



**The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines
GENERAL COMMITTEE AGENDA
Regular, Wednesday, May 6, 2020
Electronic Participation**

This Meeting of Regular Council will be held through Electronic Participation in accordance with Bill 187, the Municipal Emergency Act, which was passed by the Province of Ontario on March 19, 2020.

This Meeting may be viewed online at
www.stcatharines.ca/youtube

Public Comments: The public may submit comments regarding agenda matters to the Office of the City Clerk by contacting clerks@stcatharines.ca by Tuesday, May 5, 2020 before 3:00 PM. Comments submitted will be considered as public information and entered into public record.

His Worship Mayor Walter Sendzik takes the Chair and opens the meeting following Items Number 5 and 8 on the Council Agenda

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1. Motion to Move Reports on Consent

2. Consent Reports

Following Consent Reports, Council will proceed to Council Agenda Item 6 (Public Meetings Pursuant to Planning Act)

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 3 - 20 | 2.1 Engineering, Facilities and Environmental Services, Environmental Services
2019 Summary Report of the City of St. Catharines Water Distribution System as Required under the Safe Drinking Water Act
<i>(This report was originally published as part of the March 23, 2020 General Agenda)</i> |
| 21 - 23 | 2.2 Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
Amendments to Simplified Meeting Procedures to Permit Electronic Participation During an Emergency
[Addenda] |

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- 24 - 85 2.3 Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
 Council Correspondence

3. Discussion Reports

Following Discussion Reports, Council will proceed to Council Agenda Item 9 (Motion to Ratify Forthwith Recommendations)

- 86 - 101 3.1 Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
 COVID-19 Update – May 6, 2020
 [Addenda]

- 102 - 110 3.2 Financial Management Services, Director
 2020 Property Tax Rates

4. In-Camera Session (General Committee)

Council will meet In-Camera for the following purposes:

- Property Matter – Acquisition and Disposal (In-Camera Pursuant to By-law 2015-170, as Amended, Section B20.3(c), a Proposed or Pending Acquisition or Disposition of Land by the Municipality or Local Board), Port Dalhousie Harbour Lands (59A Lakeport Rd.) Realty File No. 18.004
- Property Matter – Potential Acquisition of Land (In-Camera Pursuant to By-law 2015-170, as Amended, Section B20.3(c), a Proposed or Pending Acquisition or Disposition of Land by the Municipality or Local Board), Riverview Boulevard Realty File No. 19.064

5. Adjournment

Following Adjournment, Council will proceed to Council Agenda Item 15 (Motion Arising from In-Camera Session).



Corporate Report City Council

Report from: Engineering, Facilities and Environmental Services, Environmental Services

Report Date: March 3, 2020 **Meeting Date:** May 6, 2020

Report Number: EFES-046-2020 **File:** 68.81.5

Subject: 2019 Summary Report of the City of St. Catharines Water Distribution System as Required under the Safe Drinking Water Act

Strategic Pillar:

Recommendation

That report EFES-046-2020, regarding 2019 Summary Report of the City of St. Catharines Water Distribution System as Required under the Safe Drinking Water Act, be received for information. FORTHWITH

Summary

Staff have prepared the 2019 Water Distribution System Summary Report. The report outlines the actions the City is required to take to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system is annually inspected by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. St. Catharines received a Final Inspection Rating of 100% in the last Inspection indicating full compliance with all requirements.

Residents and businesses can be confident St. Catharines continues to provide safe, high quality drinking water.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

Not Applicable.

Background

Regulations under the Safe Drinking Water Act require that municipal council members are provided an annual summary report for the drinking water system that falls under their municipal responsibility.

The report must:

- list the requirements of the Act, the regulations, the system's approval, drinking water works permit, municipal drinking water licence, and any orders applicable to the system that were not met at any time during the period covered by the report; and
- for each of the above requirements that were not met, specify the duration of the failure and the corrective actions taken.

Report

To satisfy these legislative requirements, staff is providing Council members with the 2019 Water Distribution System Summary Report, which is included as Appendix 1. Staff take a wide variety of actions to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. Some of the highlights include:

- In 2019, staff collected over 8,700 samples throughout the City that were analyzed for microbiological parameters, chlorine residual and/or chemicals.
- Staff continue to implement a Community Wide Lead Testing Program, which is a volunteer based sampling program to test for lead in drinking water on private properties. In 2019, staff sampled 70 properties for lead.
- All staff who conduct water sampling must be certified as a Water Quality Analyst or Water Distribution Operator by the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office. These certifications must be renewed every three years and have mandatory, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) approved training requirements.
- All laboratory analysis must be carried out by an accredited laboratory. This ensures acceptable laboratory protocols and test methods are in place. It also requires the laboratory to provide evidence and assurances of the proficiency of the analysts performing the test methods.
- Notification is given to the MECP, the Regional Public Health Department and Decew Water Treatment Plant of all incidents of regular sampling which exceed the Ontario Drinking Quality Water Standards.
A Drinking Water Quality Management System (DWQMS) has been implemented and is in place. This includes an annual DWQMS audit by a third party. In 2019, the external audit was conducted by NSF International. The audit determined that St. Catharines is in conformance with the appropriate standards.
- One element of the DWQMS is a risk assessment. The risk assessment was designed to meet the DWQMS standard and includes climate change hazards. Integrating climate hazards into existing workplans can help address these risks as well as provide context compared to other known risks (e.g. aging infrastructure). The higher risks to the drinking water system include staff shortages (e.g. pandemic, strike, lockout, lack of available staff etc.), supply issues from the Region of Niagara Decew Water Treatment Plant (loss of supply or contamination of the water supply), contamination of the distribution system (backflow, watermain breaks) and lead water services.
- To address the risk of backflow into the system the City has implemented a backflow protection program. This is designed to reduce the risk of contamination entering the water distribution system from back pressure or back siphonage. Protective devices have been installed and tested annually at City-owned facilities such as splash pads, the bulk water station and wastewater facilities where the potential for cross connections exist.
- The City also has a backflow protection program that requires industrial, commercial and institutional properties to ensure they do not pose a risk to the municipal system.

- At least once a year the MECP conducts a rigorous and comprehensive inspection of the municipal drinking water system to determine compliance under the Safe Drinking Water Act. St. Catharines received a Final Inspection Rating of 100% in the last Inspection indicating full compliance with all requirements.
- The City's Municipal Drinking Water License was renewed in October 2019. The licence will expire in October 2024. Six months prior to its expiry the City is required to apply for another renewal.
- The Summary Report for the St. Catharines Water Distribution System is posted on the City's website and copies are available for the public upon request.

