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**Subject:** Consultation Response and Further Policy Development

**Report to:** Planning and Economic Development Committee

**Report date:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021

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## **Recommendations**

1. That Report PDS 36-2021 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That a copy of Report PDS 36-2021 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

## **Key Facts**

- This report outlines responses to consultation received on draft Niagara Official Plan (NOP) policies included in the Joint Consolidated Draft Report PDS 17-2021, being Growth Management, Infrastructure, Transportation, District and Secondary Planning and Urban Design.
- It highlights future consultation to take place regarding Natural Environment System and Agricultural mapping changes.
- A timeline for completion and adoption of the NOP is provided.
- A draft Introduction Chapter (Chapter 1) attached as Appendix 4.2 establishes the context and framework for the NOP.
- The Pillar Statements and Directives outlined in the draft Introduction (Chapter 1) were developed from extensive public input and Council consultation.

## **Financial Considerations**

Council approved the resources to complete the new NOP over a five year period as part of the 2017 Budget Process, predominantly funded through Development Charges.

## **Analysis**

This report has four parts:

1. Responding to consultation received from the release of the May PDS 17-2021 Report;
2. Consultation moving forward;

3. Niagara Official Plan timelines; and,
4. Further policy development being Chapter 1, Introduction.

### **1. Responding to Consultation Received**

In the Joint Consolidated May Report (PDS 17-2021), detailed information was provided on the purpose of an Official Plan, the importance of a new Official Plan and the Pillar Statements and Directives. Also included for further consultation were draft policies pertaining to Growth Management and supporting draft policies on Infrastructure, Transportation, District and Secondary Planning and Urban Design for the Niagara Official Plan.

Consultation input received on the Joint Consolidated May Report has been through two venues. Input received at Public Information Centres provided by questions and some comments, and the often more detailed written submissions on the draft policies contained in the Report.

#### **June 2021 Public Information Centres**

As mentioned in Report PDS 32-2021- Update on Niagara Official Plan-Further Draft Policy Development, five virtual Public Information Centres were held in June, with each session focusing on policy topics from a different chapter of the NOP. There were 238 attendees, and 204 questions and comments submitted. The majority of questions were answered live by staff during the webinar, however, answers to questions left unanswered at the webinars due to lack of time or available information, have been posted to the NOP website. Further, recordings of the PIC webinars are also posted on the Region's website.

Report PDS 32-2021 provided an update of the key themes/questions from the PICS for reference. For the Committee's reference, the updates are attached as Appendix 1.

#### **Received Submissions**

As mentioned in Report PDS 32-2021, there were 73 written submissions received on the draft growth management policies, settlement area boundary requests and employment conversions. Key themes from this consultation were outlined in Report PDS 32-2021 and are made available for the Committee's convenience as Appendix 2. [Comments](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/commenting-may-july.aspx) (https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/commenting-may-july.aspx) received on the Joint Consolidated May Report can be found by clicking the link above.

In addition, there were numerous written submissions received relative to land needs, allocations and settlement (urban) area boundary expansions. These were outlined in Report PDS 33-2021.

The NOP website also has a [Settlement Area Boundary Review \(SABR\) mapping and commenting tool](#)

(<https://navigator.niagararegion.ca/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eb1c2537526b44a4a275372e76e10939>). This can be found by clicking the link above. The last day for providing comments through the SABR mapping and commenting tool is October 1, 2021.

Staff will be providing recommendations on these requests in late Fall.

All the written submissions received on the Joint Consolidated May Report and referred to in Reports PDS 32-2021 and PDS 33-2021 are summarized in Appendices 3.1 to 3.5. These Appendices also outline action to be taken. There are numerous revisions being made and contemplated to all policy sections of the Plan based on public input. Where staff are considering making policy changes the text is coloured blue and where staff have decided to make policy changes the text is bolded.

It is important to note that the revisions are in response to the draft policies presented in the Joint Consolidated May Report. Further revisions will be made as the consultation and policy development moves forward.

After the Committee considers this Report, it will be placed on the NOP website.

## **2. CONSULTATION MOVING FORWARD**

As the Committee is aware, staff have had ongoing consultation with the public local municipal planning staff, local Councils, stakeholder groups and Indigenous groups. This consultation will continue.

Based on feedback from Planning and Economic Development Committee, staff will be advising individual property owners where Regional mapping changes may have an impact on the development potential of their property. In this regard staff will contact property owners directly relative to the following:

- Where lands will be changed from Rural to Agricultural unless the properties are already designated or zoned Rural; and,

- Where a new natural heritage feature, being a feature not currently mapped in the Regional Official Plan, is identified on a property in the urban area and is not a feature directly identified by the Province such as a provincially significant wetland.

As previously mentioned to the Committee, staff have been discussing technical boundary adjustments to the urban area boundaries with local planning staff. These refinements are being done in accordance with criteria and will not result in significant impacts on development potential. As a result, Staff will not be consulting individual property owners on these technical refinements.

This Fall, staff will update the Committee on all the draft policy sections that have undergone revisions as a result of consultation, highlighting any key changes in policy direction. This would include the Introduction, growth management policies and supporting draft policies on Infrastructure, Transportation, District and Secondary Planning and Urban Design, as well as Source Water Protection, Excess Solis, Petroleum and Mineral Resources and Monitoring.

Once a complete draft consolidated Official Plan is provided to Planning Committee at the end of the year there will be the normal continued public consultation with stakeholder groups and the public. Public consultation will be via three open houses and the formal public meeting required under the Planning Act.

### **3. NIAGARA OFFICIAL PLAN TIMELINES MOVING FORWARD**

The chart below outlines the general timeline for the NOP. Staff intend to have a draft Consolidated Official Plan for consultation for the end of the year. The statutory public meeting date identified in March is in association with 90 review period of the Province. Open Houses will be scheduled prior to the public meeting.



#### 4. FURTHER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

##### Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Introduction, being Chapter 1 establishes the planning context in Niagara, the Plan’s legislative basis, process for planning in a two tiered system and the Niagara Official Plan structure and frame work. The Introduction also contains Pillar Statements setting the Vision for Niagara and direction for the manner in which Niagara will grow. These were developed after substantial consultation with the public and Council. The Executive Overview for this Chapter is attached as Appendix 4 and the draft Introduction is attached as Appendix 5. The Draft Introduction will be provided for consultation in the same manner as previous policy sets.

##### Alternatives Reviewed

There are no alternatives to this report. This report is for information purposes providing an update on consultation and action being taken on certain draft policy sections, consultation moving forward, Official Plan timelines, and a draft Introduction Chapter for consultation.

## **Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities**

The Niagara Official Plan will support the following Strategic Priority Objectives:

### **Objective 1.1: Economic Growth and Development**

- Enhance integration with local municipalities' economic development and planning departments to provide supports and improve interactions with businesses to expedite and navigate development processes.
- Forward thinking approach to economic development in Niagara through long term strategic planning and leveraging partnerships with post-secondary institutions.

### **Objective 1.4: Strategically Target Industry Sectors**

- Define Niagara's role in tourism including areas such as sport, eco, agricultural and culture tourism.

### **Objective 2.3: Addressing Affordable Housing Needs**

- Retain, protect and increase the supply of affordable housing stock to provide a broad range of housing to meet the needs of the community.

### **Objective 3.2: Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship**

- A holistic and flexible approach to environmental stewardship and consideration of the natural environment, such as in infrastructure, planning and development, aligned with a renewed Official Plan
- Drive environmental protection and addressing climate change such as through increasing waste diversion rates and reducing our carbon footprint

### **Objective 3.3: Maintain Existing Infrastructure**

- Sound asset management planning to ensure sustainable investments in the infrastructure needed to support existing residents and businesses, as well as future growth in Niagara.

## Other Pertinent Reports

- Joint Consolidated May Report [PDS 17-2021](#)  
(<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/consolidated-policy-report.aspx>)
- PDS 32-2021 Update on Niagara Official Plan - Further Draft Policy Development
- PDS 33-2021 Niagara Official Plan: Land Needs Assessment and Settlement Area Boundary Review Update

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## Appendices

- Appendix 1 June 2021 Public Information Centre Key Themes
- Appendix 2 Themes Emerging from Feedback on Joint Consolidated May Report
- Appendix 3.1 Chapter 2: Growing Region
- Appendix 3.2 Chapter 3: Sustainable Region
- Appendix 3.3 Chapter 4: Competitive Region
- Appendix 3.4 Chapter 5: Connected Region

Appendix 3.5 Chapter 6: Vibrant Region

Appendix 4.1 Executive Overview

Appendix 4.2 Chapter 1 – Introduction (Draft)

## Themes Emerging From Feedback on Joint Consolidated May Report

The following table outlines the key themes emerging from feedback received on the Joint Consolidated May Report ([PDS 17-2021](#)) between May-July 2021.

A summary of the comments and regional response can be found within Appendix 3.1 to 3.5 of this covering report.

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region's website: [Niagara Official Plan \(https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/\)](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/)

Chapter	Consistent/Key Comment or Question
Chapter 2: Growing Region	<p>2.1 - Growth Allocations &amp; Land Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some municipalities suggested higher populations may be more appropriate for them and there were private sector submissions suggesting different distributions.</li> </ul> <p>2.2 - Regional Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests for clarification on concepts and policies.</li> </ul> <p>2.3 - Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns for appropriate housing mix, separation between dwellings, and secondary dwelling units.</li> </ul> <p>Settlement Area Boundary Review (SABR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various requests for urban boundary expansions/adjustments in Niagara, including Niagara Falls, West Lincoln, Pelham, Fort Erie, Thorold, Welland, and St. Catharines.</li> </ul>
Chapter 3: Sustainable Region	<p>3.1 - Natural Environment System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions about balance of protecting natural environment with urban boundary expansions.</li> <li>• Emphasis on protection of natural spaces, including trails and parks.</li> </ul> <p>3.5 - Climate Change</p>

Chapter	Consistent/Key Comment or Question
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of making climate change prominent throughout the plan to address transit, watershed planning, natural heritage system and agriculture.</li> <li>• The need to protect mature trees in addition to planting new trees across the region.</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 4: Competitive Region</p>	<p>4.1 - Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests to expand agricultural areas as well as requests for removal of land in the Greenbelt Plan area.</li> <li>• Comments on recognizing agricultural infrastructure in the NOP.</li> </ul> <p>4.2 - Employment Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific requests to remove employment areas and letters of support for employment conversions.</li> </ul> <p>4.3 - Aggregates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions with respect to technical studies required for new aggregate operations, haul routes, and rehabilitation requirements.</li> <li>• Concern over local and regional amendments for new operations and concern over haul route and rehabilitation policies.</li> </ul>
<p>Chapter 5: Connected Region</p>	<p>5.1 - Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern with heavy truck traffic along the Niagara Escarpment crossing to QEW.</li> <li>• Support for lands designated as Major Transit Station Areas and growth surrounding those areas.</li> </ul>

Chapter	Consistent/Key Comment or Question
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requests for clarity on local-regional jurisdictional matters.</li> </ul> <p>5.2 - Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific request with respect to servicing outside the urban area.</li> <li>• Requests for clarity on local-regional jurisdictional matters.</li> </ul>
Chapter 6: Vibrant Region	<p>6.1 - District and Secondary Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on requirements to add secondary plan policies into local official plans.</li> <li>• Concern over expanded scope and study for Secondary Plans.</li> </ul> <p>6.2 - Urban Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on local and regional urban design guidelines.</li> <li>• Concern over Region's oversight relative to urban design matters.</li> </ul> <p>6.3 - Archaeology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions regarding when archaeological assessments should be required and exemptions.</li> </ul>

### Chapter 2: Growing Region

Below is a summary of written comments received on [PDS 17-2021](#) between May 2021 and July 15, 2021, related specifically to the Land Needs Assessment, Regional Structure, Housing, Settlement Area Boundary Review, and employment conversions.

Where text is bolded under ‘Regional response’, revisions will be occurring to draft policy. Where the ‘Regional response’ box is highlighted in blue, revisions will be considered.

Comments received verbally through municipal meetings and Public Information Centres (PIC) are not summarized below. Video recordings, presentations, as well as Regional responses to comments not addressed at the June PICs can be found at the Region’s website: [Niagara Official Plan \(https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx\)](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx)

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region’s website: [Niagara Official Plan \(https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/\)](https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/)

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)	Stakeholder	Niagara-on-the-Lake	2.1	PALS regards the use of a higher population projection by Niagara than that provided by the province as subversive of good land use planning across Ontario. Comments with respect to rejecting provincial population projections.	The Region must plan for the population forecasted in the Growth Plan, as a minimum. Decision of Regional Council must conform to the Growth Plan. In developing forecasts, Staff consider all planning matters, including climate change, the natural environment system, and core housing needs/affordability.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
					<p>The Made-in-Niagara Forecasts best address these matters.</p> <p>Staff recommend proceeding with the Made-in-Niagara Forecasts for the reasons identified here and in PDS 33-2021.</p>
<p>Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)</p>	<p>Stakeholder</p>	<p>Niagara-on-the-Lake</p>	<p>2.1</p>	<p>Understands that a 460 hectare urban expansion for residential needs has been determined. Comments that this figure hasn't been defended and logically explained. Confusion with this being subject to change and why there is need for expansion of employment lands, with no precise figure provided. This does appear to eliminate however, the notion that residential needs can be accommodated through re-designating employment lands.</p>	<p>A detailed May 2021 Draft Land Needs Assessment (LNA) is provided in Appendix 3.2 of PDS 17-2021. An updated version of the LNA is attached PDS 33-2021 as Appendix 1. This LNA was developed in conformity to the Provincial Land Needs Assessment Methodology, which identifies the specific components, inputs and assumptions required.</p> <p>Employment Areas are a component of the LNA. The additional Community Area land cannot be supported through re-designating employment lands. A reduction in existing Employment Areas to support Community Area development</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
					<p>would create a greater need for Employment Area.</p> <p>Staff recommend proceeding with the Made-in-Niagara Forecasts for the reasons identified here and in PDS 33-2021</p>
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Section 1: Growth Allocations and Land Needs (p.1). If the Housing Report explains housing need will get worse if growth continues at this level, why is the Traffic Zone study showing a decrease in population in established neighbourhoods?	Established neighbourhoods generally have an older demographic than new neighbourhoods; as a result, the average number of people per unit is expected to decline slightly from 2021- 2051.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Table 2- Accessory Dwelling Unit forecast seems low as the City of Welland itself has been processing approximately 50 accessory dwelling unit permits a year.	<p>Through consultation with Welland staff after receipt of this comment, the Region and City agreed that 50 additional units per year for Secondary Suites was an achievable target.</p> <p>Welland is assigned an additional 1,600 apartment units in the Made-in-Niagara Forecast. The majority of additional</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
					apartment units are anticipated to be Secondary Units.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Table 3 (Welland). As discussed, this forecast seems low for Welland. Planning applications and pre-consultations alone is higher than these figures, especially for apartment units. These projects will commence within the next half decade or less. How will the Region work with municipalities to address these issues? Does the apartments figure also take into consideration accessory dwelling units?	Based on a detailed review of development proposals and servicing to 2051, more population is needed in Welland’s built-up area.  In the updated Made-in-Niagara Forecast, Welland is assigned an additional 10,000 people to 2051, exclusively in the built-up area. This results in an intensification rate of 75% and no additional need for Community Area lands to 2051.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Table 12- Employment Area Land Need Figure will be greater once you take into consideration the updated natural heritage mapping.	Refinements to the Natural Environment System (NES) have been on going since the May report. Since that time, the Region has protected more environmental lands in Employment Areas, including in Welland. This results in less developable Employment Area in Welland.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
					The revised LNA has a small need for additional Employment Area land in Welland. NES work, including consultation on it, is ongoing. Thus, the final land need may have minor adjustments prior to completion in the Official Plan.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Natural Environment System impacts (p.27, paragraph 4)- The document states 'The approach set out in the Methodology is to remove all natural features and systems from the developable land supply (i.e. DGA).' Yet, the NES Options characterize developed and already excavated and cut lands as Natural Heritage. Does this mean our Employment Area land need is not actually as great as what is stated?	The Employment Area calculations for the LNA are based on developable land supply and remove natural heritage features and encumbered lands.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.1.1.9 c) 2.1.2.1	The City is currently having its own forecasts being created as part of our own Official Plan review. These forecasts will be included in the	The Growth Plan identifies that the Region is responsible for allocating forecasts. Until the Region allocates forecasts, the forecasts that existed on

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			2.1.2.2 a)	updated Official Plan document. The city will consider policies in its Zoning and OP where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial Policy.	August 28, 2020 remain in effect. Future forecasts established by Welland must conform to the Niagara Official Plan and Growth Plan.
Township of West Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	West Lincoln supports the Regional growth allocations as provided to West Lincoln.	Staff acknowledge the Township’s support of the Region’s work to date on the forecasts.
Timberlee Glen Development Ltd. (IBI Group)	Stakeholder		2.1	IBI Group representing Timberlee Glen Development Ltd., respecting lands in the Port Weller East area of St. Catharines, south of Lakeshore Road, between Read Rd and the Welland Canal, outlines reasons for making these lands a mixed-use area. These lands are currently employment and comprise approximately 18.4ha.	This matter is the subject of an OLT appeal relating to St. Catharines OPA 26. At this time, the Region does not agree to change the designation on these lands from employment area.  Employment Area conversions remain under consideration as part of the SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Identified excess lands through the Regions' LNA need to be addressed through tools and policies in the Region's Official Plan. However, at	Work is ongoing on policies and tools to manage lands that are currently designated beyond the 2051 planning horizon.

