



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

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REPORT #: CDS-25-104 **COMMITTEE DATE:** N/A
REPORT TO: Council **DUE IN COUNCIL:** 2025-07-22
SUBJECT: Official Plan Update – First Draft of Official Plan

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 Council **RECEIVE** this Official Plan Update report and **APPROVE** the release of the first draft of the new NOTL Official Plan, attached as **Appendix II** to this report, for the purposes of public and agency consultation;
- 1.2 Council **DIRECT** Staff to meet with Town advisory committees, resident and business organizations, Indigenous groups, and public agencies and consider the public input received in the preparation of a second draft Official Plan; and
- 1.3 Council **DIRECT** Staff to schedule public open houses and a statutory public meeting in the fall, before bringing a final draft Official Plan to Council for consideration and adoption.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to provide Council the draft Official Plan with red-line revisions.
- A summary of the changes to the adopted Official Plan was provided in the presentation and Staff Report CDS-25-084 at the Official Plan Council Workshop on July 8, 2025.
- Staff will continue to engage through the summer and early fall, working towards the final draft of the Official Plan.
- Staff will circulate the draft Official Plan to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to commence the 90-day review period.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the draft Official Plan with red-line revisions. The draft Official Plan will also be released for public consultation and will be sent to the Province to commence the 90-day review period.

4. BACKGROUND

Following approval of the Region's Niagara Official Plan, the Town commenced the conformity review of the Town's 2019 Adopted Official Plan to ensure alignment with updated Provincial plans, policies and other legislative requirements. Council also included the completion of the

Official Plan as an action item in the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan's Vibrant and Complete Community pillar.

A dedicated Staff resource was hired in fall of 2024. With this hire, a report with timeline was presented and endorsed by Council in December 2024.

Public Information Centres were held in Spring 2025, along with ongoing meetings and consultations. Staff reported on these consultation efforts in a report at a Special Council meeting on July 8. Further details are provided in Staff Report CDS-25-084 attached as **Appendix I** to this report. The overall policy direction under the Official Plan Update theme areas of: Growth Management, Housing, Employment/Economy, Climate Change, Natural Environment, Cultural Heritage, Agriculture, Indigenous Engagement, Transportation/ Infrastructure, and Urban Design is outlined in that report.

At the July 8 meeting, Council also provided direction on specific areas where staff were seeking input as follows:

That from the Staff Presentation, Council puts forth consideration of finalizing the draft Official Plan - Option One of the Growth Management Theme, and Option Two of the Employment Theme as recommended.

Below areas in which Council provided specific feedback are discussed below:

4.1 Growth Management

At the Council workshop, Staff presented two options for an approach to an update of growth management policies, and in particular, update of the population and employment forecasts to 2051. Council selected the option recommended by staff, Option One, to update the population and employment forecasts to 2051 using the forecasts contained in the approved Niagara Official Plan, as permitted by the PPS, 2024, and submit the Plan to the Minister for approval. This approach reflects the importance that Town residents place on a well-planned approach to accommodating growth in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

During the approval process with the Ministry, Staff would complete a Growth Management Strategy and Intensification Strategy to determine how and where to accommodate growth to 2051 and update the population and employment forecasts to include the growth planned for Glendale in the new Secondary Plan. These strategies could be incorporated into the new Official Plan by Ministerial modification if completed before Minister approval of the new Official Plan, or by amendment to the Official Plan if after Minister approval.

4.2 Employment/Economy

Staff presented two options for an approach to the Planning Act and PPS, 2024 change to the definition of an "area of employment/employment area", which will ensure that the recently approved Glendale Secondary Plan is consistent with Provincial legislation and policy. Council selected the option recommended by Staff, Option Two, to revise the draft Official Plan to remove the Glendale Industrial/Business Park designation from the Employment Area designation to allow the Town to maintain the vision of the secondary plan to attract higher

density, knowledge and innovation uses to Glendale, and not only traditional manufacturing and warehousing uses included in the new “area of employment/ employment area” definition.

