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COUNCIL NEWS

Region, Pelham eye joint public works site

If approved, the town and the Region would share the Region's current yard on Victoria Avenue in Fenwick and the costs for upgrading the facility.

By **Bill Sawchuk** Standard Reporter

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Niagara Region

A map shows the Region's transportation operation's areas, including zone's 13 and 14, covering Lincoln, Pelham and Wainfleet.



Niagara Region will undertake a feasibility study to explore establishing a shared public works operations centre and patrol yard with the Town of Pelham.

The current regional operations centre and yard is located at 1495 Victoria Ave., Fenwick, the main north-south road connecting Wainfleet, Pelham and Lincoln all the way north to the QEW highway.

The Region is undertaking the study with an eye on the future capacity and future service needs for both, a report to the Region's Public Works Committee said.

"We are basically trying to provide good service to the residents and, at the same time, cost-saving measures through consolidation of properties and operations as we move forward," said West Lincoln Coun. Albert Witteveen, the chair of the Region's Public Works Committee, in an interview. "Something like this is a win-win for residents."

The project also bolsters the current drive among the Region and the 12 local area municipalities for shared services that has already yielded projects across Niagara including a single fire department for Grimsby and Lincoln and shared library services between Pelham and Lincoln.

A 2019 provincial review of municipal governments included the possibility of amalgamations. While the provincial government shelved the report, it is still encourages municipalities to explore opportunities for shared services.

The Region's operations centre and yard is on 7.77 acres and includes a service garage, operations office, equipment garage, and material storage garage, all built in 1990. The site also contains salt-sand storage domes built in 1971 and upgraded in 2020 for \$238,683.

About 24 regional road operations staff members work out of the facility during spring, summer and fall road maintenance operations. Twenty-two staff members use the property for winter maintenance operations in Wainfleet, Pelham and Lincoln.

Pelham completed an operational review of its public works yard at 675 Tice Road in Fenwick. The report concluded the facility doesn't meet the town's current and future needs.

The Region’s Public Works Committee department recommended that the full council approve the study at its meeting Thursday.

Once authorized, Pelham Council’s support for the project will be sought through a cost-sharing agreement, though the Region will pay \$100,000 for the first phase of study.

A 2004 patrol yard report concluded that public works yards in Smithville (West Lincoln) and Pelham needed to be improved due to aging buildings, technological advancement, fleet expansion and growing service demand.

A second study in 2013 looked at a consolidated yard for the Region, Pelham and West Lincoln. However, the report found the joint site was “an unreasonable distance” from the West Lincoln areas of operation, and it was shelved.

The new study will concentrate on the needs of the Region and Lincoln, though the staff report said West Lincoln would still be encouraged to join.

A Pelham report said the town has three options for a new site, including staying at the current location on Tice Road, purchasing land to develop a new facility or leasing a portion of the Region’s current patrol yard on Victoria Avenue.

The Region’s study will review the potential for cost savings to both municipalities through cost sharing for maintenance, utilities, material, and equipment acquisition and outline the capital funds required to construct a new joint facility.



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