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				<p>this time those policies and tools have not yet been prepared. Development of these policies and tools should be done in conjunction with local Planning staff.</p>	<p>Additional policies are forthcoming in Fall 2021 to address this comment. Region and Thorold staff will meet to collaboratively work on policies.</p>
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	<p>Staff are of the opinion that the population growth forecast for Lincoln is low considering current development proposals and the planned higher densities in the Beamsville GO Station Area and Prudhommes area. As such, staff are of the opinion that further consultation is needed with Niagara Region prior to finalizing growth allocations for Lincoln.</p>	<p>Based on a detailed review of the development proposals and servicing to 2051, more population is needed in Lincoln’s built-up area.</p> <p>Lincoln is assigned an additional 10,000 people to 2051, exclusively in the delineated built-up area. This results in an intensification rate of 90% and no additional need for Community Area lands to 2051.</p>
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	<p>The Region has allocated an additional 900 households to Lincoln’s Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) over the next 30 years. Staff are of the opinion that this figure is low, considering the majority of Lincoln’s vacant DGA is</p>	<p>The DGA lands in the Beamsville GO Transit Station Area Secondary Plan Land Use Schedule are predominately Office Commercial and Transit Station Area. Thus, only 900 residential units are</p>

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				located in the Beamsville Go Transit Station area, which has planned for higher transit-oriented densities.	forecast. However, this unit forecast is a minimum target.  Minor refinements may be made to the housing unit mix prior to the completion of the Niagara Official Plan.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Consistent with these policies, the Region has allocated 0.5% of Lincoln’s growth to the Rural Area. Town staff are supportive of this.	Staff acknowledge the Town’s support of the Region’s work.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Staff are of the opinion that the LNA be refined for Lincoln prior to finalizing. A larger proportion of growth should be allocated to apartment unit types. This considers both market demand based on development proposals the Town has been receiving in the Built Up Area (BUA), the planned densities in the BUA, and the limited supply of vacant land available in the BUA.	On further data review, Staff have adjusted the unit mix and included a greater share of apartment units. This is assigned exclusively within the built-up area.  Lincoln is assigned an additional 4,225 apartment units through the Made-in-Niagara Forecast.

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City of Niagara Falls	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	The City accepts the 2051 population target of 141, 560 people and housing growth of 20, 220 units for the 2021 to 2051 period.	Staff acknowledge the City's support of the Region's the work to date on the forecasts
City of Niagara Falls	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Recognizing the City's Housing Needs and Supply Report, the City requests that the intensification rate currently set at 50% for the Built Up Area be revised to 60%. A change in the intensification rate will result in the need to amend Tables 3-6 and Table 8 in the Draft LNA summary.	<p>Niagara Region staff support the City's Housing work. The Region's Intensification Rates are based on the Land Needs Assessment Methodology released by the Province. The City's Housing work suggested increased intensification to address Housing needs, but did not include analysis of land needs, including market demand.</p> <p>The Region will continue to work with the City to support the City's Housing work. The City is encouraged to apply a greater intensification rate, above the minimum identified in the Niagara Official Plan, through the City's future Official Plan conformity exercise. At this time, in the Region's Official Plan, we do not</p>

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					intend to change the City’s intensification rate from 50% to 60%.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		2.1	Town Staff reviewed the Draft LNA and Draft Forecasting Polices and are generally satisfied with the proposed intensification rates, growth allocation numbers and land needs assessment. However, the Town felt although close, more employment area was needed based on its consultant findings (Report PDS-54-2021).	Staff acknowledge Town’s support of Region’s work on the LNA and allocations. The revised Made-in-Niagara Forecast and updated LNA has more employment area in Fort Erie than the May Forecast and LNA.  Region Planning staff will continue to consult with Fort Erie staff on the LNA and related processes.
Amie Chung	Other		2.2.2.5 2.2.2.10	Request for information pertaining to the designation of the Niagara Falls MTSA as a Strategic Growth Area	Staff responded to Amie with report links and information.
Ramune Angela Bell	Public	NOTL	2.2	Contends that a hospital in Niagara-on-the-Lake is necessary given population growth and projections for NOTL.	Decisions for hospital locations are decided by the Ministry. This comment was received previously through the Glendale District Plan.
Susan Murphy	Public		2.2	Clarification regarding 'complete communities' and if it describes new	Complete communities is a guiding principle applying to both infill and

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				infill development or greenfield development.	greenfield development.
Susan Murphy	Public		2.2	Are there opportunities to incentivize intensification in urban areas and transit corridors?	<p>The Regional Structure policies are allowing higher densities, in this way incentivizing this type of development to occur in urban areas and along transit corridors.</p> <p>The Region is also undertaking an incentive review. For more information please visit the Regional Incentive Review website:  <a href="https://niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-incentive-review/default.aspx">https://niagararegion.ca/projects/regional-incentive-review/default.aspx</a></p>
Susan Murphy	Public		2	What impact will the Regional Council's recent request for more mapping of the Natural Heritage System have on the expected timeline on completing the Growth Management policies of the Official Plan?	Report PDS 33-2021 addresses NHS impacts with growth management policies.

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City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2	Build Complete Communities introduction, second paragraph: complete communities should include reference to outdoor amenities, so that the whole live, work, play concept of a complete community is achieved.	<b>Staff will update the introduction to reference outdoor amenities.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.1.3 c)	This policy refers to tenure and unit size. Staff cannot regulate tenure in any planning document and unit size is regulated through the Ontario Building Code.	Staff will consider removing tenure and keeping unit size.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.1.3 I ii)	How will this policy be implemented? Will the Region be requiring green infrastructure and LID practices at the Site Plan Approval stage?	<b>The intention was not to make this a requirement. Staff will revise policy to clarify.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.2.12	The phrase 'where permitted by scale' should be removed to avoid confusion. The phrase is unnecessary and it is unclear whether a scale requirement is	Staff will consider removing 'where permitted by scale'.

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				intended to apply to the whole list of uses, or just to employment uses.	
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.3.3 c)	Promoting redevelopment of brownfields in the rural area is a bit peculiar. Remediation of a brownfield is done to allow a more sensitive land use, i.e. residential. Encouraging redevelopment is good, but provincial policy may limit what you can actually allow in a rural area. This is really an "urban" policy.	Thank you, Staff will consider this comment.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.6.1 k)	An application cannot be predetermined as suggested in this policy. The density is to be achieved across the entire DGA or Built Boundary. Some sites may warrant being down zoned/designated based on site criteria/surrounding area/built form/local concern and should be assessed accordingly.	Staff will consider revising the language of this policy.

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City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.6.1 l)	Secondary plans cannot be prepared for future urban areas. Secondary plans should be prepared after the urban area expansion has been approved.	Staff agree language does not consider approval of secondary plans prior to expansion.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.6.3	Local municipalities should have the flexibility to add these policies at the time of preparing the local OP update.	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.1.5 d) and e)	Not sure how the Region can ask developers to provide a mix of household sizes and incomes and minimize the cost of housing.	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.6.2	Local growth centres: this term is used to provide direction to the local municipalities to identify 'local growth centres'. The term is italicized but there is no definition. Including a definition will provide more clarity.	<b>Staff will include a definition for local growth centres in the glossary of the plan.</b>

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City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.5.6	This policy states 'The Region will develop criteria to guide the review of settlement area boundary expansions and adjustments as set out in Policies 2.2.5.2 to 2.2.5.5'. Should municipalities not be included in the development of this review process? Has the Province already created this type of criteria?	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.2.6	The City will consider policies in its Zoning and OP where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial Policy.	Local Official Plans must comply with both Regional and Provincial Policy where relevant.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.2	How will new strategic growth areas be identified? Will there be criteria created to determine this?	Policy 2.2.2.7 references new strategic growth areas.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.2	When will the Smart City policies be developed?	Smart City policies will be developed following completion of the new Niagara Official Plan.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Comments Received</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.2	Map is missing Innio lands as part of Delineated Built Up Area.	The Province establishes the delineated built up area in 2008, which is what is reflected in the Regional Structure Schedule.
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.2.1.3 c)	Suggested policy language change from 'provide' a diverse range and mix of housing types to 'prioritize.	Staff are satisfied with the current language.
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.2.1.3 e)	Suggested policy language inclusion of 'minimize vehicle miles travelled' (VMT).	The objective is to provide alternative or diverse forms of transportation, not to specifically minimize vehicle miles travelled. Public forms of travel may increase miles travelled.
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.2.1.3 f)	Suggested policy language inclusion of 'by introducing quality bike infrastructure and pedestrian walkways within new development'.	Thank you for your suggestion. This is addressed in Section 5.1 Transportation.
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.2.1.3 h)	Suggested policy language inclusion of 'by promoting human-scaled design and the development of rear lanes, greenways, and pedestrian walkways'.	The Official Plan will focus on integrating urban design concepts and provides flexibility in urban design.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.2.1.3 g)	<p>Suggestion of an additional sub-policy:</p> <p>‘Promote the design of Regional and local roads that prioritizes public safety, particularly those of vulnerable road users over the management of vehicle through-put, levels-of-service, and <i>goods movement</i>. Road design speeds within urban areas should never exceed 50 km/h and 30 - 40 km/h engineering design speeds should be broadly encouraged, explored and implemented’.</p>	Road safety is considered through an environmental assessment process.
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.2.4.1 b)	Suggested policy language change from ‘encourage’ compact built forms to ‘prioritize’.	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.2	Comments on Regional Structure and information as to what the Town will be required to do for their local official plans and zoning by-laws.	No action required. Comments received.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		2.2	<p>The overall intensification rate for Fort Erie is proposed to be 50%. The Town's actual intensification rate tends to average around 60%. In 2019 it was 59% and 2020 is was 63%. Staff is confident a target of 50% is achievable. Staff are of the opinion that the higher rate is more reflective of the existing and planned growth in the future.</p> <p>Staff has no issues with the Draft Regional Structure Policies or Schedule B, which identifies the Town's Urban Area Boundaries (UAB) and Greenfield Areas. Staff assumes that Schedule B will be updated when the Land Needs Assessment is completed and any expansions to the UAB will be captured at this time.</p> <p>Council has identified a priority list of areas where Secondary Plans</p>	Staff have received these comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				should be prepared and will continue to move forward based on these priorities.	
Sheila Jennings	Public	NOTL	2.3	Question regarding the provision of an appropriate housing mix and who is responsible for monitoring	The housing mix is established by local municipalities with guidance from the Niagara Official Plan.
Victoria Berk	Public	Fort Erie	2.3	Concerned about the size of residential lots and lack of separation between dwellings	Thank you for your comment. Size of residential lots and separation between dwellings is a local responsibility.
Dave Nicholson	Public		2.3	Question regarding permitting secondary dwelling units and how it will affect housing affordability. Will rezoning existing residential properties to permit secondary dwelling units increase the price of a property / dwelling?	The authorization of secondary units within single-detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings is a legislated requirement under Section 16 (3) and 35.1 (1) of the Planning Act. It is for this reason that municipalities must provide

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
					<p>as-of-right permissions for these units in Official Plans and Zoning By-laws.</p> <p>With that in mind, data related to secondary units has historically been limited in Niagara. With the new Official Plan, we intend to work with local municipalities to establish more consistent and comprehensive monitoring to understand their prevalence and impacts on our housing market.</p> <p>Staff provided commenter with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Commission (CMHC) 'Housing Market Insights' report centered on secondary units in Ontario.</p> <p>The report confirms that secondary units can help to increase the overall supply of rental units in established neighbourhoods using a more gentle form of intensification. This gap in rental</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
					<p>accommodations is particularly needed by households in core housing need.</p> <p>Staff outside of the Niagara Official Plan itself are also considering other strategies, such as incentives that cover a portion of costs needed to add secondary units to a dwelling.</p>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.2.3	Staff are supportive of this policy but tools need to be developed by the Province and/or the Region to assist with implementing affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning is not an option, as the City does not have a major transit station area or a development permit system.	Thank you, Staff will continue working with city staff to reach goals of affordable housing
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.2.7 c)	The intent of this policy needs to be clarified. All municipalities are regulated by the Province to complete asset management plans for all assets.	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.3	Some policies under this section are duplication of policy already identified in the Provincial Policy Statement and Places to Growth Plan.	The Region is required to implement policy from the Province.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.3.1 e)	Vacancy rate is normally looked at over a 3-year period rather than at current situation/time of submission. This policy could lead to the conversion of much of the rental market if the vacancy rate is above 3% at a specific time. Controlling it over a longer period manages the conversion better.	Thank you, we will reconsider based on this comment.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		2.3	Many of the policies in this section are missing direction for who will implement. For example, policies 2.3.1.4, 2.3.1.6, 2.3.2.8, 2.3.2.9 do not provide direction for who will implement the policy. Some of the policies may only be appropriate for the local municipalities to implement and some may be a combination of	Thank you, we will reconsider based on this comment.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				both the Region and the local municipalities.	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.1.5 b)	The City will use its own Urban Design Guidelines where applicable.	The policy refers to Chapter 6: Urban Design, where local urban design guidance can be used if available.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.2.4	Priority will be given to the sale or lease of surplus municipal property for the development of affordable housing while ensuring the objectives and policies of this Plan are met.' Does this only apply to Regional surplus land?	Thank you, Staff will look at the relevance of this policy.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.3	The City will consider policies in its Zoning and OP where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial Policy.	Thank you, Staff will look at the relevance of this policy.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		2.3.3.1 e)	Prohibit the demolition or conversion of rental housing to ownership tenure'. The City's current OP applies this to residential rental	If a local municipality has a policy that covers this in their local OP or zoning by-law, that will apply.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				properties containing six or more dwelling units. Would this still apply, or is more clarification needed?	
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.3.1.1	Suggested policy language change from 'support' the development of a range and mix of housing types to 'encourage'.	Staff will consider this suggestion.
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.3.1.1 e)	Suggested sub-policy to be added: 'Do not regulate housing on the basis of human relationship in accordance with the Planning Act and Ontario Human Rights Code'.	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.3.3.2 b)	Suggested policy language change from 'allow for' flexibility in the scale, form and types of residential uses permitted as-of-right to 'encourage'.	<b>Staff will revise policy to address comment.</b>
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.3.3.2 c)	Suggested policy language inclusion of 'flat maximum GFAs rather than a % of principle dwelling (see O.Reg 384/94)'.	The direction for this policy is to local municipalities and includes site standard examples. It would not preclude this from being implemented at the local conformity stage.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Better Neighbourhoods	Stakeholder		2.3.3.2 c)	Why is this more optimal than basic height requirements? FARs are bad proxies for land use compatibility	The direction for this policy is to local municipalities and includes site standard examples. It would not preclude this from being implemented at the local conformity stage.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		2.3	<p>Town staff are generally in support of the housing theme changes, and several are already within the Town’s Official Plan. A wide mix of housing types will help meet market needs as well as attract diverse populations to Niagara across all ages, incomes and backgrounds. One area of concern is how the “Affordable Housing” will be defined.</p> <p>On account of the varying average household incomes, what may be considered affordable in Lincoln may not be in other lower tier municipalities.</p> <p>Town staff can work with Regional planners to fine tune this definition to</p>	It is Provincial policy that states affordable housing is defined using the regional market area.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				ensure that it better reflects the reality in Lincoln.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		2.3	<p>Staff have reviewed the Draft Housing Policies and are satisfied that they will provide overall guidance for the Town in encouraging a mix of housing types and tenures.</p> <p>The policies support the work that the Town has already done through the Housing Action Strategy (April 2019) and Housing Needs Study (November 2019).</p> <p>Staff has initiated an Official Plan Amendment to address affordability in the Town as well as a Community Improvement Plan to provide incentives for affordable housing development.</p> <p>While not outlined specifically</p>	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				<p>through these policies, Staff note that the Region is encouraging municipalities to create incentive programs for affordable housing.</p> <p>The Town encourages the Region to develop matching or additional programs through the Smarter Niagara Incentive Program (SNIP) that will complement the incentives the Town is currently working to implement.</p>	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		Glossary	<p>The <i>Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act</i> (NEPDA) defines development as including “a change in the use of any land, building or structure”. There is no exception for development approved through an environmental assessment. As such, infrastructure projects which have been subject to environmental assessment may still be subject to the requirement to obtain a Development Permit from</p>	<p><b>Staff will add policy to separate section of the Niagara Official Plan to address comment.</b></p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				the NEC, if the project is within the Area of Development Control.	
Frank & Lisa McGee	Public	Niagara Falls	SABR	Question about potential redevelopment and land use designation changes to the lands west of Garner Road, north of McLeod Road, and south of Lundy's Lane in NF.	This is to be considered as part of the Region's SABR process.  Planning staff communicated with commenter to outline SABR and reasons why the process is needed.
P. Coletto & Mr. D. Bartels  T. Johns Consulting Group	Other		SABR	Preliminary letter expressing rural settlement area boundary expansion request - 8250 Mud Street West and 3498 Grassie Rd, being totaling approximately 31 ha. in West Lincoln	Comments received. Rural expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Marco Marchionda  (Marcasa Homes Inc.)	Stakeholder	Grimsby	SABR	Submission made in respect of lands on the north side of Regional Road No. 81 in the area of Cline Rd. comprised of approximately 2.4 ha. in Grimsby.  How does the ROP identify the lands between Casablanca and Kelson	Area identified is within Greenbelt and currently prohibited from being considered for expansion. Lands would need to be removed from the Greenbelt through Provincial process prior to consideration for expansion. Staff have

