
REPORT TO: Planning & Development Committee

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, November 09, 2016

SUBJECT: Regional Official Plan Update

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the net incremental cost estimated of \$1.69 million associated with bringing the Regional Official Plan into compliance from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021 **BE REFERRED** to the 2017 budget process for consideration; and
2. That a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

KEY FACTS

- The purpose of this report is to provide Planning and Development Services Committee with an overview of the resources that will be required to bring the Regional Official Plan into conformity with Provincial Policy resulting from the Co-ordinated Planning Review (CPR) and the Region's Growth Strategy (Niagara 2041).
- The Province is in the final stages of reviewing provincial planning documents (Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan). Niagara Region's submission to the CPR was approved at Regional Council on Thursday 27 October 2016.
- Once the CPR is complete and the final provincial planning documents are released (expected early 2017), Niagara's Regional Official Plan needs to be updated to conform to the Provincial Plans by 2021. This will result in a new Regional Official Plan for Niagara.
- In addition, the Region is developing a new Growth Strategy (Niagara 2041) which integrates future transportation and servicing needs.
- Ontario's *Planning Act* (S.26) requires municipalities to undertake regular reviews (10 year review of a new Official Plan and every five years thereafter) of their plans to align with provincial requirements. The Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) is a component of this work and is currently underway.

- Background work required in preparation for the new Official Plan includes: population and employment forecast, land supply, performance indicators, natural heritage system mapping, agriculture system mapping, agriculture impact assessment, watershed planning and climate strategy.
- Approved in 1973, the Regional Official Plan has never been comprehensively updated.
- Many of the background studies required to support Niagara’s Regional Official Plan will require substantial resources and staffing in order to be completed by 2021.

CONSIDERATIONS

Financial

The estimated annual expenditures and projected available funding to bring the Official Plan in compliance are outlined in the chart below. The estimates are based on current direction contained in the draft Provincial planning documents, expenditures may change once final version of Provincial planning documents are released (early 2017) and associated guidance documents are released (early 2018).

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020 & beyond</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>Net \$</u>	<u>Net \$</u>	<u>Net \$</u>	<u>Net \$</u>	<u>Net</u>
Gross Expenditures	400,000	870,000	870,000	860,000	3,000,000
Gross Revenues	<u>(360,000)</u>	<u>(500,000)</u>	<u>(200,000)</u>	<u>(250,000)</u>	<u>(1,310,000)</u>
Net Impact to levy/rate	40,000	370,000	670,000	610,000	1,690,000

Expenditures required to revise the Regional Official Plan include the cost of 3.5 temporary, full time staff over the 5 year project which would include: Project Manager, Senior Planner, GIS/Planning Analyst and administrative support. This staff would oversee the completion of the new Regional Official Plan. Additional expertise would be brought in through the contracting of background reports in order to meet the requirements set out by the province

Expenditures associated with bringing the Official Plan in compliance are considered 100% growth related and are therefore eligible to be funded 90% by Development Charges. Based on the current development charge rates there would not be sufficient funding to completely fund 90% of the anticipated costs. The annual funding projected to be available from development charges is shown under Gross Revenues with the balance shown under net Impact to levy/rate. However, there is the legitimate opportunity to capture the differential through updated rates as part of the new

development charge by-law. As such, there is the potential for development charges to fund a higher portion of the costs.

Corporate

A new Regional Official Plan is a key Council document that establishes policies and land uses over a 20 year period. The project aligns with Council's strategic priority of Innovation, Investment, & Entrepreneurship. An updated plan will align with new Provincial Policy and is consistent with the Region's objectives. It will also provide policy guidance on emerging matters such as a comprehensive regional employment strategy and climate change.

Governmental Partners

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is the approval authority for the Niagara Region's Official Plan. Staff will work closely with the Province and our local Municipalities to update the Regional Official Plan. The Province is aware and supportive on a new Official Plan for Niagara Region.

Public and/or Service Users

The preparation of an Official Plan represents a significant commitment and requires ongoing collaboration and public engagement. Over the course of the project it is envisioned that there will be numerous opportunities for members of the public, stakeholders, and agencies to be actively involved.

ANALYSIS

Ontario's *Planning Act* (S. 26) requires municipalities to undertake regular reviews (ten or five year reviews) of their plans to align with provincial requirements. The Act requires alignments be achieved in the following areas:

- Conformity with Provincial Plans (Places to Grow; Greenbelt, NEC)
- Conformity with Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)
- General Alignment with the goals of the *Planning Act*

Since 2013 there have been policy updates to the Regional Official Plan. However, as a result of the current CPR and changes to the Planning Act this necessitates a comprehensive overhaul to the existing Regional Official Plan in order for the document to conform to Provincial legislation. A new Official Plan that is aligned with Provincial policy and up-to-date with current planning practices will reduce the risk to the development community and allow the regional and local official plans to be brought into alignment.

ALTERNATIVES REVIEWED

Municipalities in Ontario can take one of two approaches in conducting a review of the Official Plan.

1. Prepare a new Official Plan from start to finish. This approach is costly and time consuming. It would be in the Regions best interest proceed with this approach, given that the content of the Regional Plan is not contemporary. Once Regional Council adopts a new Official Plan, the local municipalities will have to also undertake a conformity exercise to ensure their official plans comply with the Regional Plan, and Provincial Policy. This is a more responsible approach for the Region to take as it reduces the burden (time, cost, resources, etc.) on our local municipalities from incrementally and continually updating their official plans.
2. Undertake a series of topic specific amendments. This is generally done when the content of the Plan has been regularly updated and the work in the Five Year Review is more focused on specific topic areas needing attention. Given the recent provincial policy changes and the current state of Niagara's Regional Official Plan, this approach is not recommended.

ORIGIN OF REPORT

This report is seeking direction to move forward with a work program for the Regional Official Plan update.

OTHER PERTINENT REPORTS

PDS 29-2016: Province of Ontario Coordinated Plan Review Submission on the Draft Plans

PDS 41-2016: Coordinated Policy Review Proposed Revisions

SUBMITTED BY:

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Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

APPROVED BY:

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