff would meet to discuss how best to launch the website.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

11. Moved by Councillor Augustyn
Seconded by Mr. Barr

That the minutes of the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee meeting of February 18, 2009, be approved.

Carried.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

12. Projects/Studies Activity Report
Transportation Strategy Public Works/Transportation
PWP 09-2009

Mr. Ranjan, Transportation Engineer presented Committee members with a Project/Activity update.

Highlights of the update were, in part, as follows:

South Niagara East West Arterial Road Corridor: Work in progress; meetings held with affected area municipalities; working ongoing for compiling data; PIC to be held on April 15, 2009 – announcements going in this weekend newspapers.

Airports Study: Work ongoing – an opinion survey is being conducted from amongst municipal stakeholders, economic development offices and the Chamber of Commerce, the consultants are likely to make a presentation in April 21 TSSC. The study will address if there is a role for Regional involvement with respect to the operation and financing of NDA and / or NCA; if yes – then the issues of infrastructure improvements, capital requirements, budgets and administrative structure will be looked into.

IMT (Fixed Route Transit) Study: RFP issued and Consultant selection in progress, the Study is likely to be completed by Sep 2009.

Ports Niagara: An MOU has been worked out between the funding partners – objective is to position Niagara as a multi-modal transportation hub, map marine related infrastructure assets and market Niagara as a Port region. Additional funding opportunities being explored, Work started on the asset mapping.

Niagara Falls Transportation Master Plan – Consultant selected – project initiation to be held in meeting in April.

GO rail service to Niagara: GO Rail has initiated a feasibility study respecting a GO Rail Extension to Niagara Peninsula. The planning horizon is (2016 – 2031) and the Study will investigate the extension of GO Rail commuter service to the Niagara Peninsula using either the existing CN or CP line corridor.

Moved by Councillor Greenwood
Seconded by Ms. Stewart

That the Oral Update and Report PWP 09-2009 (dated February 25, 2009) respecting Projects/Studies Activity Report Transportation Strategy Public Works/Transportation, be received for information.

Carried.

(Refer to Information Requests)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

13. **Niagara 2031 – Considering the Regional Plan Amendment –
Places to Grow Conformity**

Mr. Gummo presented Committee members with a document entitled, “Niagara’s Sustainable Urban Vision” (Section 1) which listed a *series of planning objectives for Niagara’s urban areas – transit supportive, mixed use, complete communities, sustainable development and provincial conformity.*

Further highlights of the document were, in part, as follows:

- Regional Urban Structure Policies
 - Urban Areas
 - Built Up Areas
 - Greenfield Areas
 - Downtown St. Catharines Urban Growth Centre

- Growth Management Policies
 - Region Population, Household and Employment Projections
 - Municipal Population, Household and Employment Projections
 - Urban Area Expansions
 - Intensification
 - General Intensification
 - Intensification Areas
 - Intensification Targets
 - General Greenfield Development
 - Greenfield Areas
 - Greenfield Density Targets
- Economic Gateway Policies
- Land Use Policies
 - Employment Areas
 - Employment Land Conversion
 - Commercial Areas
 - Residential Areas
 - Regeneration Areas
- Infrastructure Policies
 - Transportation
 - Transit
 - Water and Wastewater
 - Energy
- Implementation and Monitoring
 - Local conformity
 - Amendments

Moved by Councillor Greenwood
Seconded by Councillor Timms

That the Document entitled "Niagara's Sustainable Urban Vision", be received for information.

Carried.

Following a lengthy discussion Mr. Gummo suggested, Committee members agreed, that a meeting be scheduled for April 15, 2009 that would deal specifically with the items mentioned above.

14. Data Requirements for Performance Indicators, Forecasting, and Estimating

Mr. Miller, Planner, provided Committee members with an overview respecting the data requirement for performance indicators, forecasting, and estimating.

He further spoke to the discussion paper; stating that it identified the data needed to provide the information required by the land use policy planning function of the Department, including the data required for the standards or indicators in various Provincial and local programs and plans as well as for making estimates and forecasts about population, housing, employment, and land use.

Mr. Miller also mentioned that some of these standards, indicators, and required data are mandated, or a commitment has been made to use them, or they are needed to answer the queries that have been made in the past however; the discussion paper does not explore a full range of indicators and data required on urban growth, the environment, resources, or the economy.

The various programs, plans, and land use planning queries are identified, and the data needs and challenges, as follows:

- Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Program -- OMBI
- Municipal Performance Measures Program -- MPMP
- Regional Policy Plan and the Annual Development Capacity and Development Performance Report
- Provincial Policy Statement, 2005
- Places to Grow Plan
- Estimating and Forecasting Population, Housing, and Employment
- Growth Management Evaluation Indicators

In closing Mr. Miller stated that future work has been identified as identifying priorities, deciding on data requirements, and solving the challenges that have been noted.

Committee members unanimously agreed that the Working Group set to deal with Incentives should be postponed until after June 1, 2009; to allow for the proper attention to be paid to the Regional Plan Amendment.

Mr. Lundrigan wished to participate in the Incentives Working Group once formed.

Moved by Councillor Greenwood
Seconded by Councillor Timms

That the Document entitled "Data Requirements for Performance Indicators, Forecasting, and Estimating", be received for information.