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				Ave? Question about the potential for a MCR in Grimsby rather than NOTL given available infrastructure for development.	advised commenter of Provincial prohibition for expansion.
Gloria Katch	Public	Welland	SABR	Has the Region changed the land use designation of the lands on the east side of Rice Road from agricultural land to rural or urban? Contends that it should be redesignated due to LAM zoning, extension of services, and dormant agricultural fields.	This area is under consideration for possible expansion.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Mark Zuidersma	Public	Pelham	SABR	Will 1538 RR20 will be brought into Bismark Hamlet in West Lincoln? Region should review hamlet boundaries to capture all of the R1A zone	Staff are reviewing request to determine if request is an expansion or technical adjustment. The change requested will not add building lots in hamlet.  Staff communicated with requestor to outline process and provide location for materials.
Owner	Stakeholder	Welland	SABR	Request to include south side Forkes Street (25 acres south-west of Forks Rd and Elm St) that spans	This area is under consideration for possible expansion.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
(Antrix Architects Inc.)				both Welland and Port Colborne municipal boundaries, be brought into Urban Area. Total lands comprise approximately 45.2 ha.	Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)	Stakeholder		SABR	Supportive of urban boundary expansion in Welland as it has been carefully planned for 10 years, has a linked natural heritage system, and can be logically serviced by transit. PALS not supportive of urban boundary expansions in Fort Erie and West Lincoln, for reasons of lack of transit support and loss of agricultural land, natural heritage and water resource features.	Comment received. Expansions remain under consideration as part of SABR process.
Township of West Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		SABR	Township staff recently prepared report PD-077-21 which identifies the rural hamlet review work that staff intend to complete over the summer months in accordance with Appendix 18.3. We will connect with Regional Staff and hope to deliver	Regional planning staff acknowledge the Township’s work plan and are available to consult as needed.  Region will work with Town and consultant as needed during their study.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				our recommendations to you by the end of August 2021.	
502 Winston Road Inc. (IBI Group)	Stakeholder	Grimsby	SABR	Request for consideration of an urban boundary expansion - Lands at 502 Winston Rd. in Grimsby comprised of approximately 5.8 ha.	Area identified is within Greenbelt. Provincial policy prohibits the Region from expansion in the Greenbelt, unless lands are removed from it. Regional Planning staff have advised agent of the Provincial Plan prohibition.
Iron Horse Stables (Niagara) Inc. (JV Consulting)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Request for consideration of an urban boundary expansion - Iron Horse Stables (Niagara) Inc. adjacent to existing settlement area boundary in Chippawa. 95 ha in size and bound by Sodom Road (west) and Willoughby Drive (east)- Niagara Falls	Comments received. Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
(1) Niagara Falls Park Inc. (2) Niagara Estates of Chippawa (3)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion in 3 separate locations in Niagara Falls – (1) 5021 Gardner Rd (81.2 ha.), (2) east side Sodom Rd between Willick Rd and Weaver Rd	Comments received. Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Comments Received</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
Lyons Creek Niagara Falls (Trans Global Partners Canada)				(36.9 ha.) and (3) northeast corner of Stanley and Logan Rd (36.6 ha.)	
Owners (Weston Consulting)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion at 9941 Lundy's Lane in Niagara Falls being approximately 24.5 ha.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Grand Niagara (The Planning Partnership)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Grand Niagara request for urban boundary expansion in Niagara Falls being approximately 138 ha. west of the existing Grand Niagara golf course lands.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
River Realty, Club Italia, Redeemer Bible Church (Niagara Planning Group)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion of approximately 40 ha. in Northwest Niagara Falls between the QEW and Montrose, south of Niagara Sports Centre Limited lands (Regency Motel).	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Anthony Romano, Andrew Zhongan, and Young Hong (Niagara Planning Group)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion – northeast Corner of Lundy's Lane and Beechwood in Niagara Falls and comprising approximately 12.9 ha.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Niagara Sports Centre Limited (Douglas, Morningstar & Bonin LLP)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Letter of support for Niagara Sports Centre Limited and Ralph Biamonte for expansion of the northwest quadrant in Niagara Falls to include lands of approximately 64.8 ha.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Grand Niagara Legends Estate Inc. (MHBC Planning)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Grand Niagara Legends Estate Inc. request for urban boundary expansion of lands on the north side of Weaver Rd, east of Willoughby Drive, and south of Legend's way in Niagara Falls. Total area requested expansion is approximately 206 ha.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Comments Received</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
Owner G. Douglas Vallee Limited	Stakeholder	Pelham	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion at 949 Clare Ave in Pelham are comprised of approximately 4.1 ha.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Owner G. Douglas Vallee Limited	Stakeholder	Pelham	SABR	Water and waste water calculations for 949 Clare Ave potential expansion in Pelham	Comments received.
Kaneff Properties Limited (MHBC Planning)	Stakeholder	St Catharines	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion at 590 Glendale Avenue in St. Catharines being a portion of the site and totaling approximately 17 ha.	Lands currently awaiting decision from Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) on designation.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Prisca Global Enterprises Inc. (The Planning Partnership)	Stakeholder	Thorold	SABR	Request for both an employment area conversion and settlement area expansion involving lands totaling approximately 16.3 ha. - Price Global Enterprises Inc. at 38 Merritville Inc. and Schmon Parkway.	Comments received.  Expansion and employment conversions are under consideration as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Comments Received</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
P. Coletto & Mr. D. Bartels (T. Johns Consulting Group)	Stakeholder	West Lincoln	SABR	Rural settlement area boundary expansion request - 8250 Mud Street West and 3498 Grassie Rd, West Lincoln totaling approximately 31 ha.	Comments received.  Rural expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Owner	Stakeholder	West Lincoln	SABR	Consultant for 5415 Hwy 20 West Lincoln inquiring about the property and potential expansion of the Bismark Hamlet Boundary. Inquires about studies/reports required and the overall process for the expansion.	Planning staff responded to inquiry to provide information relating to rural settlement area expansion criteria.  Rural expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
P. Coletto & Mr. D. Bartels T. Johns Consulting Group	Stakeholder	West Lincoln	SABR	Preliminary letter expressing rural settlement area boundary expansion request - 8250 Mud Street West and 3498 Grassie Rd, being totaling approximately 31 ha. in West Lincoln	Comments received.  Rural expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Andre Leblanc (IBI Group)	Stakeholder	West Lincoln	SABR	Rural Settlement area boundary expansion request in the Caistorville Hamlet - Part Lot 20, Concession 1, West Lincoln. Request area is approximately 7.1 ha.	Comments received.  Rural expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Comments Received</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
Stuart Wright (Quartek)	Stakeholder	Fort Erie	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion- 1555 Nigh Road- Lands West of Buffalo Rd to Rosehill Rd- Town of Fort Erie. Site totals approximately 10.7 ha.	Comments received. Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Marz Homes (A.J. Clarke and Associates Ltd.)	Stakeholder	Fort Erie	SABR	Engineering Feasibility Report for expansion at Schooley Rd and Michener Rd in Fort Erie totaling approximately 8.3 ha.	Comments received. Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Marz Homes (A.J. Clarke and Associates Ltd.)	Stakeholder	Fort Erie	SABR	Planning Rationale Report for expansion at Schooley Rd and Michener Rd in Fort Erie totaling approximately 8.3 ha.	Comments received. Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Marina (Green Acres) Development s Inc. (Niagara	Stakeholder	Fort Erie	SABR	Request for settlement area boundary expansion for lands on the south side of Bertie Street, east of the Fort Erie Golf club and comprised of approximately 10.2 ha. in Fort Erie.	Comments received. Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Planning Group)					
Jukic Group Inc. (Bousfields Inc.)	Stakeholder	Fort Erie	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion for 'Black Creek Commons' by Jukic Group Inc. in Fort Erie. Materials provided include planning rationale, concept master plan, and responses to MCR criteria. Total of lands is approximately 371 ha. between Stevensville and Douglstown.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.
Owners (LANDx Development s Ltd.)	Stakeholder	Thorold	SABR	Request of for technical mapping adjustment for 100 Dock Road in Thorold.	Comments received.  Staff are working on technical boundary adjustments, for reporting in Fall 2021.
LJM Development s (Niagara Planning Group)	Stakeholder	Niagara Falls	SABR	Request for urban boundary expansion for Pt Lot 154 Garner Rd on the west side of Garner between Lundy's Lane and McLeod Road in Niagara Falls, comprised of approximately 24.1 ha.	Comments received.  Expansion consideration is under review as part of SABR process, for reporting in Fall 2021.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency	Lincoln	SABR	Town staff previously requested a number of technical amendments as part of the Provincial Plans Review and Municipal Comprehensive Review. The Town’s suggested boundary amendments that were included in staff report PL 16-13 continue to be carried forward to the Region for consideration. Town staff request to be provided with draft mapping from the Region when it becomes available for comment.	Region staff acknowledge receipt of technical boundary adjustments, and will comment at a later time. Technical adjustments are not the same as boundary expansions – these are minor and intended to fix a technical matter.  Staff are working on technical boundary adjustments for reporting in Fall 2021.
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		SABR	We request that if any of the proposed urban designations in the Region’s Official Plan are for properties within the NEP Area, that the NEC be consulted as the Region cannot approve urban amendments, unless the change in designation has first been approved by the Province (see email for more info). Comment that NEC would like to assist with mapping discrepancies,	Any boundaries changes related to the NEP area, including technical adjustments, will be discussed with the NEC and local planning staff.  Region has ongoing meetings with the NEC and will address this topic at future meetings.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Comments Received	Regional Response
				mentioning that new digital maps for the NEC Area of Development Control will be available starting July 1.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency	Fort Erie	SABR	The Town, through the approved Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study, has forwarded candidate sites to the Region. These sites will be assessed based on the SABR criteria.	<p>Staff received the Town’s reports on preferred expansions. These will be reviewed as part of the Region’s SABR process.</p> <p>Region Planning staff will continue to work with Fort Erie staff on the SABR expansion process.</p>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency	Fort Erie	SABR	The Town has the ability to legislatively advance 40 ha expansions outside of the MCR process. Addendum 2 of the Urban Area Boundary Expansion Study, identified sites and priorities for these expansions, should candidate sites not be considered by the Region.	<p>Only the Region can expand boundaries.</p> <p>The Growth Plan has a policy that allow expansions for up to 40 Ha in advance of a municipal comprehensive review (i.e. new Official Plan), subject to specific requirements. The Region is not processing 40 Ha expansion requests at this time since it is not in advance of a municipal comprehensive review.</p>

### Chapter 3: Sustainable Region

Below is a summary of written comments received on [PDS 17-2021](#) between May 2021 and July 15, 2021, related specifically to the Natural Environment System, Niagara Watershed Plan, and Climate Change.

Comments received verbally through municipal meetings and Public Information Centres (PIC) are not summarized below. Video recordings, presentations, as well as Regional responses to comments not addressed at the June PICs can be found at the Region’s website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx>)

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region’s website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>)

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Marcie Jacklin	Public	Fort Erie	3	Question about where the presence of Indigenous communities are in the process	Staff have engaged with Indigenous communities throughout the NOP process, most recently in May 2021 on the topics of the Natural Environment System, Climate Change, and the Archaeological Management Plan (AMP).
Debra Kassay	Public	Fort Erie	3.1	3C please.	Thank you for your comment.
Susan Murphy	Public		3.1	Has the Region considered "hard" urban boundaries to incentivise intensification and protect agricultural areas and natural heritage?	Urban boundaries are based on community needs after a land needs assessment. In determining expansions, the impact on agricultural areas and the natural environment is considered. Municipalities with boundaries within the

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
					specialty crop area designation of the Greenbelt Plan have fixed boundaries.
Kenneth Goddard	Public	NOTL	3.1	Stop urban sprawl in St. Davids, Virgil, and Niagara region. Stop habitat loss, developing farmland, and bulldozing natural habitat.	Thank you for your comments. The balanced policy approach considers these factors. Urban expansion is considered on a land needs basis.
Victoria Berk	Public	Fort Erie	3.1	Emphasis on natural spaces, trails and parks should be focused on so that people are not all crowding into one space.	Thank you for your comments. This is taken into account through secondary planning at the local level. This is being encouraged by the Region for growth management purposes.
Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)	Stakeholder		3.1	One significant change that should be made to environmental policies is that peer review of Environmental Impact Studies (EIS) should be required, not just imposed at the discretion of the Regional Planning Director as is now the situation. Peer Reviewers should have access to the site to study field conditions and draft reports for public comments. Complaint of EIS studies by consultants missing key features. Comment that municipalities are limited in their	There is the option for the Commissioner to request a peer review, however, staff also have the option. We frequently identify EIS's for peer review at a staff level.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				planning to protect wildlife and suggestion for more naturalist groups to provide habitat information.	
Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)	Stakeholder		3.1	PALS supports the more restrictive Option 3C to move forward with but also believes phosphorous trading should be included. To achieve a net phosphorous reduction, efforts should be made to examine how some of the heavy sums spent on storm and sanitary disconnections could achieve a larger net reduction if used for such purposes as riparian tree buffer plantings, purchase of conservation easements and acquisition of natural habitats.	Thank you for your comments. Staff will consider further when developing climate change policies.
Lynda Goodridge	Public	Fort Erie	3.1	Planning process needs to be addressed with reliance on Environmental Impact Studies to show negative effects on properties for development. Comment on the accuracy of these assessments when	EIS's are prepared by qualified professionals and reviewed by staff.

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				consultants are hired by the developer.	
Maria Featherston	Public	Fort Erie	3.1	The general public clearly supported 3C and yet 3B, which is supported by developers, is still being considered. The amount of land involved is only 1.5%; is the physical and mental health of our residents not worth that? We need natural green spaces in which to walk and encounter all of nature's creatures. We need buffers and linkages to support the movement of wildlife, reduce roadkill and protect biodiversity.	Thank you for your comment. Regional Council has chosen to move forward with Option 3B and 3C.
Maria Featherston	Public	Fort Erie	3.1	Comment on conflict of interest with EIS' being paid for by developers ,the need to improve the process, and have endangered species reported by local residents included in the reports.	EIS's are prepared by qualified professionals and reviewed by staff. The MNRF has jurisdiction for endangered species in the province.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		3.1	Comments supporting Option 2 for additional local flexibility, however recognizes Option 3B does propose enhanced protection and that it may be possible through assessments to	Thank you for your comments. Regional Council has chosen to move forward with Option 3B and 3C.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				conclude a feature or linkage is not necessary.	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		3.1	Support Option 3B, note that key natural heritage features (NEP policy Part 2.6.1 and 2.7.1) include all wetlands and not just provincially significant wetlands, and want to continue to be consulted.	Thank you for your comments. You are correct, within the NEP area all wetlands are considered key natural heritage features. Staff are aware of the NEP's definition of wetland through discussions with NEC staff. Outside of the NEP area, other provincial plans apply.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		3.1	Staff previously reviewed the mapping options and provided information to Council. Feedback based on the draft mapping was provided to Regional Staff at that time. Staff have no further comments at this time and look forward to reviewing the mapping and policies when they are available.	Thank you for your comments.
Marcie Jacklin Dawn Pierrynowski	Public	Fort Erie Welland	3.1	Mapping should be done first and who is doing the mapping? Ground truthing needs to be done. Also statement that there should not be an appeal process for developers.	Thank you for your comment. The Planning Act allows for an appeal process by land owners and the public.

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Marcie Jacklin  Dawn Pierrynowski	Public	Fort Erie  Welland	3.1	Question that given climate change, why is the region even considering 3B? Comment recommending 3C+, sighting Niagara as being an area mentioned in study by Nature Conservancy Canada as being in an eco-crisis area. It is not good enough to exceed provincial standards. The residents of Niagara deserve more protection. It is after all only 1.5% of land. There should be no appeal process by developers, who will use natural events like Emerald Ash Borer to their advantage.	Thank you for your comment. The Planning Act allows for an appeal process by land owners and the public.
Marcie Jacklin  Dawn Pierrynowski	Public	Fort Erie  Welland	3.1	Shouldn't a cost-benefit analysis be done to find out how much money a Natural Heritage System actually save the community in Niagara? Requiring all the municipalities to have a Natural Assets Plan is a good solution. <a href="https://mnai.ca/">https://mnai.ca/</a>	Thank you for your comment.
Marcie Jacklin  Dawn Pierrynowski	Public	Fort Erie  Welland	3.1	It should be obvious to everyone how much the natural areas in Niagara have been a source of therapy, wellness and enjoyment	Thank you for your comment.

