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Council-In-Committee Meeting – June 08, 2021

Subject: Growth Management Study Kick-off and Terms of Reference
Report Number: CD 21-47
Division: Community Development
Department: Planning
Purpose: For Information

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to kick-off the Norfolk County Growth Management Study and present the study Terms of Reference.

This is the first time the County will be completing a comprehensive growth study, and this will be significant project that will be led and completed by staff with some assistances by consultants in areas where specialized expertise is necessary. Staff are proposing that the study be completed in five stages, with the assistance of Watson & Associates to undergo the growth projection component summarized in phase three of the study. It is anticipated that the study will begin in June 2021 and be completed by mid-2022. The phases of the study include:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation
- Phase 2A: Policy Review & Technical Reports
- Phase 2B: Growth Projections
- Phase 3: Opportunities & Options
- Phase 4: Preferred Direction & Recommendations

Community engagement, stakeholder participation and targeted consultation will occur throughout the process and an interdepartmental staff technical committee will be established to ensure the growth study is coordinated with other major initiatives the County is pursuing.

Discussion:

Norfolk County continues to experience increased pressure to expand Urban Area boundaries to accommodate residential and economic growth throughout the municipality. Recent changes to the policy framework at the Provincial level, through amendments to the *Planning Act* and an updated Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS), have introduced new planning concepts and permissions for municipalities to consider while developing policies.

To ensure that Norfolk County plans for the efficient growth of the municipality over the long-term, Community Planning is embarking on a Growth Management Study that will ultimately establish growth management principles as well as identify opportunities and options to consider to accommodate growth until 2051.

A Growth Management Study provides guidance on where to direct growth within a municipality to accommodate the projected population and economic growth over a 25 to 30 year planning horizon. Generally, historic population growth trends and forecasted growth are examined in accordance with the available designated land and local factors, such as the infrastructure system and overarching policy framework of a municipality. The study would be considered a comprehensive review that would be utilized during the next five year Official Plan review process or development of a new Official Plan.

The study includes five phases that comprise of a policy review and conformity exercise, completion of growth projects, the identification of opportunities and options and finally, recommendations regarding the preferred policy direction for Council to consider.

The scope of the study is summarized below and the Terms of Reference is attached as Appendix A to this report. The Terms of Reference outlines the general workplan and consultation strategy for the study, however, it provides some flexibility to review other topics as they relate to growth, if deemed necessary, to provide well researched options during the fifth stage of the study.

Growth Management Study Work Plan and Timelines



Phase 1: Project Initiation

Phase one is the project kick-off and establishes the terms of reference for the overall Growth Management Study.

Planning, in consultation with Communications and IT staff, will finalize the communication and engagement strategy as well as formally establish the participants of the Staff Technical Committee.

Phase 2A: Policy Review & Technical Reports

Phase two A (2A) includes a series of staff reports that will analyze the current state of existing policies in relation to the new Provincial policy framework as well as propose new evaluation tools for Norfolk to consider.

The technical reports anticipated include:

1. Context Report;
 - To include a review of the County's land inventory and supply for industrial, commercial and residential uses.
2. *Planning Act* and PPS Conformity Exercise; and
 - Review of the Accessory Residential Dwelling Unit policies; and
 - Study Short Term Rentals.
3. Land Evaluation Study Options.
 - It is important to note that the Lakeshore Special Policy Area (LSPA) will be included in this evaluation in response to previous direction from Council.

Phase 2B: Growth Projections

Watson & Associates are completing the growth projections for the County and will include forecasts regarding population and employment growth as well as potential land requirements to accommodate the projected population.

A presentation to Council-in-Committee by Watson & Associated is anticipated during the fall of 2021.

Phase 3: Opportunities & Options

During Phase three of the study, planning staff will be presenting a series of reports identifying options and opportunities for Council to consider, discuss, offer feedback and provide direction.

Staff will investigate how other municipalities monitor and report growth on an annual basis in regards to residential, commercial and industrial development. It will be necessary to understand how the continued pressure for growth impacts agricultural land as well.

