

History of Plan Preparation, Adoption and Approval

When the Niagara Region was formed according to **The Regional Municipality of Niagara Act** in 1970, the Niagara Regional Council was directed to prepare, adopt and forward to the Minister for approval an Official Plan for the regional area before the 31st day of December, 1973. Consultants were employed during 1971 and 1972 to prepare a "working draft" plan. This was reconsidered during 1973 and the Regional Council adopted a plan and submitted it to the Minister on December 31st, 1973, for approval, with some portions of it not completed. Commercial policies and urban areas boundaries maps were considered and adopted in 1974.

The Province informed Regional Council, in September, 1975, that the urban areas boundaries were too large and should be reduced. After many months of review, Council made reductions to the urban areas boundaries in August, 1976. In February, 1977, the former Minister of Housing, the Honourable John Rhodes, proposed some further reductions in the urban areas boundaries.

During the period up to the end of 1977, Regional Council also made various small amendments to the urban areas boundaries and the text of the Policy Plan. The agricultural, rural and environmental policies included in the 1973 Policy Plan were reviewed and reconsidered by the Region during 1977 and early 1978. As a result, amended policies, under the title "Amendment One", were submitted to the Minister for approval.

On June 16, 1978, the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Claude Bennett, officially approved a large portion of the Policy Plan as submitted by Niagara Regional Council. The Minister also:

- made some modifications as requested by Regional Council;
- referred numerous portions of the Urban Areas Boundaries Maps and some text to the Ontario Municipal Board for a decision;
- deferred his decision on some other parts of the Plan; and
- modified and then approved portions of the Urban Areas Boundaries Maps in accordance with the Minister of Housing's statement of February 16, 1977.

Amendment One (the sections of the Plan - Four, part of Five, Six, Seven and Part of Twelve - which were amended by Regional Council in 1978) was referred to the Ontario Municipal Board later.

The Ontario Municipal Board held a hearing from October 16, 1978, to December 6, 1978, concerning portions of the Urban Areas Boundaries Maps within the Cities of Port

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Colborne, Niagara Falls and Thorold, and issued its decision which approved some parts and modified other parts of the Urban Areas Boundaries Maps for those Cities.

The Ontario Municipal Board held a very lengthy hearing, continuing from November 13, 1979, to November 5, 1980, to consider the many portions of the Urban Areas Boundaries Maps for the City of St. Catharines and the Towns of Grimsby, Lincoln, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Pelham, and all of Amendment One. Its decision of February 27, 1981, approved some parts and modified other parts of the maps and text.

As a result of the above process commencing in 1971 and concluding early in 1981, the Regional Niagara Policy Plan was in a nearly complete and approved form, as reproduced in the 1983 and 1988 Office Consolidations. In response to several petitions, the Provincial Cabinet made two changes to the text in August, 1981.

Since Amendment One was adopted by Regional Council in June, 1978, there have been a number of other amendments. These are listed in Appendix B. Those which have been approved by the Minister, the Ontario Municipal Board, or after a decision by Regional Niagara, are incorporated into this Office Consolidation.

Amendments 58, 59 and 60 were the result of a lengthy review of the Policy Plan initiated in 1988. They were adopted by Council in 1991 and approved by the Province in 1994 with some amendments and deferrals of some disputed portions. The deferred portions were modified and approved in 1997.

A detailed list of the original documents and the approving or amending statements which form the basis for this Policy Plan is provided in Appendix B.