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				<p>during the stressful time of the pandemic. Shouldn't the region be looking to expand these areas rather than reduce them given the expected increase in population growth?</p>	
<p>Marcie Jacklin  Dawn Pierrynowski</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Fort Erie  Welland</p>	<p>3.1</p>	<p>I was surprised that you did not respond to my question at the webinar on June 23/21 about what will be done to fix the EIS process. Here are some key points:                      *the EIS is paid for by the developer. I can't imagine a developer paying for an EIS that won't allow them to build.                      *what does qualified biologist or environmental planner mean? What are appropriate qualifications? Why isn't this process regulated? This shows a real need for option 3C+                      *there is a lack of qualified experts at the region, NPCA, and municipalities to properly assess EIS. MNRF staff are not allowed to do site visits.                      *what is the penalty for an incomplete or inaccurate EIS?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. All questions not responded to verbally at the PICs have been replied to and can be found on the Niagara Official Plan website: <a href="https://niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx">https://niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx</a></p>

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				<p>Essential the peer review process is not functional. In some cases, many of the proposed developments in Niagara that are opposed by the community are as a result of the numerous flaws in this process. This process needs to be fixed and many of us are waiting for a response about this issue.</p>	
<p>Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)</p>	<p>Stakeholder</p>		<p>3.2</p>	<p>The Niagara Watershed Plan policy has a clear position that watershed plans will be a pre-requisite to be considered before any urban boundary expansion. No watershed plans have been done to evaluate the urban boundary expansions being considered in Fort Erie, Welland and West Lincoln. Any more work on the urban area boundaries features of this plan, should wait until such watershed studies are completed. This should not</p>	<p>The Niagara Watershed Plan project is underway. It is being completed in conjunction with the NOP work program. Volume 3 of the plan will analyze potential growth scenario in the region.</p>

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				prevent approval of other aspects of this plan.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		3.2	Staff will provide more specific comments when the NWP is made available but is generally supportive of the creation of an overarching watershed plan for the Region.	Thank you for your comments.
Marcie Jacklin  Dawn Pierrynowski	Public	Fort Erie  Welland	3.3	The basics of life include clean air and water. We can't survive without them. Relying on municipalities to have the expertise and the will to deal with higher level threats and actions is inadequate. We are at the tipping point and more importance needs to be given to this area immediately.	Thank you for your comment.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		3.5	Staff will provide more specific comments, if applicable, when the Climate Change Policies are made available but are generally supportive of the identification and inclusion of policy that supports planning for climate change.	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Susan Murphy	Public		3.5	When you talk about creating "complete communities" in terms of mitigating and adapting to climate change, are you talking about developing new areas from the ground up or redeveloping underutilized, already serviced lands within existing urban boundaries?	Thank you for your question. Through Chapter 2: Growing Region, the majority of growth will be directed to urban areas with existing or planned municipal service in order to support complete communities.
Susan Murphy	Public		3.5	How is the loss of agricultural lands and natural areas and their associated ecosystem services (climate mitigation / adaptation) weighed when evaluating the benefits of greenfield development and growth management?	The purpose of the planning process is to evaluate a range of factors when making a decision. Community benefits, natural services, and agricultural potential are important considerations that go into making a decision under the Planning Act.
Ellen Qualls	Public	NOTL	3.5	I recently saw that Niagara-on-the-Lake only has 10% tree canopy and it needs 30% to support biodiversity. I would like to see funds allocated to planting a significant number of native trees and other plants on public lands and rights-of-way. And I would like to see some sort of program to reward landowners for planting native species.	Thank you for your comments and suggestions. The purpose of the Regional Greening Initiative is to increase vegetative cover across the region. Your feedback will be explored through that initiative.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
Maria Featherston	Public	Fort Erie	3.5	Comment that climate change should be on everyone's mind and the importance of trees and wetlands providing natural infrastructure. Comment on needing to prevent trees from being cut down and new trees do not provide the same benefits as mature trees.	Thank you for your comments. Staff will consider your feedback related to the planting of new trees and maintaining existing mature trees as part of the Regional Greening Initiative.
Grape Growers of Ontario	Stakeholder		3.5	Emphasizes the risk that climate change poses to the viability of agriculture in the Region. Due to increasing frequency of extreme weather events, water for irrigation is becoming more critically important and the need for access to irrigation water and infrastructure should be recognized as part of planning for climate change. We encourage the Region to add a policy section for agriculture infrastructure.	Section 4.1 Agricultural System contains policy 4.1.7.1 "The Region encourages the continued operation and expansion of agricultural infrastructure including irrigation systems". Staff will also consider this comment through the development of climate change policies.
Dawn Pierrynowski	Public	Welland	3.1 3.3 3.5	Comment on trying to contact regional representatives and only having one response. Expressed difficulty with reception during June PIC webinar and was unable to watch the entire webinar.	Official Plan Team confirms receipt of comments as well as comments received February 3, 2021.  The June public information centre (PIC) videos, presentations, and outstanding questions not responded to verbally at

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					<p>the PICs have been replied to and can be found on the Niagara Official Plan website: <a href="https://niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx">https://niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx</a></p>
<p>Marcie Jacklin  Dawn Pierrynowski</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Fort Erie  Welland</p>	<p>3.1, 3.5</p>	<p>Comment that climate change has not been as prominent as it should be driving this plan and it should be the number 1 priority. Suggestion that there needs to be bigger emphasis on mitigation and adaptation strategies particularly for transit, watershed planning, natural heritage system, and agriculture. Planting trees isn't enough, need to save the mature trees. Concerns that buffers are inadequate and other regions have 120 m buffers, whereas in Niagara we only have 30m.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The climate change section will reference the topic areas of transportation, watershed planning, the natural environment system, and agriculture as part of climate change mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>The Regional Greening Initiative will focus on increasing vegetative cover across the region. Your feedback with respect to planting and preserving mature trees will be considered through that initiative.</p> <p>We are not aware of other Regions that require 120m buffers. 120m is typically the radius used around certain features to trigger a study on a site-specific basis.</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Lynda Goodridge	Public	Fort Erie	3.1, 3.5	<p>Comment on the importance of climate change and questions why climate change is not the main issue for a sustainable region? Comment that it is to be integrated within the entire plan but seems to be lost in the text. Comment that best defence is enhancing our 'green infrastructure', maintaining and expanding woodlands, wetlands and other natural features but many are destroyed through planning policies. Importance of Option 3C for the Natural Environment System.</p>	<p>Climate change impacts many of the topic areas addressed through a Regional Official Plan. The Niagara Official Plan will have a climate change section, as well as policies throughout the plan. Planning for climate change from a land use planning perspective includes supporting the development of complete communities that are compact, walkable and transit-supportive; protecting agricultural lands for agricultural use; protecting the natural environment system; encouraging and supporting the use of sustainable construction materials; supporting existing and planned transit and active transportation; supporting energy conservation for existing and planned developments; assessing infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities, among others.</p>

### Chapter 4: Competitive Region

Below is a summary of written comments received on [PDS 17-2021](#) between May 2021 and July 15, 2021, related specifically to the Agricultural System, Employment Areas, and Mineral Aggregate Resources.

Where text is bolded under ‘Regional response’, revisions will be occurring to draft policy. Where the ‘Regional response’ box is highlighted in blue, revisions will be considered.

Comments received verbally through municipal meetings and Public Information Centres (PIC) are not summarized below. Video recordings, presentations, as well as Regional responses to comments not addressed at the June PICs can be found at the Region’s website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx>)

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region’s website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>)

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Marco Marchionda (Marcasda Homes Inc.)	Stakeholder	Grimsby	4.1	Question about removing Greenbelt designation for lands between Kelson and Oak Road on Main Street W as the lands are not actively farmed.	Land cannot be redesignated in the Greenbelt Plan area.
Ellen Qualls	Public	NOTL	4.1	Request for limits on agricultural pesticides and more education on organic and no till farming practices	Thank you for your comments.
Susan Murphy	Public	NOTL	4.1	What Regional policies are available to protect prime agricultural lands? How is the loss of agricultural lands	Thank you for your comments. Section 4.1.1 specifically protects prime agricultural areas in accordance with

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				weighed when considering new greenfield development?	the policies throughout Section 4.1 Agricultural System.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		4.1	Town staff note that minor changes may need to be undertaken to the Agricultural Land Base map should minor urban boundary changes be made for technical reasons. Should these revisions be required, the Town would also have to undertake minor mapping exercises to conform with the Region and Province’s maps.	No action required.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.10.2-4.1.10.4	Sections 4.1.10.2 – 4.1.10.4 require the completion of an agricultural impact assessment for any expansion of a legal non-conforming use or the conversion of a legal use to a non-conforming use in the Specialty Crop Area. The wording for this should be changed to state that one may be required depending on the context of the property and the nature of the use being expanded.	Thank you for your suggestion. Staff will not be revising this policy. No exemptions for agricultural impact assessments (AIAs) will be allowed for this section.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.11.12 f)	Section 4.1.11.12(f) states that short-term accommodations shall not exceed 6 bedrooms. Regional staff have expressed support for short-term accommodations on farms and wineries in the range of 10 – 12 guest rooms provided that they meet other policy requirements for on-farm and Agri-tourism uses. Town staff feel that the number of potential allowable guest rooms should be increased slightly to account the economies of scale needed to make such accommodations viable for bonafide farmers, provided that items such as private service are possible.	The requirement of not exceeding 6 bedrooms comes from the Ontario Building Code and Fire Code. Staff will not be revising this policy.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.4-4.1.6	Policies for consents in Prime Agricultural Area appear to be more stringent. For example, consents related to Agricultural land uses must submit a Planning Justification Report to the Region to justify the proposed lot size even if it meets the Town’s OP policies for such applications. Town staff feel that this requirement is too stringent and the wording should be	Thank you for your comment. Staff will review and consider revisions.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				relaxed to account for applications that meet the general intent of the Town and Region’s OP policies and whose sizes may be deficient in a minor nature.	
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.4.2	The wording of this policy seems to indicate that the Region will not permit any lot severances or existing lots of record, to connect to municipal infrastructure if it runs in front of the newly created lot. While the vast majority of rural properties in Lincoln do not have municipal water and/or sanitary services, those that do may be unable to hook up to such infrastructure in future consent applications. This is not consistent with the Town’s Official Plan as staff’s position is that if infrastructure is available across a property’s frontage, then a lateral connection is permitted and does not constitute an extension of a service outside the urban boundaries which is not permitted under the Greenbelt Plan.	The Niagara Official Plan will maintain existing policy direction on servicing outside the urban boundary. This policy reflects Greenbelt Plan policy 4.2.2.2.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.6.1 b) iii.	Why would an agricultural impact assessment be required for a consent for an agriculture-related use? Consider more flexibility for the requirement of an agricultural impact assessment ("may require").	Staff will review policy and consider revisions.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.11.2	The City will consider policies in its Zoning and OP where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial Policy.	Local Official Plans must comply with both Regional and Provincial Policy where relevant.
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.8.2 e)	We note that proposed policy 4.1.8.2 (e) would allow cemeteries on rural lands. Cemeteries in the NEP Area are included in the definition of institutional uses and include governmental, religious, charitable or other similar uses for a public or social purpose to serve the immediate community. Institutional uses are Permitted Uses in the Escarpment Protection and Rural Areas but not in the Escarpment Natural Area. Large-scale commercial cemeteries and associated facilities would most likely require an amendment to the NEP to be a Permitted Use. We request that	The new Niagara Official Plan will reference the NEP and that NEP policies apply.

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				the Region consider these NEP land use restrictions in relation to the proposed cemetery policy in the ROP.	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.11.12 g)	We advise that events within the NEP Area must be accessory to a Permitted Use on the property where the event is to be held. Depending on the scale and nature of the event, a Development Permit may be required. NEC staff are developing Guidance Material with respect to special events. A recent staff report on this topic (May 19, 2021) is available from our website.	The new Niagara Official Plan will reference the NEP and that NEP policies apply.
Grape Growers of Ontario	Stakeholder		4.1	We are pleased that the importance of agriculture, and the continued operation and expansion of agricultural infrastructure including irrigation systems, are recognized in the Agriculture System Chapter 4 of the Consolidated Policy Report.	Thank you for your comments.

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Preservation of Agricultural Land Society (PALS)	Stakeholder		4.1	Comments that PALS is pleased to see a larger agricultural area proposed in the new plan. Comments that the Rural designation encourages estate lot residential development and dry industrial uses and may be land use conflicts with livestock operations. Comments on how rural estate development negatively impacts the environment. PALS believes consents are bad land use planning.	The policies comply to Provincial policy, which limits rural estate residential development to 3 lots and reviewed against minimum distance separation (MDS). The area where this is permitted has been limited in the new plan.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.2.3	Secondary uses' should be noted in a separate policy, as they are not the same thing as agricultural uses.	Thank you for your comment. This policy complies with Provincial policy.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.5.1 a)	It should be clarified that the minimum of 16 ha applies to both the severed and retained lots. Is a dwelling also a permitted use for the severed and retained lots?	<b>Staff have revised policy to include that it applies to both the severed and retained lots.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.5.1 b)	Does the retained lot need to be 16 ha in this case?	Yes.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.7	This section should be moved ahead closer to the beginning of this section of the ROP.	Staff will consider this revision.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.9.3 (c,d,e)	These are really matters that should be addressed through site plan control rather than OP policy. Do they need an amendment to the ROP if they don't meet these policies? Perhaps the directive should be that rural non-farm residential development should be subject to local site plan control to address such items described in the policy?	Staff are satisfied with current policy.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.10.2	A sidebar with examples of expansions that bring a use more into conformity would be useful to augment these requirements.	Staff will consider adding a side bar with examples.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.11.1	Doesn't this direction come from the MOE? The City has a site alteration by-law in place already.	Staff will consider revising this policy.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1.11.5	could be added to policy 4.1.2.2 (existing ag uses)	Thank you for your suggestion. Staff will review and consider.

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City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.1	The proposed Agricultural designation of the Port Robinson East Special Policy Area is not consistent with the City's Official Plan and does not reflect the actual built form and land use of this area. Staff have discussed this issue with Regional staff and will continue to work with them to find a solution.	Thank you, comments received.
George Trifunovic	Public	Grimsby	4.1	Provides a number of comments with respect to being supportive of the Livingston Avenue Extension and wishes to see land removed from the specialty crop area of the Greenbelt Plan area.	Changes to the specialty crop area mapping has to be completed by the Province. The Region has supported local municipal requests twice to change the specialty crop area designation. Staff do not anticipate changes to the specialty crop area mapping in time for the completion of the Niagara Official Plan.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		4.1	Staff have had the opportunity to review the Draft Agricultural Policies and have no comments or concerns.  Council on August 10, 2020, through PDS-34-2020, endorsed in principal the proposed Regional Agricultural Systems Mapping for the Town and	Thank you, comments received.

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				<p>Staff can confirm that Schedule E maintains what was endorsed by Council through that report.</p> <p>Council on March 22, 2021, through PDS-24-2021, approved OPA 51, a housekeeping amendment to the Official Plan that included adding Value Added Agricultural uses as part of the secondary uses section of the Town's Official Plan and updated Appendix A: Glossary of Terms to include a definition of Value Added. These policies are in keeping with the farm diversification policies that the Region has developed and ensure a broad range of flexible uses are permitted in the agricultural area to maintain viability.</p>	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.5.19 b)	<p>What is this policy intended to mean? Are 'virtual work arrangements' intended to function as satellite offices? How is this different than something that would be normally permitted in this designation?</p>	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications

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City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.12.1 d)	It should say that these policies shall be included where applicable at the municipal level. The City of Welland does not have an airport, so it's not necessary for these policies to be included.	<b>Staff have revised this policy.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2	<p>Comment on excess lands. Since Thorold's Employment Areas are not in the Designated Greenfield Areas, it is our opinion that they are not 'excess lands' as defined by the Growth Plan. Can you please confirm your understanding of this definition and advise how these 56 ha of employment area land will be addressed going forward in the ROP?</p> <p>Comment on tools for excess lands and that this is one of Thorold's major concerns as they don't want to see existing land use designations change.</p>	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications and will continue to work with City of Thorold staff.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2	Comment on 680 jobs within Employment Areas in City of Thorold quite low given the City is within the	<b>The Province provided employment numbers, which represent</b>

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				Niagara Economic Centre, proximity to canal and major highways.	<b>minimums. Staff will work with City of Thorold staff to revise.</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2	The difference between 'employment areas' and 'employment lands' should be provided in the ROP for clarity. Policies need to be rearranged to sort out the differences up front in the document. Employment lands are typically the lands within the Community Area where non-employment area "jobs" are located.	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.2	This policy needs to implement the Growth Plan and should be removed, as it is talking about institutional uses not employment areas. It is not until you read policy 4.2.2.11 where you understand what is prohibited from employment areas. Overall, staff find this section confusing and suggest revision.	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications.

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City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.5.5	Employment areas: the Growth Plan directs major office and major institution out of employment areas (see policy 2.2.5(2)). The Knowledge and Innovation designation shouldn't be within an Employment Area, they are directed to downtowns (UGC) and other strategic areas which are within Community lands not employment areas. Employment Areas should be Prestige Industrial and General Industrial designation. Supporting retail and commercial uses as noted previously and office associated with the industrial use is what the Growth Plan envisions for Employment Areas.	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.5.6	Density targets: concerned with how high the density targets are for THO-1, THO-2 and THO-3. A new standalone industrial use in the Brock District would have an extremely difficult time meeting 81 jobs/ha. True industrial uses have more lower densities in the area of 25 j/ha.	<b>Staff will discuss with City of Thorold staff.</b>

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City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.5.12	We were advised that brownfields were not included in the LNA, so why are they a priority for redevelopment? Also, brownfields typically don't get remediated if they are going to be used for continued industrial uses. Only remediated to allow a more sensitive land use like commercial, residential, open space, which are not employment uses.	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.5.19	The components of this policy are not the responsibility of the City. Many of the elements in this policy are up to the business and City/Region can't require it. This section, Knowledge and Innovation EA, should be removed. For Brock District, this should be a Strategic Growth Area designation separate for Employment.	Staff are reviewing for possible modifications.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.9	This section needs to be clarified. It is unclear if this is the identification of lands outside of a current settlement boundary. If so, only an LNA can determine how much future employment will be needed based on projections beyond 2051. Does this	<b>Staff are reviewing to clarify.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				relate to our surplus of employment area lands if not DGA?	
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.11.4	This policy is not an OP policy but a Regional issue.	Comment received.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.12.1	Much of this policy is duplication of policies already in this section.	Staff are reviewing the comments and will be considering modifications where appropriate.
Rankin Construction (MHBC Planning)	Stakeholder		4.2	Martindale Employment Conversion Request from MHBC Planning on behalf of Rankin Construction for 218, 222, 250 Martindale Rd & 20, 25,75 Corporate Park Dr in St.Catharines.	Staff responded to MHBC that we are in receipt of this request.
Owner (Bousfields Inc.)	Stakeholder		4.2	Employment land conversion request for 4431 Victoria Ave in Niagara Falls.	The property is not within an Employment Area as set out by the Region. Employment Land change in land use is a locally led initiative. Staff will review Niagara Falls policies as they relate to MTSA and SGA to determine if additional discussion is required with City in respect of this request.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Zoran Cocov (MHBC Planning)	Stakeholder		4.2	Employment conversion request from MHBC Planning for client (owner) Mr. Zoran Cocov for 4620 and 4415 Buttrey Street, Niagara Falls	The property is not within an Employment Area as set out by the Region. Employment Land change in land use is a locally led initiative. Staff will review Niagara Falls policies as they relate to MTSA and SGA to determine if additional discussion is required with City in respect of this request.
Mr. Albanese	Public		4.2	Spoke to Dave Heyworth on the phone and inquiring whether his land (55 Fares St., Port Colborne) would be impacted by the Niagara Official Plan work going on (specifically the draft employment area)	Staff have corresponded with Mr. Albanese explaining his lands are not shown as being within an Employment Area and any changes to designation or zoning impacting his lands is a city matter.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		4.2.5.14	Fort Erie has 3 identified Employment Areas (FE1- Stevensville Industrial Cell with a min density target of 13 jobs/ha; FE2- Interational Peace Bridge Trade Hub with a min density target of 13 jobs/ha; FE3-Bridgeburg Rail Zone with a min density target of 11 jobs/ha. While the Town generally meets or exceeds these targets, Staff have concerns about the repercussions if a development does	The Growth Plan requires density targets be established for Employment Areas (2.2.5.13). The target densities are the result of observed densities of existing sites and through consultation with local planning staff. While density targets are minimums, the expectation that target density be achieved is not unrealistic given the target is only slightly higher than observed in these locations for Fort Erie.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				not meet the minimum density target and requests clarification.	<p>The Region will be seeking the target densities be identified in the local OP through conformity and expect the Town to do its utmost to promote higher density. It can be noted the target applies to the entirety of individual Employment Areas, so while some sites might be slightly less, others may be slightly higher. While repercussions are not a focus, promoting intensified development of industrial lands both from a local and regional perspective is good planning.</p> <p>The Region will be monitoring as part of its ongoing measure to inform on any potential changes for subsequent review of the new NOP.</p>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		4.2	As noted, Town Staff have forwarded the results of the Urban Boundary Expansion study to the Region. This study prioritized Employment Lands for inclusion in the Urban Boundary. Staff anticipate that Schedule F will be	Ultimately, any additions to the urban settlement areas as a result of the SABR process that are support by Regional Council will be displayed in the draft Niagara Official Plan at the time of adoption, whether community or employment in purpose.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				updated accordingly, if new lands are included in the UAB.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		4.2	The proposed study requirements in Section 4.2.5.14 seem onerous and extensive for dry industrial uses. Staff recommend scaling back the requirements, or allowing for scoping based on individual proposals.	Staff will consider the request to review the studies associated with this type of development.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		4.2	Staff requests that FE1 (Stevensville Industrial Cell) be included in the Niagara Gateway Economic Zone, so that future development can leverage the 10-year tax increment-based grant as opposed to the 5-year grant currently available.	<p>The Region is currently reviewing its incentive programs and reporting to Committee of the Whole in August 2021.</p> <p>The Town can expect consultation in the near future respecting outcomes related to Gateway CIP programs and how that may impact on the nature of this request. Regional staff responsible for incentives will be reaching out to municipalities in near future.</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Jack Hellinga	Public	Port Colborne	4.3.3.3 4.3.3.4	<p>These clauses are vague, and can and will be interpreted in different ways by different readers. They should be clear and concise as to what is allowed and what is not. If these clauses refer to setbacks, than it should say so. It should be recognized that there is more at stake than transportation when aggregate operations impinge on road allowances.</p> <p>Quote from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP) Statement of Environmental Values regarding cumulative effects</p> <p>The MECP's responsibility extends to the Region for these considerations and protection.</p>	<p>In order to minimize impacts and to ensure the efficient use of the resource there are range of factors that need to be considered. In the case of adjacent operations, or operations that are separated by a Regional road there are a number of site specific factors that will need to be considered. These policies are not specifically related to setbacks.</p> <p>Staff have reviewed the proposed wording of the policies and are satisfied that they are appropriate policies for inclusion in the Niagara Official Plan.</p>

