

For Information

DATE: October 19, 2012

REPORT TITLE: **REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

FROM: Norma Trim, Chief Financial Officer and Commissioner of Corporate Services

**OBJECTIVE**

To inform Regional Council about the Region of Peel Sustainable Development Guidelines Project.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- Sustainable development guidelines are voluntary policies to encourage the development community to consider alternative methods of development practice that reduce negative impacts on the environment, while supporting positive economic and social goals.
- This project is being undertaken in order to support the Term of Council Priorities, assist in implementing the Peel Climate Change Strategy, and to implement the Regional Official Plan policies pertaining to sustainable development.
- The sustainable development guidelines would link to existing regional initiatives, including initiatives by Peel Public Health and Public Works, and create a set of new sustainable development policies for areas which are within the Regional mandate.
- The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2013.

**DISCUSSION****1. Policy Framework**

Commencing in 2005, the Province enacted a series of plans, policies and legislation to communicate the provincial interest in land use planning. These included *Bill 51, Planning Act Reforms, 2005*; *Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 (PPS)*; *Greenbelt Plan, 2005* and *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006*. Through these plans and policies, the Province has established its commitment to sustainable development. Specifically, the Planning Act was amended to add "the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians" as a provincial interest.

In May 2009, Regional Council adopted Regional Official Plan Amendment 20 which incorporated sustainability and energy policies into the Regional Official Plan (ROP). This amendment also established sustainability as an overarching theme for the ROP and gave direction for the Region to prepare green development standards in consultation with the

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area municipalities. ROP policy 7.6.2.4, directs that the Region prepare green development standards to address the optimum and effective use of regional infrastructure, human services, transportation, waste, natural heritage, water resources and energy; and the promotion of health and walkability.

### 2011-2014 Strategic Plan and Terms of Council Priorities

Regional Council has endorsed the Region of Peel Strategic Plan 2011-2014 which directs Council to:

- Demonstrate leadership in responsible environmental management practices and energy use,
- Promote low impact development and urban restoration,
- Collaborate with other levels of government and agencies on environmental issues, and
- Influence healthy living through community design.

The development of Sustainable Development Guidelines will support many of the Term of Council Priorities including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increased waste diversion, reduction of per capita water consumption, improved stormwater management, increased active transportation, and promoting a supportive environment for healthy weights and healthy built environments.

### Climate Change Strategy

Goals 1.11 and 2.7 of the Peel Climate Change Strategy, which was adopted by Council on June 23, 2011, recommends that the Region undertake a cost-benefit analysis of climate change adaptation and mitigation actions (in this case the mitigation action is encouraging sustainable community development and building practices) and seek opportunities to show leadership through developing green development standards.

### Peel Public Health's Built Environment and Health Initiatives

Regional and Area Municipal Councils have recognized the need for an integrated approach to improving the health of Peel residents through community design. Through direction provided by Regional Council in 2005 (Recommendation GC-257-2005), 2008 (Recommendation GC-214-2008) and in 2011 (Recommendation 2011-1224) as well as motions passed by the Area Municipalities (City of Mississauga-Resolution 0112-2012; City of Brampton-Resolution C114-2012; Town of Caledon- Resolution 2012-050), Health Services staff work collaboratively with Regional and Area Municipal staff to develop planning policies for active living and apply tools such as the Healthy Development Index to studies and planning policy.

As a result of these directions, the Integrated Planning Division of Corporate Services will be leading the development of Sustainable Design Guidelines for the Region of Peel in collaboration with other regional staff from Public Health, Public Works and Corporate Energy. Regional staff will also collaborate with area municipal staff and conservation authority staff.

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### 2. Project Goals

The goals of this project are:

- a) To create a set of recommended guidelines and targets, for new private development, that encourages the development community to use resources, such as water, more efficiently and contributes to the creation of complete communities, while minimizing negative environmental impacts.
- b) To create a reference document and framework to coordinate and implement sustainability guidelines at the regional and area municipal levels to avoid duplication and increase quality of life for Peel residents in an efficient manner.
- c) To investigate options, including incentives, to further encourage the uptake of sustainable development practice in the development community.

Consolidating the Region's goals, requirements and potential investments into one document creates a convenient communication tool for external stakeholders. This project will compliment existing sustainability guideline initiatives including the City of Brampton Sustainable Community Design Guidelines, Town of Caledon Green Development Program and City of Mississauga Green Development Standards.