Drinking Water System Backflow Protection Program

Water typically flows within a water distribution system in one direction. If the water within the system begins to flow in the opposite direction, there is a possibility for contamination as a result of a backflow. This possibility can be increased if there are potential cross-connections to the system. These can potentially occur in any building, structure or property connected to the water distribution system.

Backflow as a result of cross-connections between a drinking water system and any source of contamination has the potential to impact the users of the drinking water system. The purpose of backflow prevention programs is to ensure that the drinking water supply is protected against the entry of contaminants, from cross-connections which could harm users and negatively impact the water distribution network.

St. Catharines has had a backflow program in place since 2009 and is intended to prevent any cross connections between the City's potable water system and non-potable sources at industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) properties. St. Catharines backflow program generally follows the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard B-64. The CSA standard defines hazards to the drinking water system in three categories; Severe, Moderate and Minor:

- Minor is nuisance to the water supply and results in a reduction in only the aesthetic quality of the water.
- Moderate is any minor hazard connection that has a low probability of being a severe hazard.
- Severe is any type of cross-connection or potential cross-connection involving water that has additives or substances that, under any concentration, can create a danger to health.

The City's program focuses on the severe and moderate hazards. It is implemented by having plumbing surveys completed at the identified properties and ensuring the required backflow prevention device is installed and tested as per the CSA standard. The surveys are required to be updated every 5 years and the devices are required to be tested annually.

In St. Catharines, there are over 1,750 ICI properties are required to participate in the backflow program. Staff continue to work to achieve compliance from all required properties. However, it should be noted that this is an ongoing, constantly changing,

multi-year program. In 2020, staff will be prioritizing efforts using the following risk based approach:

1. Addressing the properties identified in the severe risk category,
2. Addressing the properties identified in the moderate risk category,
3. Requiring annual testing reports for properties with up-to-date cross connection surveys.

Staff will be reviewing the program over the next year, including reviewing best practices and municipal comparators.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

Conclusion

To satisfy the above legislative requirements staff is providing Council members with the 2019 Water Distribution System Summary Report, which is included as Appendix 1. The City of St. Catharines is in full compliance with the requirements under the Safe Drinking Water Act and its associated regulations.

Residents and businesses can be confident St. Catharines continues to provide safe, high quality drinking water.

Prepared and Submitted by

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Approved by

Anthony Martuccio, P. Eng.

Director, Engineering, Facilities and Environmental Services

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Director, Municipal Works

Appendices

1. 2019 Water Distribution System Summary Report

2019

Annual Summary Report

Water Distribution System



CITY OF ST. CATHARINES

WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM
2019 ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

March 2020

Waterworks #260003279

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DEFINITIONS

Backflow – the undesirable reversal of flow possibly containing contaminations in to the potable water supply.

Background Count – the bacterial content in water which can be used to measure water quality deterioration in distribution systems.

Cross Connection – an actual or potential connection between a potable water system and any source of contamination.

Disinfection – effective destruction by chemical or physical processes of pathogenic microorganisms capable of causing disease.

***Escherichia coli* (E. coli)** – a sub-group of Coliform bacteria. It is most frequently associated with recent fecal pollution. The presence of E. coli in drinking water may be an indication of sewage contamination.

Free Chlorine Residual - the amount of chlorine available for disinfection.

Heterotrophic Plate Count (HPC) – a microbiological test indicating the overall water quality in drinking water systems. Increases in HPC can indicate a problem with drinking water treatment.

Lead – present as a result of corrosion of lead solder, lead containing brass fittings or lead water service pipes.

MAC – Maximum Acceptable Concentration - this is a health-related standard established for parameters which, when present above a certain concentration, have known or suspected adverse health effects. The length of time the MAC can be exceeded without injury to health will depend on the nature and concentration of the parameter.

Microbiological parameters (i.e. bacteria) – bacteria which may come from wastewater treatment plants, livestock operations, septic systems and wildlife. Microbiological analysis is the most important aspect of drinking water quality due to its association with dangerous water-borne diseases.

Total Coliforms – the group of bacteria most commonly used as an indicator of water quality. Total coliforms are a group of closely related bacteria that are usually free-living in the environment, but are also normally present in water contaminated with human or animal feces. With certain exceptions, they do not cause disease. Coliforms are used as a screen for fecal contamination. The presence of these bacteria in a water sample indicates inadequate filtration and/or disinfection.

Disinfection By-Products - Trihalomethanes (THMs), Haloacetic Acids (HAAs) – disinfection by-products are produced when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic material found in water.

INTRODUCTION

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), requires Municipal Council members be provided with a summary report for the drinking water system that falls under their municipal responsibility. The report must list any time the City was unable to meet the requirements of the Act, the regulations, the system's approval, drinking water works permit, municipal drinking water license or any order issued by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Each failure must specify the duration and measures taken to correct the failure. The report must also summarize the amount of water supplied by the system.

Waterworks Description

The St. Catharines water distribution system is classified by the MECP as a Class II, large residential system. The City's waterworks consists of:

- 💧 605 kilometres of watermain;
- 💧 Approximately 3,500 hydrants;
- 💧 Over 5,600 valves.

The Region of Niagara's Decew Water Treatment Plant treats and supplies the water;

- 💧 The source of water is surface water, from Lake Erie.
- 💧 The water is diverted via an intake from the Welland Canal located approximately six kilometers from the treatment plant, near Allanburg.
- 💧 The water travels along a 5.4 kilometre supply channel which flows by gravity directly to the treatment plant.
- 💧 The Decew Water Treatment Plant is a conventional surface water treatment plant which incorporates:
 - 💧 Zebra mussel control,
 - 💧 Screening,
 - 💧 Chemically assisted flocculation,
 - 💧 Coagulation,
 - 💧 Sedimentation,
 - 💧 Filtration,
 - 💧 Disinfection using sodium hypochlorite and ultraviolet light.

Municipal Drinking Water Licensing Program

Each municipal residential system must be licensed under the Municipal Drinking Water Licensing Program. This program requires municipalities to obtain a license to operate their water distribution system and to incorporate the concept of quality management into their operations. The license grants St. Catharines the ability to operate the water distribution system and identifies the conditions which must be met. The license must be renewed every five years. The City's Municipal Drinking Water License was renewed in October 2019.