The reports will include the outcome of the *Planning Act* and PPS conformity exercise, review of Norfolk County's current housing options and the progress of the land evaluation study.

Phase 4: Preferred Direction & Recommendations

The fourth phase of the study will conclude with a preferred direction report (or reports, as necessary) that offer policy recommendations, as required, to facilitate the growth management strategy. Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments may be required to implement the policy direction.

If Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments are required to implement the new policies of the Provincial Policy Statement or as a result of the comprehensive review process, a deliverable of this phase would be to ensure that the statutory process and notice requirements are met. This includes a formal public hearing as required by the *Planning Act*.

Public Engagement, Participation and Consultation

Throughout the process staff will organize engagement events to discuss each technical report topic as well as utilize the County website to solicit feedback from the public. Residents can request to be included on the project distribution list and will be emailed news and status updates during each phase of the project. Staff recommend that Committees of Council and stakeholder groups be updated and consulted through focused engagement sessions, as necessary, for during each phase of the process.

If there is a particular organization or committee that has been missed, it is requested that Council or any member of the community advise staff so the particular group is added to the project consultation or distribution list. There will be a webpage created on the County website as well as updates to various social media accounts with the assistance of the Communications team to maximize contact and notification of the on-going project.

Generally, the overall project is intended to be completed "in-house" and led by the Planning Department. The project lead will be a senior planner, supported by a planner and administrative staff as necessary. Other planning staff will provide input and assist with public engagement events throughout the course of the project. Also, there will be an opportunity for each department to provide feedback through the implementation of the Staff Technical Committee. Phase 3, Growth Projections, will be completed by Watson & Associates. The budget allocation for this work has already been approved and the work is underway.

If deemed necessary, legal Counsel will be sought in regards to policy interpretation or in relation to potential new policy implementation. Final proposed policy recommendations will be provided to County legal counsel for review before being presented to Norfolk County Council for consideration.

Financial Services Comments:

Insourcing Planning and Development Studies was approved as a pilot project within the 2021 Levy Budget process (Option 4A). This option included hiring a temporary Project Planner position within the Planning Department to reduce the reliance and costs associated with hiring consultants for studies planned within the 10-year capital forecast. This plan included completing a significant portion of the 2021 Growth Management Study "in house", which is the focus of this staff report.

The Approved 2021 Capital Plan has an allocation of \$150,000 for the Growth Management Study which contains \$35,000 for consulting services, and \$115,000 for staff salaries. This project is fully funded through the General Government Development Charges Reserve Fund.

This report does not identify additional financial implications from the approved project, and is projected to remain within budget. Status reports on this study will also be presented to Council within any 2021 Capital Status Reports.

In addition, the Development Charges Study is occurring concurrently with the Growth Management Study, and will also utilize the growth projections completed by Watson & Associates.

Interdepartmental Implications:

The Technical Staff Team will have an opportunity to provide feedback throughout the study and any interdepartmental implications can be discussed.

Consultation(s):

To be conducted throughout the five phases of the project.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priority "Foster Vibrant, Creative Communities".

Explanation:

The study will identify future population projections and land requirements for the County which will help identify if urban boundary expansions are necessary to accommodate a mix of housing options and economic development.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, if the Terms of Reference (attached as Appendix A) is accepted by Council, staff will initiate the work required to begin the four phase study. The outcome of the study will be essential to determine where growth may be appropriately accommodated in the long term.

Recommendation(s):

THAT staff report CS 21-47 be received as information.

Attachment(s):

Appendix A – Growth Management Study Terms of Reference

Submitted By:

Brandon Sloan, BES, MCIP, RPP
General Manager
Community Development Division
185 Robinson Street
Simcoe, Ontario, Canada, N3Y 5L6
519-426-5870 ext. 1348

Reviewed By:

Tricia Givens, M.Sc.(PL), MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning
185 Robinson Street
Simcoe, Ontario, Canada, N3Y 5L6
519-426-5870 ext. 1893

Prepared By:

Jennifer Catarino, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner
For more information, call:
519-426-5870 ext. 8013