



Councillor Carolynn Ioannoni, Chairperson
and Members of the Community Services Committee
City of Niagara Falls, Ontario

Members:

Re: **PD-2007-62**
Growth Management Official Plan Review

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Comprehensive Review of Residential and Employment Land Needs and Supply, prepared by urbanMetrics inc., be adopted in principle except for recommendations 1, 12 & 13 outlined in the Executive Summary in the Review.
2. ~~That the Comprehensive Review be circulated to Regional Niagara as input on the Regional Growth Strategy Study.~~ That processing of the Amendment Applications be initiated in light of the findings of Phase 1.
3. ~~That processing of the Amendment Application be initiated in light of the findings of Phase 1.~~ That the pre-existing amendment application by the Northwest Community Land Group (NCLG) proceed to a public meeting; and (4) That Phase 2 of the

BACKGROUND: Growth Management Official Plan Review recommend amendments to the Official Plan based on accommodating the City's growth needs to the year 2031 and that, in that context, the consultants evaluate the appropriateness of an Urban boundary expansion in the northwest portion of the City. In December 2006, Council authorized urbanMetrics Inc. and Meridian Planning Consultants to undertake the City's Growth Management Comprehensive Review. Both urbanMetrics Inc. and Meridian Planning will be making a presentation to the Committee at this evening's meeting to provide an update on their respective work on the review.

The Growth Management Official Plan Review

The Growth Management Review is a comprehensive study to assess the City's future residential and employment lands needs and how the City should manage its growth over the next 25 years within the context of the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Review is to be completed in two phases. The first phase involves an analysis of residential and employment lands needs while the second phase involves the creation of policies for the City's Official Plan to manage growth.

Phase 1

UrbanMetrics Inc. will speak to the findings of its final Residential and Employment Land Needs Analysis. The needs analysis included a peer review of applications by Thundering Waters and Warren Woods to redesignate industrial lands for residential use. Also, at the request of the Northwest Community Landowners Group (NCLG) and the City, urbanMetrics provided a brief evaluation of the proposed northwest urban area boundary expansion with regard to the need for these lands from a long term growth perspective.

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The highlights of the Phase 1 report include the following conclusions:

- Niagara Falls will grow by an estimated 25,200 persons and 10,400 jobs between 2001 and 2031;
- the City does not currently have a sufficient amount of designated and zoned lands to accommodate the forecasted residential growth;
- most of the residential shortfall will be in the low density (single and semi) category;
- based on current information, the City has an oversupply of industrial land however the supply should be reviewed on a 5 year basis to ensure continued supply over the long term;
- conversion of a portion of the Warren Woods site for residential use could be considered, however a portion which fronts onto Montrose Road should remain industrial;
- conversion of the Thundering Waters site to residential could be considered; and
- an expansion of the urban area boundary in the northwest is premature at this time but may be needed in the long term to satisfy residential demand.

A phasing strategy for the development of residential lands within the urban boundary through to 2024 is also contained in the report. The phasing strategy is based on the ability of the lands to be serviced. In setting the phasing strategy, the consultants had regard to the impact on the existing municipal infrastructure, the need for new facilities, upgrades to existing pumping stations and the need for new pumping stations to be constructed.

Secondary Planning

The Comprehensive Growth Strategy recommends the City process the amendment application for the Thundering Waters and Warren Woods areas for future development. Both proposals involve a considerable land area, therefore the preparation of secondary plans will ultimately be required for both areas. Secondary plans provide a policy framework for the development of an area at a level that provides more detail than the Official Plan. Issues that are to be addressed in secondary plans are specified in the Official Plan:

- overall population capacity of the community related to road and service infrastructure;
- the location of major engineering services and public utilities;
- the location and areas of various residential densities;
- parks and open space, schools, convenience opportunities for shopping, employment and energy conservation;
- the road pattern, including existing and proposed arterial, major collector, collector roads; and
- the environmental constraints to development and particularly recognizing important woodlots and natural areas.

The secondary plan areas may include lands beyond those subject to the applications. Public involvement will also be a critical factor in the development of the secondary plans and will require a series of open houses and public meetings. Due to the number of issues, the ramifications on municipal infrastructure, public input and that lands of differing ownership may be involved, it may be preferable that the secondary plans be lead by City Staff in collaboration with the applicants and other landowners.


Phase 2

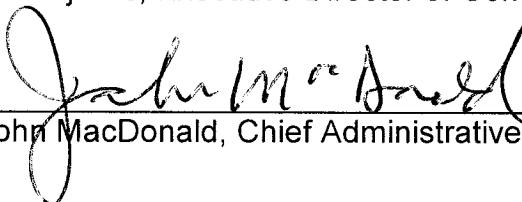
Meridian Planning will present the Committee with an overview of the key growth issues related to intensification, greenfields development and minimum densities. Meridian is completing its data collection phase and will use the input for the preparation of new Official Plan policies.

CONCLUSION:

The Comprehensive Review marks the completion of the first phase of the City's Growth Management Official Plan Review. From this point Meridian Planning will continue its work which will be the subject of further presentations to this Committee. The findings of the consultants will form an important part of the Regional growth plan and distribution of development.

Recommended by: 
Alex Herlovitch, Director of Planning & Development

Approved by: 
Ed Dujlovic, Executive Director of Community Services

Respectfully submitted: 
John MacDonald, Chief Administrative Officer

J.Barnsley:mb