There are four components to the license that are applicable to St. Catharines:

Drinking Water Works Permit - the Permit allows for the establishment and alteration of the water distribution system. It replaces the previous Certificate of Approval process and results in a single permit for the entire system.

The Drinking Water Quality Management System (DWQMS) – The DWQMS is a Quality Management System for the City's Water Distribution System. The DWQMS implements a systematic "continuous improvement" approach to planning, operations, corrective actions and management review to allow an organization to demonstrate sound system performance. The success of a DWQMS depends on the commitment from all levels and functions of an organization including operational staff and top management. The DWQMS is documented through the Operational Plan. The Operational Plan is regularly reviewed and continually improves.

In addition, internal audits take place and a yearly risk assessment is conducted and/or reviewed. The risk assessment was designed to meet the DWQMS standard and includes climate change hazards. Integrating climate hazards into existing workplans can help address these risks as well as provide context compared to other known risks (e.g. aging infrastructure). The higher risks to the drinking water system include staff shortages (e.g. pandemic, strike, lockout, lack of available staff etc.), supply issues from the Region of Niagara Decew Water Treatment Plant (loss of supply or contamination of the water supply), contamination of the distribution system (backflow, watermain breaks) and lead water services.

System Accreditation – each year, the City participates in an Audit of its DWQMS. Every three years an onsite, external Verification Audit must be conducted. The 2019 external audit was conducted in August by NSF – International Strategic Registrations. No non-conformances were identified.

Financial Plan – the preparation of a Financial Plan is a requirement specified in Regulation 453/07 and intended to demonstrate that the municipality had considered all of the financial impacts of the drinking water system. A new Financial Plan must be submitted to Council and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) prior to each License renewal. Council's Resolution confirming approval of the Financial Plan must be included in the License renewal documents.

The Drinking Water Quality Management System Policy

The City of St. Catharines is committed to:

- Ensuring a consistent supply of safe, high quality drinking water;
- Maintaining and continuously improving its Quality Management System; and
- Meeting or surpassing applicable legislation and regulations.

Actions Taken to Comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act

The *Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002* provides for the protection of human health and the prevention of drinking water health hazards through the control and regulation of drinking water systems and drinking water testing services. Ontario has a multi-barrier drinking water safety net, a framework designed to protect drinking water from the source to the tap. To comply with the Act and its Regulations, the City undertakes the following actions:

- 💧 The City is required to take a minimum number of samples each month from a representative cross-section of its watermain network and to test these samples for microbiological indications of contamination. Testing for the free chlorine residual content is also a requirement. The chlorine residual must be sampled at the same time and location as the microbiological sample.
- 💧 The City's drinking water is sampled every three months at points within the distribution system where there is a likelihood for the potential of elevated formations of Disinfection Byproducts, including Trihalomethanes (THMs) and Haloacetic Acids (HAAs).
- 💧 The City must undertake a Community Wide Lead Testing Program. The volunteer based sampling program requires samples be taken from 20 residential homes and 5 samples taken directly from the distribution system twice each year. Additional lead samples are taken outside of the regulated and defined sampling periods each year.
- 💧 Anyone who conducts sampling from within the water distribution system must be certified as a Water Quality Analyst or Water Distribution Operator by the Ontario Water Wastewater Certification Office (OWWCO). These certifications must be renewed every three years and have mandatory, MECP-approved training requirements.
- 💧 All laboratory analysis must be carried out by an accredited laboratory. The City of St. Catharines currently uses a number of accredited laboratories. Accreditation ensures acceptable laboratory protocols and test methods are in place. It also requires the laboratory to provide evidence and assurances of the proficiency of the analysts performing the test methods. Laboratories are audited by the Canadian Association for Laboratories Accreditation (CALA) and accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC).
- 💧 All drinking water sample results are available to the public. Annual reports are available at City Hall and on the City's website, www.stcatharines.ca. The daily sample records are available on request for the public to view.
- 💧 Notification is given to the MECP, the Regional Public Health Department, Niagara Region staff and the Decew Water Treatment Plant of all incidents of regular sampling which exceed the Maximum Allowable Concentration (MAC).
- 💧 On an annual basis, the MECP conducts a rigorous and comprehensive inspection of the municipal drinking water system to determine compliance under the SDWA and associated regulations.

WATER QUALITY TEST RESULTS

Summary of Results

In 2019, over 8,770 samples were taken throughout the City and analyzed for microbiological parameters, chlorine residual and chemicals analyses as part of the drinking water surveillance program. **Table 1** summarizes each parameter tested and it gives the number of samples required, the number of samples analyzed, and the range of results.

Table 1: Summary of Water Quality Test Results, 2019					
Parameter	MAC	Minimum Number of Samples Required	Number of Samples Taken	Results Range	Comments
Microbiological Analysis (Units = CFU/100 mL)					
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (E. coli)	ND	1368	1709	0	Fecal coliform bacteria that indicates the presence of sewage or animal waste contamination.
Total Coliforms	ND	1368	1709	0 - 12	Not generally harmful; but the presence can indicate the possibility of fecal contamination.
Background Count	NA	1368	1709	0 - 110	General bacterial population used to indicate deterioration of water quality.
Heterotrophic Plate Count (HPC)	NA	342	860	0 -99	HPC levels are used to monitor the general overall water quality. (*units = CFU/1mL)

ND – None Detected

NA – Not Applicable

CFU – Colony Forming Units

mL - Millilitres

Table 1: Summary of Water Quality Test Results, 2019 (continued)						
Parameter		MAC (mg/L)	Minimum Number of Samples Required	Number of Samples Taken	Results Range	Comments
Chemical Analysis						
Trihalomethanes mg/L		0.10	4	21	0.041	Disinfection By-product; reaction of chlorine with organic matter. The results are based on a four quarter annual running average.
Haloacetic Acids mg/L		0.08	4	21	0.014	Disinfection By-product; reaction of chlorine with organic matter. The results are based on a four quarter annual running average.
Lead mg/L	Residential	0.010	40	70	<0.001 – 0.043	Lead water service connections may be found in homes built prior to 1955. No lead piping was used in the distribution system.
	Distribution	0.010	10	10	<0.001	
Alkalinity		NA	10	10	87-112	The capacity for neutralizing an acid solution
pH		NA	50	80	6.5-8.3	Indicates the acidity of the water
Disinfectant						
Chlorine Residual		Must be between 0.05 mg/L & 4.0 mg/L	1368	2574	0.01 – 1.89	The free chlorine residual in the water distribution system is an indicator of the effectiveness of the disinfection process.

mg/L – Milligrams per Litre

Summary of Adverse Water Quality Incidents

An adverse water quality incident does not mean the drinking water supply is unsafe. An adverse incident simply indicates on that one occasion, a drinking water quality standard was exceeded. In 2019, seven Adverse Water Quality Incidents took place; three dealing with low free chlorine residual and four had elevated levels of Total Coliforms.

