
DATE: November 22, 2005

SUBJECT: **PLANNING POLICY AND RESEARCH**
LIVEABLE PEEL: A COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TO 2051

FROM: Nick Tunnacliffe, Commissioner of Planning
Kent Gillespie, Commissioner of Corporate Services and Regional Solicitor
Mitch Zamojc, Commissioner of Public Works
Janette Smith, Acting Commissioner of Health
Keith Ward, Commissioner of Housing and Property
Dan Labrecque, Treasurer and Commissioner of Finance
Janet Menard, Acting Commissioner of Social Services
Laura Nashman, Commissioner of People, Information and Technology

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Liveable Peel community sustainability planning initiative. Liveable Peel is a sustainability strategy to consider the long-term (to 2051) economic, environmental, social and cultural impacts of demographic and socio-economic changes, specifically the aging society, immigration and high levels of growth, on the programs and services delivered by the Region of Peel.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Liveable Peel focuses on long-term sustainability planning, having consideration for both demographic and socio-economic changes, including aging, immigration and growth, on the programs and services delivered by the Region.
- The Liveable Peel initiative supports the Corporate Strategic Plan “Fast Forward Peel: Building a Strong Community Together” and specifically implements its goal to “assess and manage all aspects of growth that affect Peel services to ensure a more liveable region.”
- Council has previously provided input to the Liveable Peel initiative in a workshop held on April 29, 2004 and a follow-up Council report on May 27, 2004.
- A service strategy business plan has been completed for Liveable Peel, which identifies the studies and actions required to address the changes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
- Recent provincial initiatives in planning, such as the establishment of the Greenbelt, the new Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and draft Places to Grow Plan provide a unique opportunity to align long-term planning efforts.
- Increasingly, long-term community sustainability planning, such as Liveable Peel, is not only good business practice but also required by other levels of government as part of their funding programs as evidenced by the requirement for a community sustainability plan as part of the federal gas tax funding program.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The concepts of sustainability and liveability have evolved to become important principles in effective long-term planning. Sustainability aims to balance the competing environmental, social, cultural and economic pillars while liveability looks to integrate these four pillars in creating people-orientated communities. Both concepts are intertwined and work towards sustaining and improving quality of life for the present generation without comprising or reducing the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs.

The concepts of liveability and sustainability have resulted in a new approach to planning. Such concepts have shaped the principles and objectives of both the immediate and long-term community planning. The intertwined concepts of sustainability and liveability provide opportunities to think globally and act locally while improving our communities in the process. This explains the prominence of such concepts in the development of long range plans and strategies. Several communities have embraced long-term sustainability planning as part of its core business practices, including the Region of Waterloo, City of Hamilton, the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the City of Ottawa. Further discussion on these communities is contained in Appendix I to this report.

The Province of Ontario is supporting the cause of sustainable development. Provincial interest in growth management has been prevalent over the past few years with the release of the new Provincial Policy Statement (2005), the *Greenbelt Protection Act* and Plan, *Places to Grow Act* and Draft Plan, and a five-year Infrastructure Investment Plan. A final draft 'Places to Grow Plan' is expected shortly. These initiatives clearly indicate that the Province is re-engaged in long-term planning after many years of absence and therefore, presents an opportunity to align long-term planning activities at the municipal level with the new Provincial direction.

It is against this backdrop that Regional staff held a workshop with Council on April 29, 2004 to further explore the issues of sustainability and liveability and to discuss the specific implications on Peel Region. One major focus of the workshop was to examine the demographic and socio-economic trends occurring in Peel Region. Research shows that Peel Region continues to face unprecedented growth, high levels of immigration especially from South Asian countries, an aging population and growing levels of poverty. Specifically on the immigration issue, more recent data from Citizenship and Immigration Canada has been analyzed to reveal that Peel Region is increasingly becoming a first choice for settlement for new immigrants. From a socio-economic perspective, analysis of Census results show that Peel residents are becoming increasingly polarized in terms of average income and some new immigrants are especially struggling in the Peel economy. In addition, traffic congestion, impaired air and surface water quality, lack of affordable housing and inadequate human services funding continue to affect the liveability of Peel.

Participants of the Council workshop were Regional Councillors, Regional and area municipal staff and Conservation Authority staff. At the workshop, the participants advised that it is important for the Region of Peel to proactively commence the examination of issues that will impact the delivery of Regional programs and services over the long-term fifty-year planning horizon. Participants cautioned that any such work must be done from a sustainability perspective with the goal of a more liveable Peel Region for present and future generations.

2. Supportive Provincial Direction

As previously noted, the Province has recently been re-engaged in providing leadership in long-term planning issues. The Province recently adopted the *Strong Communities Act* (Bill 26) which made specific amendments to the 2001 *Planning Act* including a requirement that local decisions “shall be consistent with” the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). In this regard, the Province also released a new PPS which emphasizes comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning that supports sustainable development. Further, the PPS reasserts that “long-term prosperity, environmental health and social-well-being should take precedence over short-term considerations.”

The Province also passed the *Places to Grow Act* (Bill 136) to enable the creation of Provincial growth plans and to prescribe the contents of such plans. It is anticipated that the Places to Grow Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) will be released by the Province shortly providing more details on the roles, responsibilities and contents of such plans. In addition, the Province is expected to release new source water protection legislation and requirements as well as changes to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and further changes to the 2001 *Planning Act*.