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3 Executive Overview	Under the Summary, it provides a brief but helpful discussion on aggregates in general and definitions for pits and quarries. However, it does not provide any explanation for wayside pits and wayside quarries nor accessory uses such as portable asphalt plants and portable concrete plants. I acknowledge that there are definitions provided under 4.3.8, but I'm wondering if some additional text in the Executive Overview would be helpful as well.	The Executive Overview is part of the PDS 17-2021 report and will not be included as part of the policy set.
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.4.3	This policy provides a listing of the information that will be required for new aggregate applications and I) states; "Potential geotechnical consideration as appropriate". I don't know what this means or what technical implications it would involve.	Geotechnical considerations would be reviewed on a site-specific basis, it is not anticipated to apply to all applications in the Region.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.4.9	<p>This policy related to agricultural impact seems to be a one-off and unsure why it is not just included as part of general listing of issues to be reviewed under Policy 4.3.4.3. Furthermore, the policy does stipulate that an AIA is to be undertaken “in accordance with Provincial guidance”, and then that is followed by a statement that the AIA “shall provide guidance on how to maintain or improve connectivity of the agricultural system”. Is this latter report requirement an expectation above and beyond the provincial guidance or is it not already part of the AIA review. Lastly, pertaining to the AIA, this is the only study that the Policy states it is to be “completed by a qualified professional” I might suggest that the expectation for professional authors be part of Policy 4.3.4.3 so that it pertains to all the land use matters listed. It might be good to have Sean Colville comment on this as well?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. A stand alone policy for agricultural impact assessments was included to ensure conformance with Growth Plan policy 4.2.8.3. It is the policy of the Region that an AIA must be completed by a qualified professional.</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.5.2	<p>Suggestion to forward proposed policy to consultant that conducted commenter’s Traffic Impact Study. Concerned about c) where the TIS (which is already a highly technical document) and assesses all traffic users, they have introduced an expectation to specifically look at “potential mix with residential traffic, school buses, agricultural vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and other sensitive road users”. It just feels like a rabbit-hole where we would never be able to satisfy with a valid technical response.</p> <p>As well, under d) “Social and environmental impacts and any mitigation measures”. How does a TIS respond to social issues? Once again it feels like a slimy policy that you could never satisfy if we had the wrong Regional planner at the helm reviewing the reports.</p>	Staff have reviewed and are comfortable that the proposed policy is appropriate and can be implemented.

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Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.5.3	This policy deals with external haul routes and I need to check with our consultants to better understand where the changes to the ARA landed on this. I know there was a LPAT decision a few years ago (near Uxbridge) where the Municipality won the ability to assign maintenance costs, but I'm not sure they ever hammered out a nuts and bolts of the deal as to what it looks like.	Staff are aware that there have been ongoing discussions regarding this issue and the ARA. The policy specifically includes a note "in accordance with the ARA".
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.5.6	I think you just need to better define the term 'shipping routes" although I suspect you mean by ship.	Yes, by ship is correct.
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.6.2	Regarding Progressive and Final Rehabilitation, and the need to achieve the following; d) states "Mitigate negative impacts to the extent possible". I don't understand the practical context of what this statement means in terms of rehabilitation.	The intent of the policy is that applications must be supported by rehabilitation plans. The rehabilitation plans must consider the negative impacts of the operation and of the rehabilitation plan, and demonstrate how they are being rehabilitated.

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Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.6.8	This policy is directed toward sites where the final rehabilitation is proposed to be recreation, natural area or open space and the last line of this policy says, "...the Region supports safe public access" and "Opportunities for public ownership should explored where feasible and desirable". My concern is that this sounds like a socialist public body looking for a free land grab. I'm not sure what your position on the matter is, but to me, they wouldn't ask this of any other land owner.	Thank you for your comment.
Rankin Construction	Stakeholder	St Catharines	4.3.7.1	The over-arching support for recycling is commendable but this policy is actually hollow since the policy says nothing about supporting the activity within an ARA license which is the key focus of PPS 2.5.2.3 which states; "Mineral aggregate resource conservation shall be undertaken, including through the use of accessory aggregate recycling facilities within operations, wherever" feasible.	Thank you for your comment.

<b>Commenter</b>	<b>Participant Type</b>	<b>Municipality of Residence</b>	<b>Chapter Subsection</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>	<b>Regional Response</b>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.3.2.3	Would this limit the City from requiring Site Plan Approval for new or expanded buildings, structures, or ancillary facilities? Clarification should be provided on whether this reference pertains to local Official plans, Regional OP, or both.	This policy is related to existing licenced facilities. Changes to existing licenced facilities require an amendment to the ARA site plan.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		4.3.4.10	Clarify what is meant by ARA.	ARA stands for Aggregate Resources Act as noted in the text box on the first page of the policies.
Ed Lamb	Public	Welland	4.3	Comments on transportation related to heavy truck traffic utilizing local roads, specifically references Niagara Escarpment Crossing to QEW corridor. Has provided a drawing of potential route locations that could be utilized, such as, the possible uninterrupted traffic flow that connects to Hwy #3 at Canboro to take into consideration the potential for a provincial loop should this be determined to be the best solution. This also provides a route for transporting materials to support the	Official Plan Team confirms receipt of comments and attached PDF.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				forecasted growth along the southern shores of Lake Erie.	
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3 Introduction	OSSGA would like to see a statement in the introduction highlighting that mineral aggregate resources are essential to the economy and to a number of sectors (e.g. the construction industry) and to be made available in the Region.	The introduction includes a statement on the importance of mineral aggregate resources.
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.3.3	Requested that wording be kept as what was contained in previous draft (Policy C.3) worded as follows: where two ore more mineral aggregate operations are separated by a Regional road, allowing the operators to temporarily re-route and then replace the road at a lower elevation will be considered, as appropriate, to enable operators to efficiently remove viable material between operations. OSSGA would also like to refer to Policy 2.5.2.1 contained within the PPS which states 'as much of the mineral aggregate resources as is realistically possible shall be made	Staff have reviewed and are satisfied with the policy as currently written. This issue would be considered on a site-specific basis.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				available close to markets as possible...'	
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.4.3 d)	<p>“Social impact” is addressed through a combination of more specific studies including noise, air quality, vibration, traffic, visual, cultural heritage, archaeology, water quality and natural environment. Policies, standards and guidelines are established to measure impact more specifically for these more ‘tangible’ impacts. By including the terms “social” and “health”, there is ambiguity on what additional ‘impacts’ need to be addressed by including these terms. OSSGA therefore requests that terms “social” and “health” be removed from this policy if this policy is intended to be the basis for deterring the extent of technical studies needed to support a mineral aggregate application.</p>	This language is consistent with Provincial Policy. PPS policy 2.5.2.2 specifically references social impacts.

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Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.4.4	<p>Comments that this policy needs to be implemented so its not more restrictive than the Growth Plan (Policy 4.2.8.2). In order to be consistent with Policy 4.2.8.2 of the Growth Plan, the proposed policy 4.3.4.4 in the Region’s OP must only be relative to the “Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan”. This is a critical change that must be reflected in the Region’s OP.</p> <p>Requested that the wording “to the satisfaction of the Region” be removed from this policy or, at a minimum, be changed to “to the satisfaction of the approval authority”. In the case that applications are appealed to a different approval authority, it may not be possible or reasonable to require satisfying the Region if Council is opposed to the application.</p>	<p><b>The term provincial natural heritage system is intended to include both the Growth Plan natural heritage system and Greenbelt Plan natural heritage system. Staff will italicize the definition to ensure it is clear.</b></p> <p><b>Staff will change references to approval authority in the policy set.</b></p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.4.5	It is requested that the wording included in Part b) of policy 4.3.4.5 stating “on another part of the site or on adjacent lands within the same sub-watershed;” be revised. Although OSSGA is generally accepting that such features which are lost or significantly altered are required to be replaced, the wording “on adjacent lands within the same sub-watershed;” is deemed to be restrictive on applicants in replacing key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features as such lands may not be readily available or suitable to accommodate such features. Furthermore, obtaining such lands may pose an obstacle which could possibly hinder future mineral aggregates proposals from a financial and timing perspective.	<b>The policy has been updated in alignment with the policies of the Growth Plan.</b>

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Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.4.8	It is requested that Draft Policy 4.3.4.8 be revised so that the wording “avoided first and mitigated where avoidance in not possible” is removed and replaced with the word “mitigated”. Applications for mineral aggregate operations frequently include extraction below the water table and therefore impacts on both water quality and quantity are generally unavoidable. It should also be noted that proposed mineral aggregate operations are dependent on the location of mineral resources and therefore are limited in alternative site location options without hindering extraction quantities. Furthermore, proposed mineral aggregate operations are subject to Provincial Standards of Ontario which outline standards regarding ground and surface water resources.	Staff are satisfied with the proposed policy. The policy as written does not preclude the use of mitigation, the proposed policy simply states the importance of attempting to avoid impacts first, before looking to opportunities to mitigate.

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Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.4.10	<p>It is requested that Draft Policy 4.3.4.10 be revised so that the wording “avoided first and mitigated where avoidance in not possible” is removed and replaced with the word “mitigated”. Requested that part c) of this policy be removed.</p> <p>The specific wording “type of licence” implies the depth of extraction relating to mineral aggregate operation applications. In this instance OSSGA would like to refer to PPS policy 2.5.2.4 which outlines that where the Aggregate Resources Act applies, those ARA processes shall address the depth of extraction. This builds on present provisions of the Aggregate Resources Act and Municipal Act to help confirm the ARA as the primary regulatory tool. This reduces instances where two levels of government are attempting to regulate the same thing. PPS policy 2.5.2.4 states that 'where the ARA applies, only processes under the ARA shall address the depth of extraction of new</p>	The policy does not read the depth of extraction. Staff are aware of PPS policy 2.5.2.4.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				or existing mineral aggregate operations'.	
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.5.1	Truck traffic, including mineral aggregate truck traffic, will need to serve and travel into settlement areas where the market is (i.e. growth / construction / road projects).	Thank you for your comment. It is understood that truck traffic will eventually need to enter into settlement areas. The purpose of the policy is that truck traffic should be directed away from settlement areas on route to the final destination.
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.5.2	Requested that parts c) and d) be removed from this policy. With respect to (c), a number of uses generate truck traffic that 'mix with residential traffic, school buses, agricultural vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and other sensitive road users'. While safety is important, this policy wrongfully targets aggregate trucks. This policy should be a general	Thank you for your comment, it is Staff's position that the policy should remain as written.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				transportation policy for all types of truck traffic and not specific to mineral aggregate truck traffic. Policy (d) seems to be redundant with proposed Policy 4.3.4.3(d) and should be removed for the reasons identified in our response to Policy 4.3.4.3(d).	
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.5.3	This policy is unnecessary and goes beyond what should be a clear and reasonable test for new mineral aggregate operations. If trucks are using appropriate roads then such industry-specific considerations are redundant (see submission for more detail).	Thank you for your comment, it is Staff's position that the policy should remain as written.
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.5.4 4.3.5.5	In response to Policies 4.3.5.4 and 4.3.5.5, approval of truck routes by the Region should not be specific to mineral aggregate operations. See response to 4.3.5.3 above.	Thank you for your comment, it is Staff's position that the policy should remain as written.