After each adverse water quality incident, a series of actions are required to ensure the safety of the water and compliance with provincial legislation. The City's Standard Operating Procedures provide clear and detailed instruction for follow up actions. This involves flushing hydrants located in the area of the adverse incident, taking additional water samples from the original location and locations around the adverse incident. It also involves notifying the MECP's Niagara office, the Spills Action Centre (SAC) and the Public Health Department both verbally and in writing. **Appendix A** summarizes all adverse water quality incidents throughout the City of St. Catharines in 2019 and the corrective action taken to resolve each incident.

Lead Exceedances

As part of the Community Wide Lead Testing Program, the City is required to take samples from within private residences. The results are site-specific, and not indicative of the quality of the water throughout the distribution system. When sampling for lead, the results simply represent the water sampled from within that residence. Potential lead sources include: older lead water service lines, usually built prior to the 1950's; internal plumbing, used mainly in the early 1900's; and older brass or bronze fittings and fixtures. When a lead exceedance occurs, both the Public Health Department and the MECP are notified. The affected resident is also immediately notified and a package containing the results and informational fact sheets detailing what options are available to the resident are delivered. In 2019, there were five lead exceedance found on private property.

Replacing Lead Water Services

When a lead water service is found, for example, during a new watermain construction project or when repairing a water service leak the City will replace the portion of the service on public property at the City's expense. The City will also replace the public property side of a lead service when a lead exceedance is found and also whenever the property owner first replaces the private portion of the lead service line. Lead lines are replaced with either copper or plastic service lines. Over 30.5 metres of lead service pipe was replaced in 2019.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Water System Disruptions

Disruptions to the water distribution system typically are due to unplanned maintenance required in the system. In addition to watermain break repairs, this can include any repairs to service lines, valves and hydrants. The majority of these repairs require the water to be shut-off resulting in a disruption of water service to customers. Table 2 summarizes water disruptions in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

The Province's Watermain Disinfection Procedure outlines the requirements for responding and repairing watermain breaks. It includes a sampling procedure for post watermain break repairs; and requirements for classifying each break and documentation of each break. Following each repair, microbiological samples are collected from locations both upstream and downstream of the repair. The purpose of these samples is to determine the effectiveness of the disinfection procedures used during the repair.

Table 2: Number of Service Disruptions		
Number of:	2018	2019
Mainbreaks	111	87
Services	52	43
Hydrant	8	6
Valve	15	9
Construction*	5	3
Total Repairs	191	148
Follow up water samples	342	257
Affected properties**	3,967	2530
Water off-hours***	700.5	587.50

* Construction refers to unplanned service disruptions in a Construction zone.

** Affected properties refers to the number of properties who were without water due to an unscheduled disruption (i.e. they had their water shut off during the repair).

*** Water off-hours is the total number of hours properties were without water due to an unscheduled disruption.

New Watermain Commissioning

When a new watermain is installed, the City is required to sample for microbiological parameters and chlorine residual. In 2019, over 200 samples were taken to test the new watermains before being put into service. If any bacteria are present, the new watermains are flushed, rechlorinated and sampled again until no bacterial contamination is found before being put into service. All of the watermains must also meet the required standard for chlorine residual.

Maintenance Costs

The total budget for the 2019 Water Improvement Program amounted to \$5.7 million. The total budget addresses 1.1 km of previously approved projects and 2.3 km of newly identified watermain replacements.

Backflow Prevention Program

Backflow as a result of cross-connections between a drinking water system and any source of contamination has the potential to impact the users of the drinking water system. The purpose of backflow prevention programs is to ensure that the drinking water supply is protected against the entry of contaminants, from cross-connections which could harm users and negatively impact the water distribution network.

St. Catharines has had a backflow program in place since 2009 and is intended to prevent any cross connections between the City's potable water system and non-potable sources at industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) properties. St. Catharines backflow program generally follows the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard B-64. The CSA standard defines hazards to the drinking water system in three categories; Severe, Moderate and Minor. The program is implemented by having surveys completed at the identified properties and ensuring the required backflow prevention device is installed and tested as per the CSA standard.

There are over 1750 properties that have been identified as falling into the severe or moderate hazard category. Of these properties, 47% have been contacted by staff and are in compliance or working on obtaining compliance. There are 201 properties identified as severe risk and 78% of those properties are in compliance.

Water Flows

Table 3 lists the monthly water flows from the Decew Water Treatment Plant to the City of St. Catharines (source: Regional Municipality of Niagara). More detailed flow data can be found the Decew Water Treatment Plant's 2019 Summary Report, available at: www.niagararegion.ca.

Table 4: Monthly Water Flows for 2018 and 2019		
Month	Quantity (MegaLitres)	
	2018	2019
January	1201.5	1195.6
February	1068.4	1069.6
March	1172.8	1193.9
April	1166.5	1116.6
May	1308.9	1175.3
June	1547.2	1357.0
July	1716.8	1459.1
August	1479.8	1395.0
September	1356.0	1246.3
October	1219.8	1131.6
November	1128.8	1081.1
December	1141.3	1108.8
Total	15,507.8	14,529.9
Monthly Average	1,292.3	1,210.8
Daily Average	42.5	39.8

Note: 1 MegaLitre (ML) = 1,000,000 Litres

Investing in the Future

Residents trust the City of St. Catharines for safe, clean, and reliable drinking water every time they turn on their tap. St. Catharines is proud to deliver on those expectations. We also know that investments are required to renew our drinking water systems and allow us to meet those expectations tomorrow and for future generations by improving water quality, reliability and increasing resiliency to extreme weather events, while lowering maintenance costs over time. The City continues to work on these essential improvements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on the City of St. Catharines drinking water system or the content of this report, please contact the Manager of Environmental Services, Mark Green at 905-688-5600.