3. Requirement for Sustainability Planning

Sustainability is increasingly being embraced as a core long-term planning principle. Increasingly senior levels of government and funding partners are requiring sustainability plans as a good business practice. For example, the recent agreement between the federal government and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) requires that those municipalities accessing the federal government gas tax funding program must have in place integrated community sustainability plans to coordinate an approach to community sustainability, integrate the four pillars of sustainability in community planning, collaborate with other municipalities to achieve sustainability objectives and engage residents in determining a long-term vision for the municipality. It is anticipated that the Liveable Peel initiative will provide leadership in satisfying the long-term sustainability planning required by our funding partners.

The Liveable Peel initiative provides an opportunity to support the evolving Provincial direction in long-term planning.

4. Liveable Peel

The Region of Peel Strategic Plan, *Fast Forward Peel: Building a Strong Community Together* incorporates principles originating from the four pillars of sustainability including improving a community’s health, social well-being, preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and resources of Peel and contributing to a strong regional economy. Liveable Peel strives to implement these principles over the long-term (50 years). More specifically, Liveable Peel attempts to implement goal number two of the strategic plan, to “assess and manage all aspects of growth that affect Peel services to ensure a more liveable region.”

PLANNING POLICY AND RESEARCH
LIVEABLE PEEL: A COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TO 2051

As part of the implementation of the Region of Peel Strategic Plan and to respond to the need to examine long-term planning issues for the Corporation, the Region's Executive Management Team (EMT) established the Liveable Peel strategy within a corporate planning process. This process assisted in defining a purpose, objectives, strategic actions and key tasks for the Liveable Peel project through the development of a Service Strategy Business Plan (SSBP). The SSBP is based on the following purpose: "the Region of Peel will ensure that future generations are able to live, work and travel in an inclusive and prosperous community." Five objectives were derived to support this purpose, as follows:

1. To manage the impacts of growth and affect change;
2. To achieve a sustainable land use and transportation system;
3. To balance the demands of social, economic, environmental and cultural interests;
4. To increase recognition and support of long-term planning; and
5. To capitalize on community capacity and stakeholder involvement.

Flowing from the above noted objectives are a number of actions and key tasks that fall within the four pillars of sustainability: environment, social, economic, and culture. The description below provides an overview of some of the tasks within each of the four pillars to be examined over the next few years. It should be noted that various tasks may be common to the objectives of more than one of the four pillars.

Accommodating growth while safeguarding the environment, especially water, air and land will be the main focus of the environment pillar.

The main focus of the social pillar will be the impacts of changing demographics and immigration on demand for services, particularly those for which the Region is responsible.

Alternative growth scenarios to 2051, regional urban structure and the transportation system to support it will be the focus of the economic pillar. Energy demands and human capital issues will also be explored.

Immigration and diversity will be the focus of the cultural pillar.

The above initiatives will be supported by a Consultation Plan that will help inform staff carrying out the tasks outlined above.

5. Next Steps

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of senior-level Regional and area municipal planning staff has been successful in coordinating and collaborating on many planning initiatives including the Regional Official Plan Strategic Update (ROPSU). It is anticipated that this successful partnership will continue to assist Regional staff in developing and implementing Liveable Peel. The Executive Management Team (EMT) will be the steering committee for the Liveable Peel initiative. The EMT will continue steering, monitoring and regularly reporting back to Council.

As an initial step, a Liveable Peel conference will be held on February 10, 2006 to provide input on the direction and scope of tasks associated with this initiative. Further information on the conference, including invitations, will be forthcoming.

PLANNING POLICY AND RESEARCH
LIVEABLE PEEL: A COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN TO 2051

CONCLUSION

The Liveable Peel Strategy provides an opportunity for the Region to engage in long-term sustainability planning. The Liveable Peel initiative supports Council's objectives in the Region's strategic plan for a more liveable community. Firstly, engaging in long-term planning for the Corporation is good business practice given the variety of Regional programs and services being delivered and the impact of changing demographics, socio-economic considerations and rapid growth on these Regional programs and services. Secondly, the current Provincial initiatives around long-term planning such as Places to Grow, Greenbelt protection, PPS and Source Water Protection provide a unique opportunity to align our efforts with the provincial initiatives and obtain support for long-term sustainability planning. Thirdly, increasingly other levels of government and funding partners are requiring sustainability plans as conditions of accessing funding, such as the federal government's gas tax funding program. Liveable Peel provides an opportunity for innovative long-term sustainability planning.

Nick Tunnacliffe
Commissioner of Planning

R. Kent Gillespie
Commissioner of Corporate Services
and Regional Solicitor

Mitch Zamojc
Commissioner of Public Works

Janette Smith
Acting Commissioner of Health

Keith Ward
Commissioner of Housing and Property

Dan Labreque
Treasurer and Commissioner of Finance

Janet Menard
Acting Commissioner of Social Services

Laura Nashman
Commissioner of People, Information and
Technology

Approved for Submission:

D. Szwarc, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Authored By: Naheeda Jamal/Arvin Prasad

c. Legislative Services

Error! Reference source not found. - 0 -

Error! Reference source not found.

Error! Reference source not found. - 1 -

Error! Reference source not found.

Type or insert Appendix

Place page break here, then delete this text between appendix

.

Type or insert Appendix

Place page break here, then delete this text between appendix

Type or insert Appendix

Place page break here, then delete this text between appendix