

Region of Waterloo
Planning, Development and Legislative Services
Community Planning

To: Regional Council

Meeting Date: **August 18, 2022**

Report Title: Response to Comments and Questions Raised at Planning and Works Committee August 11, 2022

1. Recommendation:

For information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

This report provides a follow-up update to the comments and questions presented as well as additional correspondence received at the August 11, 2022 Planning and Works Committee meeting on the proposed ROP Amendment.

3. Strategic Plan:

This report relates to several strategic focus areas, including: Thriving Economy; Sustainable Transportation; Environment and Climate Action; and Health, Safe and Inclusive Communities. It also relates to Action 3.5.1, “Promote efficient urban land use through greenfield and intensification policies while conserving natural heritage and agricultural areas.”

4. Key Considerations:

- a) The majority of questions and concerns raised on August 11 have been addressed through previous reports. Attached to this report is PDL-CPL-22-20 that contains a summary of public/stakeholder feedback and high-level staff responses and the response report prepared as part of PDL-CPL-22-22.
- b) The Region’s Land Needs Assessment adheres to the Provincial Land Needs Methodology. Regional staff have met numerous times with members of the public, area municipal staff and councils, the development community as well as other stakeholders to review and discuss the Region’s Land Needs Assessment. Regional staff and the consulting team of Dillon Consulting Limited and Watson & Associates has reviewed the analyses provided by the

development community regarding the Region's LNA inputs, assumptions and approach.

- c) In June 2022, CMHC released a report **Canada's Housing Supply Shortages: Estimating what is needed to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis by 2030**. The report notes that to restore affordability by 2030, Canada will need an additional 3.5 million units. Regional staff have met with CMHC and will continue to work with CMHC to allocate the national figure to a more localized level. It is important to note that the CMHC work is entirely an economic assessment of how many homes would be needed throughout Canada for the price point to stabilize at a level which would be affordable for the average Canadian. There has not been an assessment of the ability or capacity for that number of homes to be built nor any assessment if the private market would build homes if the prices declined with every build.
- d) Does Bill 3, (Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022) have any impact on the recommendation to approve this ROP Amendment?
No. Bill 3 is not proposing any changes to the Planning Act or Regulations
- e) Some concerns have been raised that nationally, Canada has the lowest number of homes per capita among G7 nations.

The Province directs all single and upper tier municipalities to plan to accommodate the population and jobs forecasts identified in Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan. The Provincial land needs methodology is used to determine the quantity of land required to accommodate the forecasted growth to 2051. The Region's Land Needs Assessment has followed the steps set out by the Province and have forecasted the housing required to accommodate the forecasted growth.

The housing needed for any given population is dependant on a number of factors, with one of the largest factors influencing housing need being the age structure of the population. Older populations have a higher proportion of seniors which typically require more housing units per capita. Younger average populations often have higher proportions of families with children. Seniors typically occupy housing with 1-2 people per home while younger populations have more families with children occupying homes with 3-4 people per household. Currently, Waterloo Region has a lower average age than the national average of all G7 countries, resulting in a lower home per capita need. Waterloo Region is also home to three post secondary institution with a significant student enrollment. Students typically occupy housing at higher occupancy's than traditional families in the region, impacting the housing required to accommodate that population. The comparison of Canadas housing

per capita ignores these factors which has a significant impact to the amount of housing a population requires.

5. Background:

The ROP establishes the long-term framework for where and how Waterloo Region will grow and develop in the future. Since 1976, it has guided strategic decisions on several major policy innovations, including the development of the ION light rail transit system, the protection of agricultural lands, groundwater resources and natural environment and the maintenance of our high quality of life for all residents. The proposed ROP amendment outlined in this report builds on the Region's strong history of leadership and policy innovation in growth management, and in protecting what is valuable – our essential groundwater resources, productive agricultural lands, significant natural areas, and important cultural heritage resources.

Under Section 26 of the Planning Act, the Region must review and update the ROP every five to ten years to align with any changes in Provincial planning policy. Since the approval of the current ROP in 2015, there have been significant updates to Provincial plans and policies, including the Provincial Policy Statement in 2020, the Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe in 2017, 2019 and 2020, and many other legislative changes.

In response to these changes, in August 2018, the Region commenced a project to review and update the ROP as outlined in Report PDL-CPL-18-33. Given the magnitude of the changes to Ontario's planning framework introduced by the Provincial government in 2019 and 2020, the Region decided to divide the project into two phases. This approach would enable the Region to complete the bulk of the project as close as possible to the Province's July 1, 2022 conformity deadline.

6. Area Municipality Communication and Public/Stakeholder Engagement:

Consultation and engagement with the various Project Committees, including the Steering Committee, Stakeholder Committee, Technical Team and Area Municipal Working Group, as well as Indigenous Peoples and public consultation has been continuous throughout the ROP Review project.

7. Financial Implications:

The Region's approved 2022 - 2031 Community Planning Capital Program includes a budget of \$756,000 in 2022 and \$3,250,000 in 2023-2031 for the Regional Official Plan Review (project 22007). The costs are to be funded from Development Charges (90%, \$3,605,000) and the Community Planning Capital Reserve (10%, \$401,000).

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Approval Process

Following adoption, staff will forward the proposed ROP amendment and supporting documents to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for review and approval. Staff will also issue a Notice of Adoption to anyone who has submitted a written request to be notified of Council's decision regarding the proposed amendment.

Under the Planning Act, the Ministry will review the proposed amendment and supporting documents, and has 120 days to issue its decision. The Ministry's decision could include approving the amendment as adopted, approving the amendment with modifications, or not approving all or any parts of the amendment.

Once the Province issues a decision, there are no appeals of the amendment as a whole, and it is considered to be legally in effect. However, recent changes to the Planning Act enacted through Bill 109 authorize the Minister to refer all or part(s) of the proposed ROP amendment to the Ontario Land Tribunal for a recommendation, or a decision. If the Minister decides to exercise this authority, the hearing process could delay approval of the proposed amendment and require staff resources at the hearing. The Minister also has the ability to extend the 120 day review period if more time is needed to issue a decision.

Phase 2 of ROP Review

Beginning this fall, staff will begin focusing on the second phase of the ROP review. That review will update the balance of the policies in the ROP (e.g., agriculture, natural heritage, cultural heritage resources, infrastructure, mobility and transportation, and other policy areas) to ensure alignment with the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement. The results of this review will culminate in a second proposed ROP amendment targeted for 2023.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: [Report PDL-CPL-22-20](#)

Appendix B: [Response Report: Summary of Public Consultation Results](#)

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