APPENDIX A**Summary of Adverse Water Quality Incidents, 2019**

Incident Date	Location	Adverse Parameter	Result	Corrective Action	Corrective Action Date
March 25, 2019	472 Grantham	Free Chlorine	0.02 mg/L	Flushed area hydrants and flushed within the original location. Confirmed the chlorine residual was restored.	March 25, 2019
July 18, 2019	86 Ventura	Total Coliform	6 CFU /100 mL	Flushed nearby hydrants. Resampled the surrounding area, including the original location.	July 21, 2019
July 19, 2019	86 Ventura	Total Coliform	12 CFU /100 mL	Flushed nearby hydrants. Resampled the surrounding area, including the original location. All of the resamples met the drinking water standard.	July 21, 2019
Aug. 27, 2019	273 Parnall	Total Coliform	1 CFU /100 mL	Flushed nearby hydrants. Resampled the surrounding area, including the original location. All of the resamples met the drinking water standard.	Aug. 30, 2019
Nov. 20, 2019	71 Berryman	Total Coliform	7 CFU /100 mL	Flushed nearby hydrants. Resampled the surrounding area, including the original location. All of the resamples met the drinking water standard.	Nov. 23, 2019
Dec. 5, 2019	320 Geneva	Free Chlorine	0.02 mg/L	Flushed area hydrants and flushed within the original location. Confirmed the chlorine residual was restored.	Dec. 5, 2019
Dec. 6, 2019	320 Geneva	Free Chlorine	0.01 mg/L	Flushed area hydrants and flushed within the original location. Confirmed the chlorine residual was restored.	Dec. 6, 2019



Corporate Report City Council

Report from: Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk

Report Date: May 1, 2020 **Meeting Date:** May 6, 2020

Report Number: LCS-073-2020 **File:** 10.12.1

Subject: Amendments to Simplified Meeting Procedures to Permit Electronic Participation During an Emergency

Recommendation

That Council approve amendments to the Simplified Meeting Procedures (Schedule "A" to By-Law No. 2015-121) to permit the advisory committees and task forces to hold meetings using electronic participation during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer or Deputy Chief Administrative Officer; and

That the City Solicitor be directed to prepare the necessary by-law. FORTHWITH

Summary

This report provides information on a proposed amendment to the Simplified Meeting Procedures to allow advisory committees and task forces to hold meetings using electronic participation during the COVID-19 pandemic at the discretion of the CAO or Deputy CAO. This approach is proposed in an attempt to balance and prioritize the needs of the entire Corporation. The staff resources required to support a meeting through electronic participation is greater than a typical meeting and some staff liaisons do not have capacity to support advisory bodies at this time due to increased workload or shifting responsibilities. Staff is also aware that not all volunteer members have access to, or may not be comfortable with technology that would allow for electronic participation and that accessibility could be a concern for some members. Criteria are included in this report which would guide the decision on whether an advisory body would be permitted to meet under the proposed amendment.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

This report is not directly related to a specific item within the Strategic Plan.

Background

Simplified Meeting Procedures

In 2015, Council approved By-Law No. 2015-121, which provides Simplified Meeting Procedures for advisory committees and task forces. These simplified procedures allow

committees to operate in a manner that is less formal than City Council, while maintaining consistency, transparency in decisions making and remaining open to the public.

Decisions related to COVID-19

On March 17, 2020, the Province declared an emergency under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. On March 19, 2020, the Province enacted the *Municipal Emergency Act, 2020* which amended the electronic participation provisions of the *Municipal Act* as they relate to municipal Councils, local boards and committees, as defined in the *Municipal Act*. On March 27, 2020, City Council amended its Procedural By-law to permit electronic participation in meetings during an emergency declared locally or provincially. This amendment applies to City Council, General Committee and Budget Standing Committee.

On March 28, 2020, the Province released an Order stating that no person shall attend an organized public event or social gathering of more than five people.

On April 22, 2020, Council received Report [PBS-065-2020](#) and provided permission for the Heritage Permit Advisory Committee (HPAC) to conduct meetings through electronic participation. The HPAC held a meeting on April 30, 2020; based on the experience with that meeting staff recommend proceeding as outlined within this report.

Report

Evaluating whether an advisory body should meet

In reviewing whether an advisory committee or task force should hold a meeting using electronic participation, staff will consider the following:

- Is the meeting required to make a decision? Is the decision time-sensitive or essential? Is there another mechanism for making the decision?
- Is there capacity for appropriate staff to manage the meeting including providing guidance to volunteer members in how to participate in the meeting?
- Are the majority of volunteer members expected to be able to participate through electronic means?

Amendment allows for electronic participation

As per the amendment to the Simplified Meeting Procedures approved on April 22, 2020, all provisions of the Simplified Meeting Procedures would remain in place, with necessary modifications. City staff will determine the appropriate tools required to support the meeting and will communicate this with committee members, Council and the public prior to the meeting – these will likely mirror the same tools used for Council. It is the intention that all portions of meetings held in open session will be live streamed online.

This approach will enable these advisory bodies to continue to meet while adhering to directives related to physical / social distancing and gatherings. It will also allow staff to continue to monitor and implement best practices. These decisions will be made with a lens of balancing protection of the public, staff, committee members and councillors, with promoting accountability, transparency, and good decision making processes.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report as the technology being used to support City Council meetings can also be applied to other advisory bodies.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

The environmental sustainability implications associated with this report are unknown.

Prepared by

Kristen Sullivan
Deputy Clerk, Legal and Clerks Services

Submitted by

Bonnie Nistico-Dunk
City Clerk, Legal and Clerks Services

Approved by

Heather Salter
Director of Legal and Clerks Services / City Solicitor



Corporate Report City Council

Report from: Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk

Report Date: April 27, 2020 **Meeting Date:** May 6, 2020

Report Number: LCS-075-2020 **File:** 10.12.1

Subject: Council Correspondence

Recommendation

That Council receive and file the items listed within the report; and

That Council receive and file additional correspondence distributed for the meeting held May 6, 2020, which is available upon request. FORTHWITH

Report

The Office of the City Clerk is submitting, for the approval of Council, correspondence received during the period of April 14, 2020 to April 27, 2020.