### 3. Relationship to Other Regional Initiatives

The Region's Sustainable Development Guidelines will incorporate and complement many other regional initiatives related to sustainability which are currently underway. Among these:

- **Public Health's Healthy Community Design Initiatives:** Peel Public Health has completed several projects that are focused on neighbourhood design which promote healthy, active lifestyles. First, the Healthy Development Index, an evidence-based review which identifies built environment characteristics that affect health. Second, the Health Background Study Framework is a framework that is intended to assist planners and developers in identifying and pre-emptively mitigating any potential health impacts associated with development proposals.
- **Transportation Initiatives:** The Region of Peel has embarked on several progressive transportation initiatives including the Active Transportation Plan (Smart Commute and Walk and Roll Peel) which is aimed at increasing the share of trips undertaken by walking and cycling, linking with transit, and creating a pedestrian and cycling friendly environment.
- **Peel Region Urban Forest Strategy:** In collaboration with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Region developed a framework and strategic direction for the protection and enhancement of the urban forest.
- **Water Efficiency Strategy:** The Operations Support Unit of Public Works has developed a strategy to promote the efficient use of water by Peel's residents and businesses through specific water efficient measures.
- **Long Term Waste Resource Management Strategy (LTWRMS):** The LTWRMS provides the conceptual and macro-scale direction for a wide range of Regional waste management programs and initiatives for a 20 year period. It is focused on reducing the Region's reliance on the landfill.
- **Energy and Environment Management Strategy:** Sets out a plan for the Region of Peel to proactively manage its corporate energy needs. The strategy also sets out a framework for integrating environmental and social obligations with sound financial planning practices in all energy related activities.

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- **Integrated Planning Framework (IPF):** In order to embed sustainability into the corporate planning process, the IPF promotes the use of a sustainability lens. The use of a sustainability lens encourages staff to consider the social, environmental cultural and economic impacts in a decision-making process.

### 4. Timeline and Project Administration

The project officially commenced in August of 2012 and is expected to be completed in November 2013. The project will be led by the Integrated Planning Department staff in close collaboration with area municipal staff. A steering committee was formed with staff from the Integrated Planning Department, Public Health, Public Works, Corporate Finance and Real Property and Asset Management. The committee will oversee the development of the guidelines. Regional staff will undertake this project in close collaboration with area municipal and conservation authority staff through an external working group. The role of the external working group is to provide expert advice related to area municipal projects and provide feedback to the Regional sustainable development guidelines project based on their municipal perspective. Other stakeholders including councillors and the development community will be consulted through workshops, meetings, interviews and other means of communications.

### 5. Project Deliverables

The final product will be a report which includes:

- Recommendations for a framework for implementing sustainable development guidelines to ensure coordination with the area municipalities, and avoid duplication of work.
- Detailed sustainable development guideline recommendations to be applied to regional services and programs, if a need for these additional guidelines is identified.
- A cost-benefit analysis to determine any potential financial impact to the Region.
- An implementation strategy to outline the resources, staffing, costs, etc. needed in order to coordinate and implement the guidelines and incentives.

Any recommended actions presented in the final deliverables would require Council approval prior to implementation.

### 6. Impact on the Region of Peel

The desired impact to the Region is development practices which take into consideration longer-term environmental, social and economic impacts. The Region, through projects and programs such as those led by Public Health, Public Works and others have been promoting alternative development approaches which support the Region's vision of healthy vibrant communities that use resources efficiently, contribute to the creation of complete communities and minimize negative environmental impacts.

This project is not intended to duplicate any of the work being done within the area municipalities. The Regional sustainable development project will complement the area municipal initiatives by working towards the shared goals/interest of sustainable development. However, this project is scoped to support the Region's mandate, programs and services that have a direct impact on sustainability of the built environment.

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**REGIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES****FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommendations provided in the final report require Council's approval before being implemented. In order to understand the financial feasibility of implementing regional sustainable development guidelines and to justify any financial commitments, a cost-benefit analysis will be conducted. This evidence based analysis will determine the impact of implementing sustainable development guidelines on the Region. This assessment will include an analysis of the costs and benefits both with and without the use of incentives. The analysis will also consider the potential cost and benefits of various levels of incentives and identify potential funding sources. Council approval would be required prior to all implementation.

**CONCLUSION**

The overall benefit to the Region of Peel for undertaking the sustainable development guidelines project will be a consolidated document with guidelines for achieving sustainable community development in the Region of Peel. These guidelines will advance the directions in the Regional Strategic Plan, Regional Official Plan, Climate Change Strategy and other programs by providing regional staff with a vehicle for implementing sustainability policies. The objective will be delivered through a document which contains a list of regional recommendations on specific development practices that the Region would like to see in a development application.

The next steps include retaining a consultant to assist in developing the guidelines and engaging with stakeholders. At the completion of the project, staff will report back to council to advise council of the outcomes and recommendations.



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**Approved for Submission:**

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