4.3 Agriculture

Staff outlined that minor revisions were being considered to the policies pertaining to agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses, particularly wineries, to address input received from the industry, but that fundamental policy changes would be considered through the pending Winery Policy Review, in order to allow more time for additional with large and small winery owners, and dialogue with the Town’s Agricultural Advisory Committee. Council agreed with this approach and recommended that any winery policy updates (beyond those required for conformity to Provincial legislation and policy) occur after the Winery Policy Review is completed.

4.4 Housing

Staff noted that changes to the housing policies of the draft Official Plan included addition of affordable housing targets contained in the approved Niagara Official Plan, as well as policies to conform to Provincial legislation for additional dwelling units (ADUs). It was also indicated that more fundamental changes to housing policies of the Official Plan would be considered after the completion of the pending Affordable and Attainable Housing Strategy, accompanied by an assessment of the current housing situation in the Town, including seniors and student housing.

4.6 Cultural Heritage

Proposed changes to the cultural heritage policies of the draft Official Plan included incorporation of the policies resulting from Official Plan Amendment No. 92 (Former Rand Estate and John Street East Character Study). Additional changes under consideration, based on Council and public input, include policies to address protection of character areas such as Chautauqua, the Dock Area, and the wartime homes, located outside the proposed expanded heritage conservation district.

5. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

A summary of the changes to the adopted Official Plan was provided in the presentation and Staff report CDS-25-084 at the Official Plan Workshop on July 8, 2025.

While the Official Plan Update process is ongoing, a draft of the Plan is now ready to be released for public review. Staff note that there are various ongoing inputs to the policy review, as well as review and input from other staff departments, agencies, interested parties, Indigenous communities, and the public.

As recommended, Staff will continue to engage through August and September with the various Committees of Council, and other interested parties who wish to engage. Councillors are also encouraged to connect with Staff if they wish to discuss any policy areas or the Plan in general.

Another round of Public Information Centres is tentatively slated for late September/early October. Notice of these engagement opportunities will be advertised once dates and locations have been confirmed.

Staff will circulate the draft Official Plan to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to commence the 90-day review period prior to finalization and adoption of the Official Plan. Staff will also engage with Ministry staff to confirm a timeline for review and have early strategic discussions in an effort towards efficient and expedient Minister approval once the final Plan has been adopted by Council.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

The content of this report supports the following Strategic Plan initiatives:

Pillar

1. Vibrant & Complete Community

Priority

1.1 Planning for Progress

Action

1.1 a) Official Plan

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 Option 1: Receive the draft Official Plan, direct Staff to continue to engage, and work towards completion of a final Official Plan for adoption (**Recommended**)
- 7.2 Option 2: Do not receive the draft Official Plan (Not Recommended)

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this status update report.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Revised environmental policies are included in the draft Official Plan. Staff will consult with the Town's Environmental Advisory Committee, as well as members of the public, on these policies.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

Following the release of the draft Official Plan, all the Town's communication channels will be used to inform the public. The draft Official Plan will be posted on the Official Plan Review webpage and Join the Conversation (<http://www.jointheconversationnotl.org/officialplan>), and also the Official Plan survey results. Public open houses/information centres will be scheduled in Fall 2025.

11. CONCLUSION

This report has provided a status update on the process to update the Town's Official Plan. A first draft of the Official Plan has been prepared, showing proposed policy revisions to the Adopted 2019 Official Plan. It is recommended that Council receive the report and approve the release of the draft Official Plan for public and agency consultation, and direct staff to meet with Town advisory committees, resident and business organizations, Indigenous groups, and public agencies and consider the public input received in the preparation of a second draft Official Plan, and schedule public open houses and a statutory public meeting in the fall, before bringing a final draft Official Plan to Council for consideration and adoption.

12. PREVIOUS REPORTS

- CDS-25-084 – Official Plan Update: Status Update and Council Workshop
- CDS-25-044 – Council Workshop – Official Plan Update and Conformity Exercise
- CDS-24-185 – Update on Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan and Conformity Exercise

13. APPENDICES

- Appendix I – CDS-25-084: Official Plan Update – Status Update and Council Workshop
- Appendix II – Redlined Draft Official Plan July 16, 2025

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