



Community Planning and Development Department

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

Subject: Town of Pelham New Official Plan – Status Update and Information Report

Recommendation:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Report 2024-0203, Town of Pelham New Official Plan – Status Update and Information Report, for information purposes.

Background:

The current Town of Pelham Official Plan was adopted by Council in April 2012 and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in March 2014. Since that time there have been 19 Official Plan amendments approved by Council and several changes to the planning framework at the Provincial level that need to be addressed including changes to Provincial legislation, policies, and plans. Additionally, the Region of Niagara Official Plan (NOP) was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in November 2022. In accordance with the *Planning Act*, the Town is required to achieve conformity with the Region Official Plan within one year of adoption of the upper tier Official Plan. The Town has initiated the process of conducting an Official Plan review and update in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act* which will result in the creation of a new Official Plan for the Town.

The entire project has been broken into 3 phases with Phase 1 being a conformity review, Phase 2 the preparation of a draft official plan and Phase 3 the finalization of the Official Plan and its adoption and approval.

The consulting firm WSP was hired by the Town to assist with Phase 1 of the Official Plan Review and the final Technical Conformity Report (TCR) was presented to Council in September 2023. The TCR identified areas where the current Official Plan required updating to be consistent with and conform to the Provincial and Regional planning policies that currently exist.

Staff have taken the recommendations of the TCR, and reviewed the applicable provincial legislation and policies of the NOP and created a new draft Official Plan Document for the Town.

Analysis:

The new (draft) Town of Pelham Official Plan is a comprehensive policy document that places a stronger emphasis on compact and efficient land use, sustainable development, housing affordability, transportation and infrastructure, climate change and environmental protection.

Mapping has been created to reflect more up to date land use and environmental conditions and is an integration of the mapping contained in the NOP and previous official plan mapping.

The draft Official Plan is made up of 15 Sections:

Section One: Introduction establishes the context for the Official Plan. This section sets out the purpose and provides a description of how the plan is structured and how it should be read and interpreted.

Section Two: Strategic Directions establishes the Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles and Strategic Goals for the Plan.

Section Three: Planning a Complete and Healthy Community provides an overview of the Town's urban structure, establishes the Town's intensification and growth targets, identifies objectives for growth management and sets out general policies that are intended to provide overall guidance and layout a framework for the detailed policies of subsequent sections of the Plan.

Section Four: Protecting What is Valuable establishes policies and development criteria that address natural heritage protection, cultural heritage conservation, water resource protection, energy conservation measures and health and safety provisions aimed at ensuring a diverse, healthy environment.

Section Five: Movement of People and Goods provides policies for transportation to facilitate safe, efficient and convenient movement of goods and people throughout the Town.

Section Six: Municipal Services provides policies for municipal services including water, wastewater and stormwater.

Section Seven: Community Infrastructure sets out a policy framework for the efficient planning of physical and social infrastructure to sustain and support growth and quality of life in the Town.

Section Eight: Urban Design provides detailed policy on how the Town will be built. This section sets out policy that focuses on creating adaptable and well-designed infrastructure networks, buildings, sites, neighbourhoods and open spaces.

Section Nine: General Land Use sets out objectives, policies, permitted uses and design and development criteria for land use designations within the Town that fall under general criteria or are identified through Provincial and Regional Policy such as Parks and Open Space, the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area, the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Natural Heritage Systems and the Natural Environment System.

Section Ten: Agriculture and Rural Land Use sets out objectives, policies, permitted uses and design and development criteria for land use designations outside of the Urban Area Boundary.

Section Eleven: Urban Area Land Use sets out objectives, policies, permitted uses and design and development criteria for land use designations within the Urban Area Boundary.

Section Twelve: Implementation provides the operational framework and tools necessary to achieve the goals and objectives and implement the policies of the Plan.

Section Thirteen: Secondary Plans lists the Secondary Plans that have been adopted by Council and form part of the Official Plan.

Section Fourteen: Glossary provides a glossary of terms used within this Plan to support policy implementation.

Section Fifteen: Schedules contains maps that correspond to policies within the Plan including:

Schedule A: Land Use Plan

Schedule A1: Land Use Plan – Agricultural and Rural

Schedule A2: Fonthill

Schedule A3: Fenwick

Schedule B: Natural Environment System

Schedule B1: Natural Environment System Features

Schedules C1 – C3-4: Secondary Plans

Schedule D: Transportation Network
Schedule E: Mineral Aggregate

Next Steps – Council, Stakeholder, Agency and Public Consultation

Staff are preparing to circulate the draft document to Council, the public, stakeholders, agencies and Town Committees. An initial round of public consultation via a series of in-person Open Houses will be completed prior to the formal Statutory Public Meeting which is proposed to be held in Q1 of 2025.

The draft Official Plan will be posted on the 'Engaging Pelham' website and the public will also be able to provide input online on the proposed draft Official Plan through this public engagement platform.

Council is also encouraged to review the draft Official Plan and reach out to Staff with any comments, concerns or questions during the commenting period so that we can address Council members' questions as well.

Staff will review all comments and correspondence received from agencies, stakeholders, Council members and the public and make final revisions to the draft Official Plan before scheduling the statutory public meeting and bringing the final Plan forward with a recommendation report to Council.

A general timeframe for the next two phases is outlined below, please note these timelines may be altered based on input from stakeholders and partners:

Phase 2: Draft of New Official Plan

October 2024

- Release draft New Official Plan on Engaging Pelham
- Circulate draft New Official Plan to Council Committees/ Stakeholders
 - Agricultural Advisory Committee
 - Active Transportation Committee
 - Environmental and Climate Adaption Advisory Committee
 - Developers Working Group
- Circulate draft New Official Plan to Municipal Partners for Comment
 - Region of Niagara
 - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Review feedback and comments as received and incorporate changes as applicable to draft

November and December 2024

- Initiate Public Information Sessions (afternoon and evening sessions)
 - Ward 1 – Fire Stations 2 and 3
 - Wards 2 and 3 – Meridian Community Centre
- Initiate survey for feedback
- Continue to review feedback and comments as received in incorporate changes as applicable to draft

Phase 3: Formal Public Planning Process – New Official Plan

January 2025

- Notice of Statutory Public Meeting – 20 days prior to public meeting
- Formal Agency Circulation
- Final draft Official Plan prepared for public planning process

February 2025

- Statutory Public Meeting held with Council
- Information Report to Council (same day as Public Meeting)
- Revisions to draft based on feedback from Public Meeting and Agencies

March 2025

- Final recommendation report and Official Plan to Council for approval
- If approved, notice of decision posted and 20-day appeal period time begins

April 2025

- If no appeal – Official Plan and supporting documentation will be forwarded to the Region of Niagara (Planning and Development) for Regional Council approval.

Conclusion

The Town of Pelham Official Plan is a foundational strategic policy document designed to steer growth, land use, infrastructure development, and community services in Pelham both now and in the future. While some policies will be shaped by provincial and regional guidelines, community input is essential for crafting a vision that truly reflects the needs and objectives of Pelham's residents. Public consultation sessions and community feedback will be key in identifying what residents want, while input from agencies and stakeholders will help ensure the plan is comprehensive and effective for the entire community.

Alternatives Reviewed:

There were no alternatives reviewed as this report is for information purposes.

Strategic Plan Relationship: Community Development and Growth

The creation of a New Official Plan for the Town of Pelham was included as a priority in Council's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

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