Resolutions

1. Welland City Council - COVID 19 Financial Impact

Correspondence Items

2. AMO Watchlist - April 23, 2020

Response to St. Catharines City Council Motion

3. Response from Niagara Region regarding Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units. Report CSD 8-2020

Correspondence from Niagara Region

4. COVID-19 Preliminary Overview of Financial Impacts. Report CSD 30-2020
5. 2019 End of Year Growth Report. Report PDS 19-2020
6. 2019 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities. Report PDS 13-2020

Reports Requested by Council

7. Outstanding Reports List – updated April 24, 2020

Prepared by:

Evan McGinty
Council and Committee Coordinator

Submitted and Approved by:

Bonnie Nistico-Dunk
City Clerk



City of Welland
Corporate Services
 Office of the City Clerk
 60 East Main Street, Welland, ON L3B 3X4
Phone: 905-735-1700 Ext. 2159 | **Fax:** 905-732-1919
Email: clerk@welland.ca | www.welland.ca

Sub-Item 1

April 22, 2020

File No. 20-64

SENT VIA EMAIL

Niagara Region
 1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way
 P.O. Box 1042
 Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Attention: Ron Tripp, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Dear Mr. Tripp:

Re: April 21, 2020 – WELLAND CITY COUNCIL

At its meeting of April 21, 2020, Welland City Council passed the following motion:

- “1. THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND receive for information Report FIN-2020-09, Covid-19 Financial Impact Report, from the General Manager Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer dated April 21, 2020; and further
2. THAT Welland City Council request that Niagara Region not charge interest/penalty for any partial payment of any portion of the remaining 2020 Niagara Region tax levy not remitted by City of Welland; and further
3. THAT Welland City Council request that Niagara Region defer issuance of 2020 Debt to late July/August 2020; and further
4. THAT Welland City Council forward this report to Niagara Region and all local lower tier municipalities in Niagara; and further
5. THAT Welland City Council request that the Federal and Provincial governments provide municipalities with a 2020 operating grant to help municipalities fund current operations and maintain appropriate service levels during the Covid-19 event; and further
6. THAT Welland City Council request that the Federal and Provincial governments establish a new infrastructure building program by increasing the amount of gas tax funding made available to municipalities to stimulate the economy later this year; and further
7. THAT Welland City Council request that the Federal and Provincial governments accelerate approval of ICIP project applications submitted by the City of Welland to contribute to the economic recovery after the Covid-19 event is over; and further

Bridging the past, present and future

RE: April 21, 2020 – Welland City Council

April 22, 2020

8. **THAT Welland City Council forward this report to all local MPs and MPPs, FCM, AMO, and the Federal Minister of Finance, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Minister of Finance for the Province of Ontario; and further**
9. **THAT Welland City Council extend the waiver of application of penalties charged on non-payment of current 2020 Realty tax arrears (excluding prior year arrears) from June 1-30, 2020); and further**
10. **THAT Welland City Council extend the deferral of 2020 water/wastewater increases from July 1, 2020 until October 1, 2020, PROVIDED that Niagara Region also defer its 2020 wholesale rate increases to that time period; and further**
11. **THAT Welland City Council extend waiving the charge back of NSF charges for all tax, water/wastewater, accounts receivable and miscellaneous accounts until June 30, 2020; and further**
12. **THAT Welland City Council extend not charging customers for removing themselves from the Pre-Authorized Payment Program (PAP) for both Tax and Water/Sewer accounts.**
13. **THAT Welland City Council request that all Niagara municipalities support the expansion of eligibility criteria to qualify for the 75% Canada Emergency Response Benefit wage subsidy for Covid-19 to all Municipal employers (including Library and Museum Boards), where currently it is only available to private sector employers."**

Yours truly,






Tara Stephens
City Clerk

TS:jm

c.c.: Sent via email
Vance Badawey, MP, Niagara Centre
Jeff Burch, MPP, Niagara Centre
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
The Honourable William Morneau, Federal Minister of Finance
The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing
Niagara Regional Municipalities
Ann-Marie Norio, Regional Clerk, Niagara Region
S. Zorbas, General Manager, Corporate Services, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer

COUNCIL
CORPORATE SERVICES
FINANCE DIVISION

APPROVALS	
GENERAL MANAGER	
CFO	
CAO	

20-64

REPORT FIN-2020-09
APRIL 21, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPACT REPORT

**AUTHOR AND
APPROVING G.M.: STEVE ZORBAS, CPA, CMA, B.Comm, DPA,
GENERAL MANAGER, CORPORATE SERVICES, CHIEF FINANCIAL
OFFICER / TREASURER**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WELLAND receive for information Report FIN-2020-09, Covid-19 Financial Impact Report, from the General Manager Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer dated April 21, 2020; and further
2. THAT Welland City Council request that Niagara Region not charge interest/penalty for any partial payment of any portion of the remaining 2020 Niagara Region tax levy not remitted by City of Welland; and further
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7. THAT Welland City Council request that the Federal and Provincial governments accelerate approval of ICIP project applications submitted by the City of Welland to contribute to the economic recovery after the Covid-19 event is over; and further
8. THAT Welland City Council forward this report to all local MPs and MPPs, FCM, AMO, and the Federal Minister of Finance, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Minister of Finance for the Province of Ontario; and further

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11. THAT Welland City Council extend waiving the charge back of NSF charges for all tax, water/wastewater, accounts receivable and miscellaneous accounts until June 30, 2020; and further
12. THAT Welland City Council extend not charging customers for removing themselves from the Pre-Authorized Payment Program (PAP) for both Tax and Water/Sewer accounts.
13. THAT Welland City Council request that all Niagara municipalities support the expansion of eligibility criteria to qualify for the 75% Canada Emergency Response Benefit wage subsidy for Covid-19 to all Municipal employers (including Library and Museum Boards), where currently it is only available to private sector employers.

ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND:

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrates the essential role played by the City in leadership, communication and community awareness, containment, and remediation efforts to flatten the curve on the Covid-19 virus. A decision was made by the City to close all public facilities and cancel events and programming until June 30, 2020. The decision was made by the City's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Emergency Control Group, based on the need to protect City staff and residents, to help contain the spread of Covid-19; and to provide some certainty for user groups and key community stakeholders. With the number of confirmed Covid-19 cases and community spread in Niagara and Ontario on the rise, public health officials are indicating that it is more important than ever to continue to practice physical distancing, including self-monitoring and self-isolation. All indications from the experts are that these measures will be in place for months, not weeks. The Covid-19 event is the largest financial challenge that residents, families, businesses, communities and municipalities have seen in history.

This report provides an "estimated" financial impact update report to Council and a summary of various cost containment initiatives implemented by CLT to mitigate the negative financial impact to the City.

Staff have assumed that normal business operations will begin to be transitioned back no earlier than July 6, 2020. An immediate 3 month closure of non-essential services has been implemented by the CLT due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the business operations and service levels have been adjusted only to deliver essential services. The preliminary impact of Covid-19 is forecasting a deficit of approximately \$650,000 after implementing various cost containment initiatives and staff will be reporting back with update reports in May and June. In addition, staff continue to review assumptions/estimates/operations/business environment as more information becomes available and financial pressures may be increased or mitigated by future Council, Provincial and Federal decisions.