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Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.6.1 4.3.6.2 4.3.6.3	<p>The above draft policies (4.3.6.1, 4.3.6.2 and 4.3.6.3) are not necessary as the ARA requires detailed rehabilitation plans as a component of an ARA licence application, which must meet Provincial requirements. As a commenting agency, the Region is circulated licence applications including detailed ARA Site Plans proposed by the applicant.</p> <p>For draft policy 4.3.6.3, the word “required” should be replaced with the word “encouraged” to be consistent with the PPS. Official Plans cannot be more restrictive than Provincial Plan rehabilitation requirements.</p>	<p>Policy 2.3.5 of the PPS deals with rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations. Rehabilitation is also a land use matter.</p> <p>The Niagara Official Plan can use the word required and still be consistent with the PPS.</p>
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.6.4	<p>Given that this policy is primarily derived from section 4.2.8.4 of the Growth Plan, OSSGA requests that the wording, terminology and definitions referred to in policy 4.3.6.4 in the Official Plan be verbatim to policy 4.2.8.4 in the Growth Plan to ensure consistency.</p>	<p>The Regional Official Plan is not required to be verbatim of the Growth Plan.</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.6.5	Given that this policy is primarily derived from section 4.2.8.5 of the Growth Plan, OSSGA requests that the wording terminology and definitions referred to in policy 4.3.6.5 in the draft Official Plan be verbatim to policy 4.2.8.5 in the Growth Plan. For example, the term "Provincial Natural Heritage System" should be replaced and similarly defined as "Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan", as defined in the Growth Plan.	The Regional Official Plan is not required to be verbatim of the Growth Plan.
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3.6.6	<p>In order to be consistent with the PPS, the wording in the above policy “prime agricultural area or on prime agricultural lands” should be changed to “prime agricultural areas, on prime agricultural land”. The current wording used is not consistent with PPS as it applies to prime land or prime area whereas PPS applies requirement for agricultural rehabilitation in prime areas on prime land (i.e. both not either).</p> <p>Furthermore, given that this policy is</p>	<b>Staff have revised policy to clarify. As noted above, Staff will make references to the approval authority.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>obtained from the PPS, OSSGA requests that the wording “to the satisfaction of the Region” in part c) be removed from this policy or, at a minimum, be changed to “to the satisfaction of the approval authority” for the reason identified earlier.</p>	
<p>Ontario Stone, Sand &amp; Gravel Association (OSSGA)</p>	<p>Stakeholder</p>		<p>4.3.9.2</p>	<p>Given that this policy is primarily derived from section 4.3.2.5 of the Greenbelt Plan, OSSGA requests that the wording terminology and definitions referred to in policy 4.3.9.2 in the draft Official Plan be verbatim to policy 4.3.2.5 in the Greenbelt Plan.</p> <p>Furthermore, given that this policy is obtained from the Greenbelt Plan, OSSGA requests that the wording “to the satisfaction of the Region” in part d) be removed from this policy or, at a minimum, be changed to “to the satisfaction of the approval authority” for the reason identified earlier.</p>	<p><b>The Regional Official Plan is not required to be verbatim of the Growth Plan.</b></p> <p><b>As noted above, Staff will make references to the approval authority.</b></p>
<p>Ontario Stone, Sand</p>	<p>Stakeholder</p>		<p>4.3.11.1</p>	<p>These policies should ensure that the upper and lower tier policy</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment.</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
& Gravel Association (OSSGA)				frameworks are complimentary and addressing different matters or levels of detail rather than duplicating each other. In all cases, policies must be consistent with Provincial Plan policy and not more restrictive when it comes to mineral aggregate applications.	
Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (OSSGA)	Stakeholder		4.3	Cover letter expressing concerns with: 1) consistency with PPS and Growth Plan 2) Need for Official Plan Amendment 3) Two-year Moratorium 4) Section 4.3.5- Define Haul Routes and Manage Aggregate Truck Traffic 5) Draft Schedules/Mapping Comments 6) Additional comments on the update (see letter for more information)	Thank you, comments received.
Walk Aggregates Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	Very similar comments as OSSGA (See above comments and letter from Walker)	Thank you, comments received.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Waterford Group	Stakeholder		4.3.2.1 4.3.2.4 4.3.4.2	<p>The "Possible Aggregate Area" mapping that is currently included on Schedule D4 of the Region's Official Plan should also be included on Schedule G3 and should carry forward the policies in the current Official Plan that <u>do not</u> require an Official Plan Amendment for expansions in identified in Possible Aggregate Areas. The removal of this designation effectively eliminates existing development rights.</p> <p>Request the Region consider eliminating the requirement for an ROPA for new or expanded mineral aggregate operations (see letter)</p>	It is Staff's position that a Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) is required for new or expanded mineral aggregate operations.
Waterford Group	Stakeholder		4.3.4.9	The wording of this policy should be revised to align with the requirements of the ARA, Growth Plan, and Greenbelt Plan	It is the position of Staff that the policy aligns with the requirements of the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Waterford Group	Stakeholder		4.3.5.2 4.3.5.3 4.3.5.4 4.3.5.6	<p>Requirements outlined in proposed draft 4.3.5.2 and 4.3.5.3 are unreasonable and go above what is required for non-aggregate urban development in Niagara (i.e. large warehouse of factory). Unfairly targets the aggregate industry which is only a small portion of heavy track traffic in the region.</p> <p>Concerns within draft policy 4.3.5.3 (Haul Route Agreement requirements) , potential scope, and ability of Regional staff to administer these agreements. This proposed policy requirement is contrary to the Aggregate Resources Act and is unwarranted as each Licence pays an annual tonnage levy fee to both the Region and the local municipality. A haul route map should not be included as an appendix in the OP.</p>	Staff disagree that the policy is contrary to the ARA, in fact proposed policy 4.3.5.3 includes the statement "in accordance with the ARA".
Waterford Group	Stakeholder		4.3.6.1 4.3.6.3 4.3.6.4	The language in these policies should be revised to reflect the language verbatim in the PPS and Provincial Plans.	The Regional Official Plan is not required to be verbatim of the Provincial Plans.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
			4.3.6.5 4.3.6.6		
Waterford Group	Stakeholder		4.3.7.3	On-site overburden and soil management is addressed through ARA process. There is no requirement in the ARA to prepare a plan for off-site excess soil use and management. The Official Plan should encourage the beneficial re-use of excess soils where additional soil can be imported to improve a final rehabilitated landform.	<b>Staff have removed reference to the ARA in the policy.</b>
Waterford Group	Stakeholder		4.3	Looking for information on the approach the Region intends to take in order to transition active applications. For example, applications that started under the old Official Plan but remain active or are appealed can lose their status when the new Official Plan comes into effect if not properly addressed in the Repeal By-law.	Thank you for your comment, we are considering the issue of transition this as it could potentially impact a range of applications.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Nelson Aggregates Co.	Stakeholder		4.3	Very similar comments as OSSGA (See above comments and letter from Nelson Aggregate Co.)	Thank you, comments received.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		4.3	<p>The Town currently has one active quarry operation – Ridgemount Quarries (Walker Aggregates Inc.) east of Stevensville. In operation since 1960s it extracts various rock members to supply the large demand for local road construction projects. This location also recycles concrete and asphalt from local infrastructure reconstruction for the purpose of reuse in the market. The proposed policies will not have an impact on the uses or operation of this quarry.</p> <p>Staff have reviewed the proposed policies and mapping and offer no further comments at this time.</p>	Thank you, comments received.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	The section 4.3 introductory paragraphs should include an objective that mineral aggregate resources must be made available from close to market locations. The readily available supply of close to	<b>Staff have revised introduction to reflect comment.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				market aggregates will be required to take into account the planned growth for the Region, the Province's goal of tackling infrastructure deficit and aggregate consumption in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). This would be consistent with the PPS.	
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	The mechanisms by which mineral aggregate resources will be made available need to be further reviewed and discussed with stakeholders. The current framework of requiring two Official Plan Amendments (upper and lower tier) in addition to rezoning and Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) licence is cumbersome and duplicative and should be removed.	It is Region staff position that a ROPA is required. Through draft policy 4.3.10.2, a JART process is recommended in an attempt to streamline the application process.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	The current Regional Official Plan includes "Possible Aggregate Areas" adjacent to our Fonthill Pit. This is a good example of a mechanism that can be used to more effectively and proactively plan for the continued availability of aggregates close to market, which is essential to meet the specific growth needs of the Region.	It is Region's staff position that a ROPA is required for a mineral aggregate operation.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				Lafarge objects to the removal of this possible aggregate area and encourages the Region to expand these areas to correspond with areas where aggregate is identified and Provincial Plans permit its extraction. No Official Plan Amendment should be required in these areas.	
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	Where (if) an Official Plan Amendment is required, the policies need to address that these applications will be permitted during the two-year period following the approval of the Official Plan. If mineral aggregate resources are to be made available only by OPA, then an exception to the Planning Act moratorium would have to be set out in the policies of the OP. The same should be required for Zoning by-law amendments where new comprehensive zoning by-laws are going to be required to implement the OP.	It is Region's staff position that an exemption to the 2 year moratorium should not be included in the policy, but should be considered on a site specific basis by Regional Council.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.3	Lafarge generally supports the policies regarding efficient extraction of resources. We would like to see the	Local roads are a local planning matter and are not addressed through the

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				policy for maximizing extraction in the vicinity of Regional Roads also include local roads and more specifically encourage access to road allowance aggregate between licenced operations as has been provided for in the recent updates to the ARA.	Regional Official Plan in regards to mineral aggregate operations.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	Concerns with the economic and financial matters are addressed by the ARA licence fee distribution and should not be included in site specific application requirements. It is not clear what geotechnical considerations are to be addressed.	<p>There is a range of economic and financial matters that go beyond the ARA licence fee distribution. It is Region's staff position that it is appropriate to consider on a site-specific application.</p> <p>Geotechnical considerations do not apply to all individual sites. The need for a geotechnical study would be considered as part of the pre-consultation process.</p>
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.4.4	Policy 4.3.4.4 addresses requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan. We are looking for confirmation that the "Provincial Natural Heritage System" in the OP is the same area as identified in the Growth Plan. To conform with the Growth Plan it	The Provincial natural heritage system is intended to include both the Growth Plan natural heritage system and Greenbelt Plan natural heritage system. The issue of new vs. expanded is clearly explained as part of the draft policy.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				should also be made very clear that these policies only apply to new mineral aggregate operations (not expansions).	
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.4	These policies should not include the requirement that provincial plan policies be addressed to the "satisfaction of the Region". It goes without saying that the Region must be satisfied and conformity is achieved before a planning approval is granted. The "to the satisfaction of the Region" is redundant, unclear and sets up potential for conflict with Provincial reviews as well as interpretations of policy that provide little comfort or certainty to aggregate operators.	As noted within the draft policies, some of the Provincial policies apply to new operations and some apply to expanded operations.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.4.5	This policy does not conform with the Growth Plan policy that it intends to implement. The wording has been altered to add additional requirements that do not conform.	<b>Revisions have been made to policy 4.3.4.5.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.4.8	This policy needs to be revised to be consistent with the PPS. The same standard of protection and mitigation should apply for the above and below water table extraction. The suggestion of avoidance first is not consistent with the PPS and could unreasonably constrain availability of important below water aggregate resources.	Region staff have reviewed and are satisfied that the policy is consistent with the PPS. The policy states where avoidance is not possible, the test of mitigation applies.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.4.9	The Agricultural policies (4.3.4.9 and Appendix 9.2) need to be revised to specifically permit mineral aggregate operations in prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas in accordance with the PPS and Provincial Plan policies. The draft Agricultural policies should be consistent with the PPS, which permits aggregate extraction in prime ag areas and specialty crop areas subject to certain criteria. The draft policies within the agriculture appendix go beyond this, and intend to "restrict" non-agricultural uses (which includes mineral aggregate	Policy 4.3.4.9 requires an agricultural impact assessment (AIA) to be completed when there is an application in prime agricultural areas.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				operations) in prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas.	
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.6.6	<p>This policy is not consistent with the PPS because it applies to prime land or prime area, whereas the PPS applies the requirement for agricultural rehabilitation in prime areas on prime land (i.e both not either).</p> <p>C) should be revised to be consistent with the PPS. The alternatives are to be considered and the suitability judged by the applicant not "to the satisfaction of the Region".</p>	<p><b>Thank you for the comment, we have corrected the discrepancy between prime agricultural land and prime agricultural area. As the application would require an amendment to the Regional Official Plan, Region planning staff and Regional Council need to be satisfied that the tests set out in all policies have been met.</b></p>
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.4.10	Concerns that this policy regarding source water protection may go beyond provincial legislated requirements.	Part 3 of the PPS states that policies represent minimum standards.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.5	<p>These policies are generally unacceptable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) mineral aggregate truck traffic should be directed into settlement areas where the market is (not away)</li> <li>2) potential for adverse impacts, safety and social and environmental considerations are matters to be considered in infrastructure planning not the responsibility of one specific truck generating industry</li> <li>3) proposed policies requiring applicants to enter into a Haul Route Agreement should be removed. It is contrary to the ARA and unwarranted as each Licencee already pays an annual tonnage levy fee to both the Region and local municipality.</li> <li>4) approval of truck routes by the Region should not be specific to mineral aggregate operations or decided on a case by case basis. Movement of goods is addressed in the transportation policies.</li> <li>5)The consideration of alternative transport modes is not necessarily an opportunity that the Region should be</li> </ol>	Thank you for your comment, it is Staff's position that these policies should remain as written.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				supporting. Trucks deliver aggregate to job sites- the requirement for individual applicants to address alternative modes should be removed.	
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.6.1	It is not clear what the Region is looking for in Policy 4.3.6.1. If the Region proposes a different standard than what is required by the Province then that would need to be identified in the policy. As proposed, the policy does not state what requirements might have to be met.	The requirements of the Region are set out in the policies of the official plan.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	Comprehensive rehabilitation could be encouraged but not required. This would be consistent with the PPS and typically only pursued where there are larger concentrations of pits or quarries in different ownerships. If there are not any known circumstances where the Region proposes to complete comprehensive rehabilitation planning then it may be	It is the position of Region staff that comprehensive rehabilitation planning is essential for ensuring appropriate long term land use. It is the position of Region staff that comprehensive rehabilitation planning be a requirement.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				better to remove this expectation from the OP. If there are areas where comprehensive rehabilitation is proposed, these should be identified, and open for discussion.	
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.7.3	There should be a policy in addition to this one that supports the use of imported excess soil for rehabilitation in all circumstances where the additional soil can improve the rehabilitated landform for its intended purpose. On-site overburden and soil management is addressed through the ARA process. An additional requirement to provide an "excess soil" plan to the Region is redundant.	Region staff have considered the comment and are of the position that importing fill would be an issue to be addressed as part of the ARA licence.
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3.9.3 c)	This policy should only be applied to the new mineral aggregate operations.	Thank you for your comment, please see text box next to policy 4.3.4.6.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Lafarge Canada Inc.	Stakeholder		4.3	For peer reviews, the policy should recognize that costs over and above the application fee may be the applicants' responsibility subject to agreement of the applicant. Peer review costs must be reasonable. Peer reviews should not duplicate where gov't agencies have the expertise to review the same subject matters. The Cost Acknowledgement Agreement should not be required as part of a complete application.	Thank you for the comment, Region staff have reviewed and of are the position that the policy should remain as written. It is Region staff's position that the cost acknowledgement agreement should be required as part of a complete application.

## Chapter 5: Connected Region

Below is a summary of written comments received on [PDS 17-2021](#) between May 2021 and July 15, 2021, related specifically to Transportation and Infrastructure.

Where text is bolded under 'Regional response', revisions will be occurring to draft policy. Where the 'Regional response' box is highlighted in blue, revisions will be considered.

Comments received verbally through municipal meetings and Public Information Centres (PIC) are not summarized below. Video recordings, presentations, as well as Regional responses to comments not addressed at the June PICs can be found at the Region's website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx>)

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region's website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>)

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Marco Marchionda  (Marcasca Homes Inc.)	Stakeholder	Grimsby	5.1	Contends that the speed on Main St W in Grimsby should not be 70 km/h and the street requires additional police surveillance.	Thank you for your comments. This is outside the scope of the official plan. Transportation staff at the Region review speed limits. Your comment will be forwarded to the appropriate staff.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		5.1	Town staff are supportive of the transportation policy framework.	Thank you, comment noted.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		5.1.1.5	<p>Proposed policy 5.1.1.5 recognizes the applicability of NEP policy with respect to transportation infrastructure. We recommend a slight change to the proposed policy given policy changes in the NEP 2017. Rather than “minimize impact [sic] occurs on the Escarpment’s scenic quality, landform, and existing environmental features”, we recommend the following:</p> <p>“...ensure that the least possible impact occurs on the Escarpment environment, scenic resources, landform, key hydrologic and key natural heritage features”.</p>	Staff will review and revise policy accordingly.
Ed Lamb	Public	Welland	5.1	<p>Comment with respect to safety and operation issues associated with moving materials through the region as it pertains to traversing the Niagara Escarpment. Recommends substantially minimizing heavy truck traffic using local roads going through high-density urban areas.</p> <p>Attached a drawing of a potential route location that could be utilized to accomplish our present and</p>	Thank you for your comments, we will consider this once we undertake the Good Movements Study in accordance with official plan policies 5.1.7.1 and 5.1.7.2.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>future needs to isolate the heavy truck traffic that is required to move materials through the region and access the QEW corridor. As you will see, this image shows the possible uninterrupted traffic flow that connects to Hwy #3 at Canboro to take into consideration the potential for a provincial loop should this be determined to be the best solution. This also provides a route for transporting materials to support the forecasted growth along the southern shores of Lake Erie. Comment that our existing practices for safe passage of Heavy Trucks crossing the escarpment does not exist in the western part of the region and the need is substantial now and is increasing exponentially.</p>	
George Trifunovic	Public	Grimsby	5.1	<p>Provides a number of comments with respect to being supportive of the Livingston Avenue Extension and wishes to see land removed from the specialty crop area of the Greenbelt Plan area.</p>	<p>Changes to the specialty crop area mapping has to be completed by the Province. The Region has supported local municipal requests twice to change the specialty crop area designation. Staff do not anticipate changes to the specialty crop area</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
					mapping in time for the completion of the Niagara Official Plan.
George Trifunovic	Public	Grimsby	5.1	The official plan makes no reference to the fact that both the Casablanca Blvd improvement plan and the Livingston Avenue Extension roadway have both been fully approved by the Region and are not shown in the OP mapping.	Thank you for your comment. Staff are reviewing to determine if this will be shown in the Schedule.
George Trifunovic	Public	Grimsby	5.1	The official plan does not refer to the recommendation in ROPA 13 for major transit station areas.	The GO Transit Station areas will be identified as strategic growth areas.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.1.5.5 b)	Staff requests clarification on Policy 5.1.5.5 b). If the intent is that if traffic volumes increase and thereby increase traffic noise that the Region may retroactively require property owners to implement noise mitigation measures, the Town is not supportive of this Policy.	It was not the intent of this policy to retroactively require property owners to implement noise mitigation measures. Staff will revisit policy for clarity.

Committer	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.1	<p>Staff would like the opportunity to review and comment on any LAM roads that the Region may be planning on assuming.</p> <p>While the Town is generally supportive of the Complete Streets approach, there should be flexibility in cases where existing constraints (space, grade etc.) may limit the ability to meet all the requirements.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Local staff would be consulted on any roads the Region may assume.</p> <p>With respect to flexibility for a complete streets approach, Growth Plan policy 3.2.2.3 states 'In the design, refurbishment, or reconstruction of the existing and planned street network, a complete streets approach will be adopted that ensures the needs and safety of all road users are considered and appropriately accommodated'.</p> <p>Staff will revisit official plan policy 5.1.8.1 d) for clarity.</p>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.1.5.9	Staff requests clarification with respect to "Encourage co-location of linear infrastructure along regional roads" as noted in Policy 5.1.5.9.	The intent of the policy is to encourage utility lines or other infrastructure during any reconstruction to co-locate where possible and be consistent with requirements.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Township of West Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		5.1 Transportation Schedule	It is our position as well as our Mayor and Council that growth must occur in tandem with improved transportation linkages. We were not provided with adequate assurance that the proposed new Transportation Schedule (Appendix 12.3 and 12.4), will include the proposed new escarpment crossing along with the proper route for a Smithville East-West bypass. These have been discussed enough that they should be depicted on your proposed Transportation Draft Schedule, even if only conceptually for now.	The proposed new escarpment crossing and route for a Smithville East-West bypass are located in the Region's Transportation Master Plan. Policy 5.1.2.2 c) supports the expansion of public transit to improve linkages from nearby neighbourhoods to major trip generators. Policy 5.1.5.13 references the use of the Transportation Master Plan recommended actions and schedules. It is Staff's position is to reference the Transportation Master Plan recommended actions and schedules only.
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency		5.2	According to the Greenbelt Plan, extensions of municipal services outside of urban areas is not permitted unless to address an identified health issue. That said, as per the Town Official Plan, if an existing municipal service exists across a property frontage, then said property is permitted to connect laterally to this service. The lateral connection is not considered to be an extension of a service since the infrastructure is otherwise	The Greenbelt Plan policy 4.2.2.2 states where municipal water services exist outside of settlement areas, existing uses within the service area boundary as defined by the environmental assessment may be connected to such a service. Existing uses according to the Greenbelt Plan are those legally established prior to the date the Greenbelt Plan came into force (December 16, 2004).

