
Niagara Region

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the
Integrated Community Planning Committee

SUBJECT: Integrated Community Planning Department
2010 Workplan

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommend to Regional Council:

1. That the 2010 Workplan directions and activities of the Integrated Community Planning Department be approved.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Integrated Community Planning (ICP) Department was created effective January 1, 2009, and has had one full year to transition while continuing the important work that had migrated into the department as a result of the re-organization. The creation of a new department presents a new frontier for Niagara to avail itself of new opportunities and tackle challenges using staff skill sets from across the corporation to more strategically work together as a unit to benefit the Corporation, Niagara community, and beyond. Working together, the directions and actions of ICP can better support Council, its Business Plan, and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

This report identifies how the ICP Department has prioritized its work efforts in alignment with Council's Business Plan (CBP), by the respective strategic goals of the CBP. Activities and projects include those carried over from 2009, as well as those being initiated in 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This workplan does not, in itself, propose any financial implications. If Council wishes Integrated Community Planning to work on additional projects or topics further resource requirements will need to be assessed, and appropriate reporting will follow.

PURPOSE

This report is prepared to outline and confirm the major directions and activities that Integrated Community Planning Department will be focusing on into 2010, with particular reference as to how these activities align with and support Council's Business Plan.

REPORT

Background

After a lengthy review of the Planning Function in Niagara and then an internal review of operations, CMT and Council decided upon the formation of a new department – Integrated Community Planning (ICP) - one that would strategically coordinate many existing functional groups within the Region to work together as a unit. The New Department has five initial divisions: Secretariat to Niagara Regional Council (i.e. Clerk's Division); Internal and External Communications (Corporate Communications); Core Land Use Policy Planning (Regional Policy Planning); Community and Corporate Planning; and Regional Emergency Planning.

Each functional group moved into the ICP Department with existing mandates and roles, many of which are long-standing or Provincially mandated. These mandates and roles have been grouped into five divisions as highlighted in the appended chart.

ICP 2010 Workplan as aligned with Council's Business Plan

The most appropriate way of presenting the workplan is by aligning the specific actions and projects with the strategic directions in Council's Business Plan, as this speaks to alignment from the political level through to the professional public service (i.e. translating democracy-based policy and strategy into action). Using this alignment approach is also quite consistent with the ICP Department's Mission statement, developed by department staff, as follows:

The Integrated Community Planning Department supports effective decision making based on meaningful engagement, research, planning and focused actions to deliver responsible public policy, resulting in good governance for Niagara

While the list of ICP activities for 2010 is not exhaustive, it does provide a high-level focus on the activities that will help staff align department, divisional, and individual objectives for the coming year. In brief, this is about applying good business practice to the public service.

It is also noteworthy that the work of the department operates at several levels – sometimes supporting activities that serve the corporation itself, while at other times addressing pan-Niagara challenges in community planning, and even beyond our geographic confines to broader questions like our bi-national or supra-regional contexts (e.g. Great Lakes). Also, given the mutually reinforcing nature of many of the CBP goals and related strategic actions, many of the initiatives identified below serve more than one objective – for the purposes of this report, however, the initiatives are listed under one CBP goal only.

A: A Responsive Region

Niagara Region will be known for its effective decision-making, strong partnerships, clear accountability and service excellence.

Ongoing from 2009

- Continuing to work on customer service and business improvements in graphics design, print shop, courier services, electronic council and internal communications methods
- Providing opportunities for collaboration with area municipalities – examples include: developing model land use policies for the environment, agriculture and growth management; assisting with various communication needs; emergency management coordination; assistance on compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and coordination of meetings with clerks of all area municipalities
- Working with Council to address committee structure and Council processes – includes splitting the cumbersome ICP & PW Committee into two, amendments to the Procedural By-law including methods for streamlining Council proceedings (e.g. better methods for dealing with presentations and delegations)
- Participating on a number of inter-agency initiatives – including the Brock Observatory, Niagara Research and Planning Council, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, area planners, area Clerks, Emergency Information Officers Network, International Joint Committee (for emergency measures coordination), Ontario Municipal CAO's Benchmarking Initiative, Partners for Long-term Urban Sustainability (PLUS) Network, Niagara 10, 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council, and more
- Participating in planning efforts and conflict resolution regarding Police Facilities

To be initiated in 2010

- Based on learning derived from the separation of the ICP & PW Committee, make recommendations by end of term for possible additional structural changes – this includes attention on the myriad advisory/steering/task force committees to assure optimal functioning and responsiveness
- Development of a more integrated internal service delivery model for the provision of printing and creative design services in collaboration with IT Solutions which administers the corporate photocopier contract
- Further update to the Development Charges By-law, under the leadership of the DC Task Force, to assure this policy tool properly aligns with growth and infrastructure investment directions
- Continue working with area planners (including Regional Development Services) to coordinate efforts on matters such as community improvement/smart growth, renewal/updating of the Memorandum of Understanding, opportunities for GIS integration, model policies and coordinating responses on various anticipated Provincial initiatives (e.g. update to the Provincial Policy Statement)
- Implementation of the DisasterLan software for emergency management interoperability in the bi-national Niagara area
- Continue work with Police Facilities, consistent with the Minutes of Settlement reached in September 2009

B: Community and Social Well-Being

Niagara Region will support a safe, healthy, diverse, culturally rich community where people of all ages and incomes enjoy a high quality of life.