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The most significant impact to the City of Welland is loss of revenues which can be offset by cost containment strategies implemented by the CLT that include, but are not limited to temporary layoffs of part-time, full-time staff, summer students, interns, co-op students and the elimination of contract positions.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is being felt across the country with widespread closure of businesses, and a state of emergency declared by the Province of Ontario, Niagara Region, and the City of Welland.

The Federal Government has already provided information on economic and financial support for Canadians and businesses including:

- The extension of the income tax filing due date for individuals, and deferral of payments of qualifying income tax amounts owing;
- A temporary wage subsidy program over the next three months for qualifying small businesses faced with revenue losses, and to prevent employee layoffs;
- Enhancements to the Goods and Services Tax credit and the Canada Child Benefit; and
- An Emergency Care Benefit for employees that do not qualify for Employment Insurance Benefits.

On March 25, 2020, the provincial government announced that it is deferring the next two quarterly educational property tax remittances payments by 90 days. The remittance which would have been due June 30, 2020 is now September 30, 2020, and the remittance which would have been due September 30, 2020 is now December 15, 2020.

The government also announced that the property tax reassessment that was scheduled to be implemented in 2020 for the 2021 tax year will be postponed. This will provide stability for Ontario's property taxpayers and municipalities, and will enable municipal governments to focus their attention on critical public health initiatives and other efforts to manage the local response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS:

Water and Wastewater Budgets for City of Welland

Welland owns, operates, and maintains in good working order, the water and wastewater system. The water supply and wastewater treatment are purchased from Niagara Region. Water/wastewater billing charged to the consumer is based on a rate per cubic meter (m³) of water consumed, plus a fixed rate. Residents are billed quarterly, while industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI), and larger residential apartment buildings are billed monthly. The water/wastewater operating and capital programs are funded by the revenue received from the water/wastewater rate charged to consumers. Approximately 55% of the revenues are used to pay Niagara Region for the water supply. The remaining 45% is used to fund the City's day-to-day operations and capital program.

City staff are recommending deferral of the 2020 water/wastewater rates to take effect October 1, 2020 in lieu of July 1, 2020, provided Niagara Region defers the proposed 2020 Wholesale rate increases to October 1, 2020. This will assist with the financial challenges many of our residents, families, and businesses are currently struggling with.

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The potential deficit in the 2020 Water/Wastewater budget is estimated between \$1.2- \$1.4 million if:

1. Niagara Region does not freeze or delay their proposed 2020 Wholesale rate increases for purchase of Water and Wastewater Treatment costs.
2. The City of Welland defers the proposed 2020 Retail Rate Increase to December 31, 2020.
3. The City of Welland does not apply penalty/late charges for unpaid 2020 Water/Wastewater billings to end of year.

To mitigate, staff will reduce the 2020 staff inter-departmental chargebacks to the water/wastewater fund.

City provided Financial Assistance for Residents and Businesses-Welland City Council approvals

As stated previously in this report, the current Covid-19 pandemic is causing financial hardship for many residents and business owners. The CLT is recommending additional financial assistance for residents and businesses in Welland as follows:

1. Extend the waiver of application of penalties charged on non-payment of current 2020 Realty tax arrears (excluding prior year arrears) from June 1-30, 2020.
2. Defer 2020 water/wastewater rate increases from July 1, 2020 to October 1, 2020 provided Niagara Region also defers its proposed wholesale rate increases for water/wastewater to October 1, 2020.
3. Waive all NSF charges from March 19 – June 30, 2020.
4. Waive all fee's associated with removing customers from PAP program from March 19- June 30, 2020.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION:

Cost Containment Initiatives Implemented by CLT:

1. Cancellation of Conferences effective March 19	\$121,000
2. Reduction of Promotions budgets (20%)	\$65,000
3. Reduce Ditching program	\$40,000
4. Reduce Catch Basin Cleaning (defer to 2021)	\$40,000
5. Defer Hard Surface Install @ Shaw St. Haulage station	\$25,000
6. Cancel Sweeping Contract and complete in house	\$45,000
7. Reduced fuel expenses at Transit	\$354,800
8. Reduced fuel – Other	\$131,000
9. Salary/Benefit Savings – Temporary Layoffs	\$1,950,000
10. Reduce Welland Museum 2020 Operating Grant	\$28,000
11. Reduce Library 2020 Operating Grant	\$291,000
12. Increase 2020 Welland Hydro Dividend	\$150,000
13. Cost Containment all City Departments – excl. salary/benefits	<u>\$560,000</u>
Sub-Total	\$3,800,800

Operating Losses Due to Covid-19

1. Reduced revenues-Recreation/Arenas/Wellness	\$230,000
2. YSP reduced revenues-Back to regular scheduling Sept 2020	\$250,000
3. Parking revenues reduced	\$124,000
4. Decrease Supplementary/Omit Taxes	\$50,000
5. Reduced charge backs to Water/WW budgets	\$1,400,000
6. Covid-19 Initiatives to be initiated - various	\$500,000

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7. Increased NSF charges	\$10,000
8. Reduction Building Department Revenues	\$23,500
9. Clerk's revenue reductions	\$32,700
10. Penalty/Interest Charges reduced	\$840,500
11. By-law revenue loss	\$4,500
12. Increased software licences for IT due to Covid-19	\$33,900
13. POA revenue reduced	\$30,000
14. Increased operating expenses due to COVID-19	\$50,000
15. Lost Revenue – Transit	<u>\$871,000</u>
Sub-Total	\$4,450,100