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>already present. The Region however does not permit lateral connections to their infrastructure. As such, staff are of the opinion that flexibility should be afforded in these situations, subject of course to engineering considerations. While staff appreciate that there needs to be clear and concise thresholds for which to base these significant investments, there needs to be consideration of current growth trends and forecasts that lower area municipalities can provide.</p>	<p>Currently, Staff maintain the position to not allow for extensions of municipal services outside of urban areas to ensure enough supply for urban areas.</p>
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.3	<p>Thorold has existing facilities outside of the urban area that need to be on full municipal services. Staff suggest that a policy be added to the Region's OP that permits municipally owned facilities located outside of the urban area to connect to existing infrastructure where adequate capacity exists. Since municipal facilities (Operations Yards, Fire Halls, and Community Centres) become an essential piece of the City's Emergency Plan and it is important</p>	<p>Although the consideration of connecting municipal services should be considered, it begins a dangerous precedent for other uses and requests.</p>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>that they are fully serviced. The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed this for us.</p> <p>The City's Operation Centre is located just outside the UAB but has a connection to the municipal water distribution. If the City proceeds with plans to retrofit the Operations Centre, Council has to make the financial decision to replace the existing septic system or connect into sewer that crosses the frontage of the property.</p>	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		5.2	<p>In Appendix 12.2 there is a proposed policy in relation to certain proposed significant transportation facilities including the “Niagara Escarpment Crossing” and the “NGTA”. Both of these facilities will involve Environmental Assessments (EA’s) where the NEC would be consulted and will comment from the perspective of the environmental policies of the NEP. Until the EA’s have been completed and all alternatives have been considered for lands within the NEP Area, the proposed policy</p>	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				to “plan for, improve, and protect” such corridors and facilities may be overly prescriptive in relation to NEP policy which requires the demonstration that infrastructure is in the public interest and that all alternatives have been considered before it can be considered a Permitted Use. This evaluation would be achieved through the EA process.	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.1.10	We note from Appendix 13.1 that the Region will be considering through the Water/Wastewater Master Servicing Plan Update, whether to allow urban service connections outside the urban boundary. There is very specific policy in the NEP, Part 2.12.7 and 2.12.8, which prohibit urban service connections to rural areas with only limited exceptions in the NEP Area. Any less restrictive policy approach in the Niagara Region Official Plan could be in conflict with the NEP. We do note, however the proposed infrastructure policy in Appendix 13.2 (Policy 5.2.1.10) which would address this matter to ensure that	Thank you for your comments. No action necessary.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				there will be no conflict and that the more restrictive policy would apply.	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.9.1	The City will consider policies in its Zoning and OP where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial Policy.	This is required as well as complying with Regional policy where necessary.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.1.22 5.2.2.9	Request clarification on Policies 5.2.1.22 and 5.2.2.9- if the intent is that the Region has to approve local infrastructure expansions within the UAB, the Town is not in support of this requirement.	<b>Staff have reviewed and clarified policy for the approval to ensure the security and capacity of the systems.</b>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.2.2	Policy 5.2.2.2 states that the Region "discourages connections to Regional water and wastewater mains". If no local mains are available, private lateral connections should be permitted, in order to avoid doubling up on service mains, especially where multiple connections already exist.	Regional Planning staff will review these scenarios with Regional water/wastewater staff on a case-by-case basis.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.3.1	The NOP should consider creating definitions and mapping to differentiate between transmission mains and hybrid (transmission and distribution mains). Additionally, as discussed in Policy 5.2.3.1, the Region should state what size for a main that is purely transmission vs. hybrid.	It is Staff's position to keep policy language as is. Regional water/wastewater staff consider all regional mains to be transmission mains.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.6.6	There does not appear to be a definition of "necessary utilities" identified in Policy 5.2.6.6. This should be defined and should include fibre optics.	Fibre optics are considered a utility.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.3.2	Suggest adding "where connection from an urban to sewage treatment facility outside the urban area boundary is necessary be included in Policy 5.2.3.2.	Staff are satisfied with current policy.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		5.2.3.3	The Town is not supportive of giving authority to the Region to permit or prohibit private lateral connections to LAM water mains or sewers that exist outside UABs as stated in Policy 5.2.3.3.	Urban services are dedicated for urban areas. The Region will comment on applications with respect to this policy.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Queenston Quarry Reclamation Company (QQRC)	Stakeholder	NOTL	5.2.3.1	We understand that the policies restricting servicing outside urban areas will remain pending the outcome of the Master Servicing Plan Update. We would request that the Region fully consider the unique nature of the Queenston Quarry request and the fact that the NEP allows such a connection to occur subject to reaching an agreement with the Region.	This is noted for consideration based on future review and approval for the Queenston Quarry's Master Servicing Plan.

## Chapter 6: Vibrant Region

Below is a summary of written comments received on [PDS 17-2021](#) between May 2021 and July 15, 2021, related specifically to District and Secondary Plans, Urban Design, and the Archaeological Management Plan (AMP).

Where text is bolded under ‘Regional response’, revisions will be occurring to draft policy. Where the ‘Regional response’ box is highlighted in blue, revisions will be considered.

Comments received verbally through municipal meetings and Public Information Centres (PIC) are not summarized below. Video recordings, presentations, as well as Regional responses to comments not addressed at the June PICs can be found at the Region’s website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/public-information-centres.aspx>)

Detailed comments of the submissions below are available at the Region’s website: Niagara Official Plan (<https://www.niagararegion.ca/official-plan/>)

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.2	Brock District Plan: Secondary Plan already exists. Is it necessary to add additional policy?	It is Staff’s position to keep policy direction in the plan. Staff will consider modifications to refer to the Council-endorsed District Plan.
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3	An alternative to Secondary Plans is the block planning process, which puts it in the landowner's hands and expense. This resolves servicing issues as well. Staff	Thank you for your suggestion, staff will review and consider.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				recommends that this be included as an option.	
City of Thorold	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3.10	This policy needs to be clarified. The language "and is not yet in effect" is the issue. If the Secondary Plan is not in effect, why would development applications be processed?	This language was included to provide flexibility.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3.9	Secondary Plans will incorporate the City's Urban Design Guidelines. The Region's Urban Design Guidance and Guidelines will be considered where appropriate. Incorporating two sets of guidelines leads to duplication and confusion. Consider including a clause stating the municipalities UDG will take precedence if the municipality has their own or capacity to create them or the Region's UDG are only applicable in absence of local UDG.	<b>Staff have revised this policy to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.4	The City will consider policies where necessary that are in	Noted - will be considered through conformity review. There is flexibility in the "should" for SP policies. Shall for SGAs.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				adherence to the requirements of Provincial policy.	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.4.2 6.1.4.3	This can be considered but should not be required. Municipalities already have zoning and official plan provisions in these areas for a reason. Why would they require additional Secondary Planning? Who will be paying for the secondary plans?	Shall for 6.1.4.2 - for SGAs, Should for all others. Local municipalities have the ability to fund secondary plans through their development charges.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	In consideration of the robust requirements for technical studies, the Town encourages the Region to continue or reinstate its funding program to support the preparation of Secondary Plans, whether performed by in-house staff or by a consultant.	Local municipalities have the ability to fund secondary plans through their development charges.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	The document indicates that ‘Secondary Plans are tool for implementing District Plans’. Please clarify, where the Region undertakes a District Plan, if a Secondary Plan is also required, and if so, what agency will be	Secondary plans are an amendment to the local official plan. They should be prepared by the local municipality. Where a secondary plan is following a district plan, they should be following the vision and objectives of the district plan.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				responsible for the preparation of the Secondary Plan.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	With the Region taking on this new role of approving Secondary Plans Terms of Reference, the Town has concerns regarding the Region’s capacity to process such reviews in a timely manner	The Guide is meant to assist locals with the preparation of TOR, similar to the work plans that development planning is preparing as part of the MOU. This is also referenced in the MOU. The intent is that the Region would review or work with the LAM on the development of the TOR
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Identify provisions for ‘urban design direction’ when municipalities already have urban design guidelines in place and provide clarification with respect to the need for additional study.	<b>Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Clarify if the Region will undertake Secondary Plans to implement regional planning priorities, or if this responsibility will fall to the local municipality	Local municipalities have the ability to fund secondary plans through their development charges.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1.3.7	Consider rewording Policy 6.1.3.7 to ‘may’ rather than ‘will’, as appropriate for the unique situation. Also, please make provisions for	It is staff’s position is to keep language as is. Scoping of the studies would be determined in accordance with policy 6.1.3.3.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				recent studies that have already been undertaken, and that these studies do not need to be repeated.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Staff is requesting clarification with respect to the requirement that all UAB expansions must complete a secondary plan including those those lands that will be brought online through the Land Needs Assessment. The Town has a number of smaller sites that have been advanced to the Region that based on size, may not warrant a full secondary plan process.	Thank you for your comment. Staff will review and consider the potential to use a block planning process.
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.1	Staff recommends setting a hectare threshold and/or reviewing each location on a case-by-case basis.	It is staff's position not to have a size threshold. The guidance document may provide assistance in considering thresholds on a case-by-case basis.
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)	PA Circulated Agency		6.1 Brock District Policies	Reference to NEP and not the Greenbelt Plan - confirm the proper policy reference	Staff will consider comment and modify appropriately
Ministry of Municipal Affairs			6.1	Will these be incorporated? Please ensure the MMAH comments	Comment received.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
and Housing (MMAH)			Glendale District Policies	provided on ROPA 17 are reviewed and considered	
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.5	The City will consider policies where necessary that are in adherence to the requirements of Provincial policy.	Comment received.
City of Welland	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.5.1 e)	e) most municipalities already have their own UDGs or the capability to create their own. Imposing two sets of UDGs for a Secondary Plan seems to create duplication and confusion. A clause should be included in this section similar to clause 6.2.5.2 b). Consider a clause stating the municipalities UDG will take precedence if the municipality has their own or capacity to create them or the Region's UDG are only applicable in absence of UDGs.	<b>Staff have revised this policy to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2	<p>The evolution of Regional roads and streetscapes will promote a balanced approach to road design, which is known as Complete Streets. This approach ensures that the needs of motorists, transit users, cyclists and pedestrians are considered in the design conversation. Examples of enhancements to Regional roads and streetscapes can include sustainable design features, street trees, traffic calming design measures, street furniture, enhanced lighting, wayfinding and public art.</p> <p>Regional transportation staff have indicated numerous times in the past that there will not be traffic calming on their roads.</p>	Physical barriers alone do not create traffic calming on roads. There are many elements and enhancements contributing to complete streets that contribute to traffic calming. This will be addressed through the Complete Streets Manual.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2	This is an absolutely gross and disturbing position for their engineering staff to take considering engineers are	Comment received.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>responsible for upholding public safety above all else.</p> <p>There is no logical reason why the Region cannot simultaneously improve their roads to provide a more human-scaled design speed whilst also efficiently moving people, and not just 'vehicles'.</p>	
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.1	6.2.1.1 Excellence and innovation shall be promoted in architecture, landscape architecture, site planning, transportation engineering, streetscape design and overall community design to ensure built environments are attractive, walkable, safe, diverse, and functional.	Staff will consider modifications to this policy. Transportation engineering is addressed in section 6.2.2.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.4	6.2.1.4 The promotion of active transportation is to be achieved through the coherent, evidenced based, and collaborative design of streets, building interfaces and public spaces.	Staff are of the position to keep language as is.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2	f) the development of private and rear laneways to enhance pedestrian safety, encourage active transportation, and discourage vehicle-dominant streetscapes	Thank you for your suggestion, these comments will be considered as part of the update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.6 b)	iv. Prioritize and encourage rear laneway neighbourhood design on new development and redevelopment where limited driveway access is desired for safety & transportation reasons and positively calibrated urban design is welcomed and achievable.	Thank you for your suggestion, these comments will be considered as part of the update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.1.6	f) Innovative municipal zoning standards that enforce human-scaled neighbourhood design principles such as maximum front yard setbacks.	Zoning is a local municipal matter.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2.1	6.2.2.1 Regional road allowances shall be designed, in accordance with the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines, and Complete Streets Design Manual to be walkable by providing sidewalks and walking connections to local	Staff will consider modifications to this policy.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				streets, high quality bicycle facilities, trails, and destinations, where feasible.	
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2.2	considered? This should be a priority.	<b>Staff have revised policy to clarify that alternative road designs will be considered as part of the Complete Streets Program.</b>
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.2.8	d) give priority to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.	Staff will review and consider suggestion.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.4.1	The suburban neighbourhood models that are routinely approved do not create a sense of place. How can we create unique, authentic, memorable and vibrant places when we only allow cookie-cutter, detached housing to dominate development?	The Model Urban Design Guidelines do not support these types of development as described in your comment. An update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines will encourage the vision set forth in this policy set.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.5.1	c) Streets, building interfaces and public spaces are to be designed to enhance the public realm and promote active transportation by prioritizing the reduction of vehicle dependency through human-scaled architecture, reduced front yard	Thank you for your suggestion. The Model Urban Design Guidelines will provide additional detail.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				setbacks, large separations between pedestrians and road traffic...	
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.5.2	Again, how do you create neighbourhood character and community identity when we allow “sameness” everywhere, where only one income category is able to own property throughout an entire neighbourhood?	The Model Urban Design Guidelines do not support these types of development as described in your comment. An update to the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines will encourage the vision set forth in this policy set.
Better Neighbourhoods	PA Circulated Agency	St Catharines	6.2.5.2	iv. Function as destinations and not thoroughfares, v. Prioritize calm traffic speeds that improve safety, make the public realm more comfortable, reduce noise, improve business vitality and improve property values.	<b>Staff have revised policy to clarify that alternative road designs will be considered as part of the Complete Streets Program.</b>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2	Based upon the Regional oversight and approval proposed in this section, the Town has significant concern relative to the practicality, the Regions capacity to process such requests/reviews/applications in a timely manner, and the implications on local concerns.	<b>Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2	The Town of Fort Erie will have Town-wide urban design guidelines in place, by the time the NOP is approved. Please consider provisions for existing Urban Design Guidelines, and how this will be dealt with.	<b>Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2	Staff are requesting clarification with respect to the requirement that Urban Design Guidelines are necessary for all municipal public infrastructure projects – be it a street, park, structure or other facility type. The Town is not supportive of this level of oversight and regulation, especially with no knowledge of what the updated and expanded Urban Design Guidelines will include	<b>Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.3.2 b)	The Town is not supportive of preparing and submitting to the Region for approval, terms of reference for urban design guidelines and related studies, or of submitting for review and approval,	<b>Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				urban design guidelines and studies, for every municipal project stated in Policy 6.2.3.2b.	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.2.5.2 b)	In relation to Policy 6.2.5.2 b): Please clarify who the approval party is, as referenced in this section.	<b>Staff have revised policies to clarify that the Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines should be used in the absence of local municipal urban design guidelines.</b>
Town of Lincoln	PA Circulated Agency	Lincoln	6.3	<p>Town Planning staff are of the opinion that the Archaeological Assessment requirement should include exemptions for minor construction/development in these areas. These could include swimming pools, and structures under a certain size or perhaps buildings that don't require footings but can be built on slabs or without significant excavation.</p> <p>Staff recommend as an alternative to archaeological assessment that a clause be included in the decision and/or building permit which states if archaeological resources are</p>	The following comments will be addressed at the September Area Planners meeting with Regional staff and the consultants for the Archeological Management Plan (AMP). The delegated review process will be rolled out for comment as part of the next key deliverable in the project and the framework will speak to Planning Act applications, screening for archaeological potential and treatment of non-Planning Act applications. The AMP will offer standardized wording for conditions and clauses to be included as part of the local administration process. This will ensure the wording is consistent across the Region.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				discovered during construction, the owner agrees to immediately cease construction and undertake an assessment (see email with more info).	
Niagara Escarpment Commission	PA Circulated Agency		6.3	Appendix 16 provides an overview of the proposed AMP. NEC staff support the continued development of the AMP as it is consistent with NEP policy in Part 2.10 which has the objective to conserve archaeological resources. The Appendix suggests that the AMP will be of assistance in reviewing Planning Act applications but we believe that it will also be helpful in the consideration of Niagara Escarpment Plan amendment and Development Permit applications under the Niagara Escarpment	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				<p>Planning and Development Act that the NEC circulates to the Region for comment.</p>	
Town of Fort Erie	PA Circulated Agency		6.3	<p>The Town has an Archaeological Master Plan that was prepared by ASI in 2003. Policies from this plan were incorporated into the Town's Official Plan and include Schedule D- Cultural Heritage Archaeological Zone of Potential and D1-Cultural Heritage Archaeological Zone of Sensitivity.</p> <p>These areas identify when the Town can request appropriate Archaeological studies when managing development applications and Staff will ensure that the mapping and policies brought forward by the Region will complement, support and enhance the existing Town policies.</p>	Thank you for your comments.

Commenter	Participant Type	Municipality of Residence	Chapter Subsection	Summary of Comments	Regional Response
				The Town will be undertaking an Archaeological Master Plan for the Southend area in late 2021.	
Wood.	Stakeholder		6.3	Looking for information on when the Archaeological Management Plan will be ready.	Staff are looking to have the AMP endorsed by Council in Q4 2021. Staff provided commenter with information hosted on the website.

## EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

### CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

#### **SUMMARY**

The Introduction establishes the planning context for Niagara, challenges and opportunities, the two-tier planning framework, pillar statements and directives as well as legislative basis and structure of the Official Plan. The Introduction addresses the following:

- An overview of Niagara's past present and future. In this regard Niagara's geographical context is also established. The legislative basis for the Plan and rationale for a new Official Plan are explained.
- The Introduction explains how planning decisions must comply with the Plan and that local Official Plans must be brought into conformity with the Niagara Official Plan within one year of provincial approval.
- The purpose of the Niagara Official Plan (NOP) in achieving conformity, integrating with other engineering and financial plans to manage growth and policies to assist in addressing housing affordability, protect our natural environment, address climate change and assist in achieving economic prosperity are highlighted.
- Managing growth in a manner where housing affordability can be addressed, vibrant communities developed and the natural environment protected is the critical challenge and opportunity.
- The usage of the NOP by Regional council, the local municipalities, agencies, departments, industry and citizens is identified.
- The utilization of the Plan leads in to the importance of the NOP having clear policy direction and roles with a balanced approach that provides flexibility and certainty where warranted.
- The Pillar Statements and Key Directives for the NOP are outlined.
- The NOP's relationship with Provincial Plans, format. Planning horizon and how it is to be interpreted are all explained.
- The plans Chapter structure is then set out to conclude the Introduction.