Carried.

(Refer to Information Requests)

CORRESPONDENCE

15. Moved by Councillor Augustyn
Seconded by Ms. Stewart

That the following communications be received for information:

SNSC 12-2009	Toronto Star Article; "Firm threatens to move 2,500 jobs; Company says it's moving to Manitoba if it can't 'leapfrog' protected Greenbelt to build new plant" dated March 14, 2009
SNSC 13-2009	National Post Article; "In Markham, the dream of a village that never was" dated March 14, 2009
SNSC 14-2009	New Urban News – March 2009

Carried.

16. Items for Consideration

Moved by Councillor Augustyn
Seconded by Ms. Stewart

That the following communication listed in addendum agenda for the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee Items for Consideration, dated April 1, 2009, be received and the resignation accepted, with regret.

SNSC 15-2008	E-mail correspondence (dated February 21, 2009) from Councillor Cordiner respecting her resignation from the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee
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Carried.

**SMARTER NIAGARA EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION WORKING
GROUP (SNECWG)**

17. Ms. Landry, on behalf of the SNECWG, advised Committee members that due to their commitment to the Smarter Niagara website a formal meeting had not been held.

Ms. Landry suggested, Committee members agreed, that the SNECWG would be better served by continuing their assistance respecting the Smarter Niagara website by providing comments and content.

OTHER BUSINESS

18. Implementing Provincial Policies
Through Regional Niagara Procedures
For Road Reconstruction Projects

Mr. Barr submitted to Committee members a memorandum entitled Implementing Provincial Policies Through Regional Niagara Procedures For Road Reconstruction Projects.

Mr. Barr stated that the purpose of the memo was not to direct attention to a specific project but to use this opportunity to suggest a significant change in Regional Niagara policy in dealing with all roadways within urban areas needing reconstruction.

Mr. Barr further stated that the following issues should be considered as part of the EA process for such projects:

- The opportunity to improve the living environment of existing residents adjacent to the street and within the adjacent neighbourhood
 - Aesthetics (street trees, underground wiring etc)
 - Additional visitor parking
 - Traffic calming
 - Noise attenuation
 - The encouragement of neighbourhood amenities (mixed uses etc)
- The opportunity to provide for infilling or intensification of development (including mixed use) adjacent to the road allowance
- The opportunity to improve the pedestrian environment for both residents and visitors
- The opportunity to provide for or improve other modes of transportation including transit and cycling
- The opportunity to improve the safety, efficiency and pleasure of drivers and their passengers
- The accommodation of commercial and emergency vehicles

In closing Mr. Barr stated that this approach would require a radically different framework to the EA process. Instead of a traffic-oriented engineering exercise, it would become a multi-disciplinary Urban Development exercise. Accordingly, Mr. Barr suggested that the Smarter Niagara Steering Committee develop a carefully researched case to promote this idea to the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee.

Following a lengthy discussion it was:

Moved by Mr. Ennelson
Seconded by Ms. Stewart

That the Correspondence entitled Implementing Provincial Policies Through Regional Niagara Procedures For Road Reconstruction Project, be received for information.

Carried.

Councillor Gabriel suggested, Committee members agreed, that Mr. Barr's correspondence be discussed at the Special Working Group Meeting of Smarter Niagara Steering Committee and Smarter Niagara Education and Communication Working Group scheduled for April 15, 2009.

19. Review of Regional Development Charges
By-law and Related Policies
CSD 67-2009

Mr. Gummo advised Committee members of a Report going to the April 8, 2009 meeting of the Corporate Services Committee and the Integrated Community Planning and Public Works Committee entitled Review of Regional Development Charges By-law and Related Policies.

Mr. Gummo stated that this was a "good news story" as the report requests approval for the shift from a current 75 / 25 Development Charge exemption (within downtown urban cores and surrounding built up-up areas and on Brownfields) ratio to a 50 / 50 ratio.

INFORMATION REQUESTS

Staff was requested to:

- Look in to whether the Go and Metrolinx merger will affect ongoing projects (Refer to Minute Item #12) (Councillor Timms)
- Follow up with respect to Highway 406 expansion Port Robinson Road to East Main Street; study completion? (Refer to Minute Item #12) (Councillor Augustyn)
- Follow up respecting Bikeways Master Plan “completion”; lights and signage issues (Refer to Minute Item #12) (Ms. Stewart)
- Look in to the possibility of merging Via and Go service to assist in weekend service to Niagara (Refer to Minute Item #12) (Mr. Gaylor)
- Schedule a meeting and send out invitations for Wednesday, April 15, 2009 (Refer to Minute Item #13) (Committee members)
- Look in to how the Heritage Act vs. Places To Grow vs. Horseshoe Act can be worked in to the Policy Plan (Refer to Minute Item #14) (Councillor Timms)
- Report back on the Regional Roadway Study Uploading/Downloading of Regional Roads (Refer to Minute Item #18) (Councillor Augustyn)
- Report back on any information concerning a Smarter Niagara Summit (Refer to Minute Item #18) (Committee members)

ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 8:00 p.m. This Committee will meet again April 1, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4 and the Education and Communication Working Group will meet May 13, 2009.

Robert Gabriel
Chair

Lisa Ricci
Legislative Assistant