Ongoing from 2009

- Development of a Niagara Culture Plan – this comprehensive process has also provided an opportunity to demonstrate the Department's commitment to 'meaningful engagement' by applying a variety of methods to the public process (e.g. social media, citizen contests, facilitated open houses, focus groups and electronic methods)
- Continue to show leadership in the implementation of the AODA, while simultaneously working with the Province (via Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO) to assure the accessibility standards are workable and responsive
- Continue to support and facilitate key public health strategies that promote and encourage healthy living and active transportation

To be initiated in 2010

- Via a secondment arrangement with Community Services, support CMT in the update of an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan – this includes, among other important component parts, the development of a Human Services Plan to address matters of poverty reduction, affordable housing and other social equity considerations
- Through the implementation of Niagara 2031, one of the implementation strategies has a direct focus on affordable housing
- Continue to identify innovative means of creating a 'sense of place' in communities – this includes a social inclusion lens applied to urban design, smart growth incentives for public realm improvements, public art, and more
- Support the initiation of Age Friendly Community initiatives beginning in the City of Welland.

C: Economic Prosperity

Niagara Region will become a prime destination for investment and encourage the growth of a diversified and sustainable economic base.

Ongoing from 2009

- Conducting review of economic growth strategy, with particular emphasis on how it aligns with other Council-approved strategies (e.g. growth management, capital, servicing master plans, etc.) to assure optimal alignment
- Complete the work on the Growth Strategy, including addressing appeal to the plan, preferably through mediation/negotiation, where possible
- Proving meaningful opportunities for youth, particularly via the Council-approved 'youth retention' funding, in terms of co-op education work terms
- Continued attention to the implementation of the Agricultural Action Plan and Local Food Action Plan – recent efforts include pursuing the value add

To be initiated in 2010

- Develop an implementation plan for the Gateway Economic Zone and Centre, as a component of the overall Niagara 2031 Growth Strategy
- Completion of the 'value-add on farm policies
- Lead a process to consider the appropriate tax structure to support a vibrant and profitable agricultural sector – this can include working with provincial ministries, academic research support, and the industry itself

D: Environmental Stewardship

Niagara Region will increase the health and sustainability of its physical infrastructure and natural environment for current and future generations.

Ongoing from 2009

- Updating the overall Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, last done in 2004. It is important to note that this effort encompasses all four pillars of sustainability – social, economic, cultural and environmental
- Development of a Climate Change Action Plan
- Support the development of a Source Water Protection Plan, especially as that relates to land use policy
- Continue to work with the area planners to assure strategies and tools are optimized related to brownfield redevelopment

To be initiated in 2010

- In anticipation of an approved Climate Change Action Plan, develop and carry out related actions, including those that require partnerships
- Complete update to Niagara Water Strategy
- Explore and support partnerships on tree planting and related ecological restoration work

E: Integrated Transportation System

Niagara Region will work collaboratively with others to strengthen and coordinate the transportation system and services, and support alternative choices for people and goods to move within and beyond the region.

Ongoing from 2009

- Continue to support the efforts for alignment of rail-based transportation planning between New York State and Ontario
- Active participation in the Environmental Assessment process for the Niagara-GTA Corridor

To be initiated in 2010

- Support any Council-directed efforts on transit planning, to assure alignment with growth directions – this includes growth implications of inter-regional transit (i.e. GO Transit in Niagara)
- Lead and/or support, as appropriate, a variety of alternative transportation efforts, including walking, bicycling and connections between various transportation modes

F: Proactive Marketing and Communications

Niagara Region will have a consistent and compelling message of our interests and needs for the community to be a great place in which to live, study, work, visit and invest.

Ongoing from 2009

- Continue the monthly E-News online web-based publication
- Develop and distribute the second edition of “Our Niagara Region”, the print publication
- Continue to promote the online and civics curriculum and education kit
- Plan and organize celebratory events and activities and create print materials to mark the Region’s 40th Anniversary
- Special events management for a variety of awards, including the T. Roy Adams Humanitarian Award, Community Design Awards, Environmental Awards, scholarship bursaries, and more

To be initiated in 2010

- Develop and distribute a ‘Directory of Services and Programs’ to inform citizens, businesses and others about Regional services and how to access them
- Launch the Social Media Strategy to capitalize on greater opportunities to engage citizens, especially youth (but not exclusively)

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Patrick Robson
Commissioner
Integrated Community Planning

Mike Trojan
Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared by Patrick Robson, with input from the ICP Senior Management Team.

APPENDIX

ICP Department Existing Mandates and Roles

Division	Areas of Responsibility
Secretariat to Niagara Regional Council (i.e. Clerk's Division)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Council business • Corporate Records management • Manage corporate print shop • Regional courier • Accessibility Advisory Co-ordination
Internal and External Communications (Corporate Communications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Council strategic objective of 'Proactive Marketing and Communications' • Media Relations • Social Media Practice and Policy • Crisis Communications Response • Internet Based Communications and Web Content • Community Engagement • Internal Employee Communications
Core Land Use Policy Planning (Regional Policy Planning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Water / Environment • Urban Form / Growth Management • Memorandum of Understanding for Planning Review Process • Transit • Link to Development Services
Community and Corporate Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Planning • Economic / Fiscal Policy and Planning • Climate Change Action Planning • Performance Measurement Initiatives • Culture Planning • Healthy Active Living Initiative
Regional Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Delivery – Regional emergency preparedness, response and recovery planning • Program Development – Hazard identification, community risk profiling, critical infrastructure resiliency and public education • Program integration – Linkages and alignments in partnership with local municipalities, cross border partners and higher levels of government