Integration Guide for Sub-sections Reported in PDS 36-2021			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regional Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Archaeology
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Employment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Land Needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SABR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Aggregates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Natural Heritage incl.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Water Systems Options
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	District/Secondary Plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watershed Planning
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Urban Design	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate Change

**OVERVIEW**

This Overview does not address all the content in the Introduction Chapter but expands on some of the points identified above.

The importance of Indigenous history, the War of 1812 and the Underground Railroad in shaping Niagara’s context is outlined. The current economic context of Niagara, the arrival of GO train service and Niagara being on the threshold of significant growth are highlighted.

With respect to Niagara’s Indigenous history it is important to note that once an Indigenous Corporate Land Acknowledgement (LA) is endorsed by Regional Council, the LA will then be placed in the appropriate place in the Introduction to the NOP.

Pillar Statements and Key Directives establish the foundational principles the policies are developed upon. These were developed based on public input. The public and Regional council were surveyed on the draft Pillar Statements and Key Directives with positive results.

The following are the Pillar Statements:

**EXCEPTIONAL** *development* and communities - Well planned, high quality *development* in appropriate locations that improves our communities, while protecting what is valuable.

**DIVERSE** housing types, jobs and population - A wide mix of housing types and employment opportunities that attract diverse populations to Niagara across all ages, incomes and backgrounds.

**THRIVING** agriculture and tourism - A prosperous agricultural industry and world-class tourism opportunities that grow our economy and elevate the Niagara experience.

**RESILIENT** urban and natural areas - Areas rich in biodiversity that mitigate and adapt to *climate change* while strengthening Niagara's ability to recover from extreme weather events.

The following are the Key Directives:

**Growing Region** – Manage growth strategically and diversify the housing stock to accommodate all ages and incomes.

**Vibrant Region** – Elevate the livability and engaging qualities of communities, facilities and attractions.

**Connected Region** – Provide connections within and between communities and outside the region.

**Competitive Region** – Plan and manage growth to position Niagara for economic prosperity.

**Sustainable Region** – Enhance the sustainability and *resilience* of Niagara's built and natural environment.

The NOP will replace the Region's current Official Plan in its entirety. The NOP will incorporate the policy and regulatory framework established by the *Province*, as outlined in the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019), the Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017), the Greenbelt Plan (2017), and other Provincial legislation. More importantly the NOP will:

- Integrate with and inform key engineering and finance programs to capture growth-related costs, so growth can pay for growth. Specifically, the Plan's timeline was aligned with the Development Charges update, Water and Wastewater Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan update.
- Substantially improve the natural environment system integrating the *natural heritage system* and the water resource system.
- Address *climate change* in order to achieve resiliency by directing for mitigation and adaptation.
- Create *complete communities* and identify where *intensification* and higher densities will be needed to achieve anticipated growth.
- Address critical housing affordability and market demand issues.

- Provide clearly defined *employment areas* to better direct *employment area* investment and restrict undesired conversion to non-employment uses.
- Guide *infrastructure* planning and strategic investment decisions to support and accommodate forecasted population and economic growth.

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

This is the Niagara Official Plan (NOP), the Regional Municipality of Niagara’s long-term, strategic policy framework for managing inevitable growth coming to Niagara by guiding future land use and physical *development* thereby influencing economic, environmental, and planning decisions until 2051 and beyond.

Niagara is on the threshold of significant growth. A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) challenges Niagara to effectively prepare for a significant increase in population and employment growth to the year 2051. Niagara is expected to accommodate a minimum population of 694,000 and 272,000 jobs. This growth will be shaped by the proactive growth management, community building, and other forward-thinking policies of this Plan - the Region and local municipalities will be ready for the future.

Proactive growth management will require this Plan to integrate with and inform key engineering and finance programs, namely: the Development Charges update, Water and Wastewater Master Plan and Transportation Master Plan update in order to ensure the necessary *infrastructure* is in place to accommodate growth.

The strategic policy direction of the NOP balances the input provided by the comments of thousands of individuals, agencies, boards, governments, academics, and organized interest groups. This input also shaped the Pillar Statements that form the foundations of policy development for the NOP. They describe what is most important to the community and how the region will change over the next 30 years. Like the policies, Pillar Statements are interconnected and must be considered holistically.

The following are the NOP Pillar Statements:

**EXCEPTIONAL** *development* and communities - Well planned, high quality *development* in appropriate locations that improves our communities, while protecting what is valuable.

**DIVERSE** housing types, jobs and population - A wide mix of housing types and employment opportunities that attract diverse populations to Niagara across all ages, incomes and backgrounds;

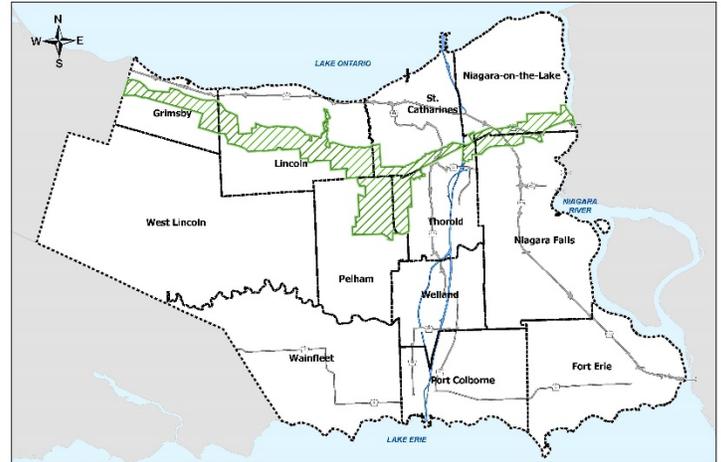
**THRIVING** agriculture and tourism - A prosperous agricultural industry and world-class tourism opportunities that grow our economy and elevate the Niagara experience.

**RESILIENT** urban and natural areas - Areas rich in biodiversity that mitigate and adapt to *climate change* while strengthening Niagara’s ability to recover from extreme weather events.

## 1.1 Overview - Niagara Past, Present, and Future

Formed in 1970<sup>1</sup>, the Region is composed of twelve local municipalities, comprising urban and rural communities, with a growing population of over 450,000 and a land base of about 1,854 square kilometres.

Niagara is a geographically distinct area of land sheltered by Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, and the Niagara River. The Niagara Escarpment, a renowned UNESCO World biosphere reserve, is a prominent visual landmark and natural corridor transecting the region. These features are influencers on climate, and, combined with the sand and silt soils of the Fonthill kame moraine and along the Lake Ontario plain create irreplaceable unique areas for the growing of tender fruits and grapes. The Provincial Greenbelt Plan, which protects these lands, will require certain municipalities to intensify development to accommodate oncoming growth.



*Figure 1: Niagara region and 12 local municipalities*

Niagara's history spans more than 10,000 years of human history, beginning with the Indigenous peoples who hunted, fished, foraged and lived sustainably on the lands. There remains evidence of the role the Loyalist migration resulting from the American Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and Underground Railroad played in how Niagara developed. Evidence of Niagara's rich history can be seen in the considerable number of historic trails, sites, buildings, and monuments that are located throughout the region

Today, Niagara is a region of contrasts where you can find quaint main streets and animated downtown cores, scenic parkways and busy highways, legendary waterfalls and reflective parks, historic pageantry, the glitz of an entertainment district, world class wineries and breweries, as well as beautiful natural areas and vineyards. These attributes together with Niagara's diverse economic base with major employment in the hospitality industry, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, service businesses, educational and medical facilities, and governments as well as recent GO train connection to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), makes Niagara a desirable destination for growth. The

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<sup>1</sup> On June 26, 1969, the Province of Ontario enacted The Regional Municipality of Niagara Act. On January 1, 1970, 12 area municipal governments and 1 regional government replaced the 2 counties and 26 municipal structures.

challenge is managing growth sustainably to maintain and enhance all these attributes.

## 1.2 Planning Context

### 1.2.1. Legislative Basis

This Plan supersedes the Region's previous Official Plan. In 1973 the Region adopted a Regional Policy plan with amendments throughout the 1970's to solidify urban boundaries. Further core amendments to address natural heritage protection and growth management were approved. It was in 2014 that the Regional Policy Plan was reformatted into an Official Plan. An Official Plan is not intended to be a static document. In accordance with the provisions of the Planning Act, the Region is required to prepare and update its Official Plan.

In 2017, Regional Council determined that a new Official Plan was needed and directed Regional staff to commence a multi-year comprehensive study. The Planning Act requires that all Official Plans contain goals, objectives, and policies to manage and direct physical (land use) change and its effects on the cultural, social, economic, and natural environment within legislated boundaries. It is required to have policies and measures as are practicable to ensure the adequate provision of *affordable* housing, a description of the measures and procedures for informing and obtaining the views of the public, and other policies or measure as may be prescribed.

This Plan was adopted by Regional Council on XXXX, 2022. The *Province* is the approval authority for this Plan.

### 1.2.2. Plan Conformity

This Plan is a legal document. The Planning Act requires that all Regional and local *public works projects*, local Official Plans, amendments, land-use related by-laws, and all future *development* must conform to the approved Plan.

The Planning Act requires that local Official Plans must be updated to conform to this Plan within one year of Provincial approval.

Under the Planning Act, the Region is the approval authority for local Official Plan conformity. To assist local municipalities each policy section of this Plan contains policies to guide conformity of their Official Plans. Within this framework, local Official Plans are to provide the detailed community planning goals, objectives, and policies that implement this Plan in a manner that reflects unique local needs and circumstances.

Land-use planning is a shared responsibility between the Region and local municipalities. This responsibility is grounded in the idea that citizens are best served by effective regional and local municipal partnerships and collaboration, including the development and review of their respective Official Plans.

The NOP is required to comply with, where necessary the policy and regulatory framework established by the *Province*, as outlined in the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), the A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020), the Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017), the Greenbelt Plan (2017), and other Provincial legislation.

### **1.2.3. Review and Amendment**

This Plan will be reviewed and amended as required in the opinion of Regional Council to meet the changing needs of the people of Niagara, and to reflect responses prompted by new issues, information, and societal values. Amendments to this Plan can be initiated by Regional Council, or in response to an application by an individual, the Council of a local municipality, or any other public body. The process for amending this Plan will be in accordance with the provisions of the Planning Act and may be exempt from Provincial approval.

### **1.2.4. Plan Utilization**

This Plan will be used by Regional Council and local municipalities relative to making planning decisions and updating Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. This Plan will also be used by other government agencies, business, industry and private citizens in considering their own plans, investments, and programs.

## **1.3 How to Read the Plan**

### **1.3.1. Relationship with Provincial Legislation**

This Plan must be read in conjunction with the Provincial Policy Plans identified in 1.2.2 above.

This Plan builds upon the policy foundation provided by the Provincial legislation and provides additional and more specific land-use planning policies to address issues facing Niagara.

Within the Greenbelt Plan Area, policies of this Plan that address the same, similar, related, or overlapping matters as the Greenbelt Plan do not apply except where the policies of Growth Plan or the Greenbelt Plan provide otherwise.

Where there is a conflict between the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, or this Plan regarding the natural environment or human health, the direction that provides more protection to the natural environment or human health prevails.

### **1.3.2. Format**

This Plan consists of text, tables, schedules, glossary of terms, figures, and comment boxes. The schedules, tables and glossary of terms must be read in the context of the related text. For the purpose of the Planning Act and the Municipal Act, Chapters 1 to 7 and the glossary of terms of this Plan, inclusive of text, schedules, and tables, shall be considered the Plan.

Figures show factual and/or conceptual information and are included in the Plan for illustrative purposes. Comment boxes are included within the Plan to add context and clarification. Figures and comment boxes are not part of the Plan and may be changed or updated from time to time by Regional Council without requiring an amendment to this Plan. Further, changes to certain schedules may be made without an amendment to the NOP where noted in policy.

Italicized terms contained in the Plan are included in the Glossary of Terms. Certain terms are used in this Plan for the purpose of achieving conformity with Provincial Plans and policies. Defined terms are intended to capture both the singular and plural forms of these terms.

Sections of this Plan may be re-numbered without amendment provided that the sequence and hierarchy of the sections are not affected by the re-numbering.

### **1.3.3. Horizon of this Plan**

Where a specified planning horizon is required, this Plan uses the year 2051. However, in all planning decisions, it must be considered that land-use decisions may have an impact on the region well beyond this 30-year horizon. The objectives of this Plan are intended to be achieved within the horizon of this Plan. Nothing in this Plan limits the planning for *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* beyond the horizon of the Plan. However, planning for *infrastructure* will not predetermine the form, pattern, or extent of *settlement area* boundary expansions.

#### **1.3.4. Interpretation**

Where the term “Region” is used, it refers to the Corporation of the Regional Municipality of Niagara. Where the term “region” is used, it refers to the geographical area comprising the Niagara region.

It is important to consider the specific language of the policies. The choice of language is intended to distinguish between the types of policies and the nature of implementation. Auxiliary verbs, such as “shall”, “should”, and “may” are used throughout this Plan. “Shall” implies that the policy directive is mandatory and requires full compliance. For example, “Prime agricultural land and specialty crop areas shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture, *development* and site alteration shall not be permitted.” The term “should” implies that the policy should be complied with unless there is a good planning rationale. Other policies use enabling or supportive language, such as “may”, “promote”, and “encourage”, which implies that the policy is permissive and not mandatory or obligatory. There is some discretion when applying a policy with enabling or supportive language in contrast to a policy with a directive, limitation, or prohibition.

None of the policies are intended to formally commit Regional Council to provide funding for their implementation. Funding decisions will be made by Regional Council on a case-by-case basis.

#### **1.3.5. Determining Applicability and Conformity**

The Plan is intended to be read in its entirety. All policies must be considered together to determine applicability and conformity. Individual policies should not be read or interpreted in isolation. Relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. When more than one policy is relevant, a decision-maker should consider all of the relevant policies to understand how they work together. The language of each policy will assist in understanding how the policies are to be implemented.

While specific policies sometimes refer to other policies for ease of use, these cross-references do not take away from the need to read the Plan as a whole.

There is no implied priority in the order in which the policies appear, unless otherwise stated.

#### **1.3.6. Policies Represent Minimum Standards**

The policies of this Plan represent minimum standards. Decision-makers are encouraged to go beyond these minimum standards to

address matters of importance, unless doing so would conflict with any policy of this Plan.

## 1.4 Organization of the Niagara Official Plan

The Plan is organized into seven chapters and a Glossary of Terms.

### 1.4.1. Chapter 1 - Introduction – Making Our Mark

The introduction identifies Niagara’s planning context, the Pillar Statements and Directives upon which the Plan is based, the legislative basis of the Plan, a guide to reading the Plan and an outline of the plan’s structure and organization. Key Directives identify the main thrusts of work necessary to achieve the Pillar Statements relative to core Chapters and are outlined for each Chapter below.

### 1.4.2. Chapter 2 – Growing Region

**Directive** – Manage growth strategically and diversify the housing stock to accommodate all ages and incomes.

Growing Region identifies how and where growth and *development* are to occur within Niagara. It identifies population and employment forecasts, land needs and the distribution of forecasted growth, as well as Niagara’s growth strategy. This chapter contains general policies that support residential *intensification*, *redevelopment*, and other enhancements to the supply of housing to address affordability in Niagara. *Settlement area* boundaries and *fringe planning* are also addressed. There are several schedules and tables that must be read in conjunction with the policies.

### 1.4.3. Chapter 3 – Sustainable Region

**Directive** – Enhance the sustainability and *resilience* of Niagara’s built and natural environment.

Sustainable Region outlines the policy framework that will enhance the sustainability and *resilience* of the Region’s built and natural environment. Policies and schedules for the integrated Natural Environment System and watershed planning will provide for the protection of environmental features and ecological functions from adverse impacts. The policies of this chapter also give direction for climate change across all sectors, although climate change will also be addressed throughout the Plan.

### 1.4.4. Chapter 4 – Competitive Region

**Directive** – Plan and manage growth to position Niagara for economic prosperity.

The Competitive Region chapter focuses on the importance of a vital, competitive, and diverse economy, and sound tax base to position Niagara for economic prosperity. Agricultural policies direct for the protection and enhancement of Niagara's vital Agri-food sector. Employment policies identify and protect *employment areas*, establish density targets for *employment areas* and provide evaluation processes for use in converting existing or establishing future *employment areas*. Policies in this chapter also protect *mineral aggregate resources* from incompatible land uses and provide for extraction while minimizing environmental and social impacts.

#### 1.4.5. Chapter 5 – Connected Region

**Directive** – Provide connections within and between communities, and outside the region.

The Connected Region chapter addresses Niagara's *infrastructure*, transportation and services existing and future needs. Policies direct for integrated planning and *development* and ensure capacity to support forecasted population and employment growth, financial sustainability and *climate change* resiliency. Transportation policies prioritize investments in public transit, the design and construction of *complete streets*, and active transportation. *Infrastructure* policies address the Region's *infrastructure* needs relating to drinking water, wastewater, waste, energy, and utility services.

#### 1.4.6. Chapter 6 – Vibrant Region

**Directive** – Elevate the livability and engaging qualities of communities, facilities and attractions.

Vibrant Region focuses on elevating the livability of Niagara's communities and introduces policies related to creating vibrant urban and rural places. District Plans and Secondary Plans are identified as important areas of interest. Policies provide a framework for proactive, coordinated and comprehensive growth management planning within these defined areas. Urban design policies assist the Region in achieving a high-quality built environment through the design of the *built form* and mobility networks. Archaeology is also addressed in this chapter with policies directing for conservation of *cultural heritage resources* and early screening for *significant archaeological resources* as part of Planning Act applications.

#### 1.4.7. Chapter 7 - Implementation

Implementation policies identify how the Plan is intended to be carried out to achieve the key directives, and focuses on identifying

consultation requirements, performance indicators, monitoring, coordination of roles, complete applications, phasing, and site-specific policies.

#### **1.4.8. Glossary of Terms**

Italicized terms contained in the Plan are defined in the Glossary of Terms.

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