NET PROJECTED DRAFT DEFICIT \$649,300

Covid-19 Related Assumptions

1. The closure of recreation facilities will result in significant lost revenues. (Staff have assumed all recreational facilities and programming will begin re-opening July 6, 2020). The lost revenues are a result of immediate closures, cancellation of spring/ summer classes, and anticipated reduced revenues for the rest of the year as client behavior gradually returns.
2. Staff have assumed all conferences for all departments, including Mayor and Council, cancelled from March 19 to December 31, 2020.
3. Staff have reduced all Corporate Promotions budgets by 20%.
4. To protect the health of both transit operators and passengers, and implement social distancing, rear-door only entrance was introduced. In addition, numerous service level adjustments were made over the past weeks to recognize significant loss in ridership and revenue loss due to "free fares". Transit revenue losses are offset by reduced diesel consumption and lower fuel pricing.
5. Interest rate earnings will be lower as the Bank of Canada has lowered interest rates. This will negatively impact interest earned in the Operating budget and interest allocated to reserve funds. On the other hand, the City will be issuing debt and we expect interest rate savings due to record low interest rates.
6. Parking enforcement is reduced with fewer cars on the road.
7. Staff are projecting that fewer Provincial Offences (POA) tickets will be issued and with the closure of courts, some revenues will be deferred.
8. The four-month relief on reduction in penalties/interest charges to tax accounts will negatively impact the City. If relief is provided to the end of the year, the City will have a revenue shortfall and has assumed waiver will continue to December 31, 2020.
9. Other increased operating costs due to Covid-19 such as premiums for protective equipment, increased cleaning supplies and frequency of cleaning, material, supplies, and increased advertising.
10. Salary savings due to temporary layoffs for part-time and full-time staff, summer students, and not hiring Interns are assumed.
11. The CLT will delay the hiring of new staffing due to vacancy, resulting in gapping savings.
12. The CLT has implemented various cost containment initiatives in regards to discretionary spending in the 2020 Operating budget.

The combined effect of COVID-19 and currently projected variances as a result of regular business is a forecasted deficit of approximately \$650,000. Staff will continue to refine these

REPORT FIN-2020-09

PAGE 6

estimates as more information becomes available. Pressures may also be increased or mitigated by future Council, Provincial and Federal decisions.

City's 2020 Capital Program and All Approved & Outstanding Projects

A similar exercise will be undertaken on the City's approved 2020 capital program as more information becomes available. Some capital projects may have to be delayed or cancelled. The April 3, 2020 announcement by the Province stopping all non-essential construction could have an impact on the City's 2020 capital program.

Cash Flow Pressures for the City

Staff are monitoring the City's cash flow daily. Our current line of credit allows the City to access up to a maximum of \$9 million. City staff are seeking Welland City Council support requesting that Niagara Region not charge penalty/interest on any 2020 Regional Levy payments that are not paid due to cash flow challenges the City of Welland may experience due to non-payment of realty taxes by residential/commercial/industrial customers. The Province recently announced the deferral of Education tax remittances to the School Boards by 90 days (September and December) and this will assist the City's cash flow requirements. Staff will also be monitoring taxes receivable and all other receivables.

Permissive Grants and Special Events

Staff have not engaged in formal discussions with any organizations that have cancelled their 2020 special events. The potential exists for the City to realize cost savings if prior approved permissive grants for such cancelled events are returned to the City to assist with our revenue shortfalls. City staff continue to seek Council direction requesting prior approved 2020 grants for special events that have been cancelled to date, or that will be cancelled, to request return of such funds to assist with the Covid-19 financial challenges.

Library and Museum Boards

The CLT has been working closely with both the Library and Museums boards and each entity has also engaged various cost containment initiatives which have included temporary layoff for part-time and full time staff. City staff are requesting City Council to reduce the Library's 2020 Operating Grant in the amount of \$291,000, and the Museum 2020 Operating Grant in the amount of \$28,000.

Consider 75% Wage Subsidy to include Municipal Employer's including Library and Museum Boards

The Ontario Municipal Human Resources Association (OMHRA) supports including municipal employer's to apply to receive 75% wage subsidy for retaining employees.

Municipalities, especially those with Transit systems, are experiencing revenue loss and mitigating staffing costs through wage subsidies can assist municipalities in coping with financial challenges. Allowing municipal employer's to participate in a 75% wage subsidy, as is currently available to private sector employers, can assist municipalities in retaining staff and/or recalling staff that have been laid off

OTHER DEPARTMENT IMPLICATIONS:

Discussed in report.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

It is unknown the length of this crisis, but the CLT has implemented cost containment initiatives to deliver essential services to end the year in a stronger financial position in the absence of continuing business as usual. It is inevitable, as revenues decrease, while many costs continue, that CLT will be challenged to end the year with a balanced budget. All four levels of government have provided assistance for Welland residents and businesses. Municipalities in Ontario cannot sustain such fiscal pressures and will require assistance from both provincial and federal levels of government. The Finance department is monitoring the City's daily cash position and developing strategies to mitigate ending the 2020 calendar year in a deficit.

The CLT meets daily to ensure essential services are delivered, discuss issues, and ensure the health and safety of all residents and staff. They will continue to implement various cost containment initiatives to ensure the City's year-end financial position avoids a deficit. The City can run a deficit in a given year but it cannot budget for a deficit. Any deficit can be offset through the use of reserves or by increasing taxes in the subsequent year, or by increasing non-tax revenues. The state of the City's year-end financial position, the state of the economy later in the year, and the financial position of the City's residents and businesses will determine the extent of any 2021 tax increases and the rate of growth. Staff will work with Council including a 2021 budget update at the September Budget Committee meeting.

During such challenging economic times, all governments are thinking about the financial recovery that follows. As such, it is incumbent upon both Federal and Provincial governments to establish infrastructure-building programs to provide jobs and get the economy moving. Municipalities have always supported such incremental programs. It is important for Welland City Council, through the Mayor's office, to work with FCM and AMO to support such new incremental programs. Increased funding opportunities include dramatically increasing Federal and Provincial gas tax allocations, and accelerating approvals for the existing Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP).

The City of Welland has submitted applications to the federal and provincial ICIP for key strategic initiatives and capital projects. ICIP's cost-sharing arrangement requires the municipality to contribute 26.67% of the funds with the remainder split between the Federal government at 40%, and the Provincial government at 33.33%. The details of the City's applications are as follows:

- Forks Road Bridge Replacement - \$5 million
ICIP – Rural and Northern Communities Stream
- New Transit Operations Facility - \$15 million
ICIP – Public Transit Stream
- Waterfront Redevelopment/Recreational and Cultural Amenities - \$13.5 million
ICIP – Community, Culture and Recreation Stream
- Broadway Infrastructure Improvements - \$1.43 million
- ICIP – Green Stream

Based on communications with provincial officials, the City's Forks Road Bridge Replacement application and new Transit Operations Facility application have been "nominated" by the province and sent to the federal government for review. To date, we have not received any updates regarding the status of our Waterfront Redevelopment application. City staff are continuing to work closely with our federal MP, Vance Badawey.

All these projects can be commenced immediately if funding is approved by the Federal and Provincial governments. The CLT will also provide Council with updates in late May and June. The City of Welland will need to rely on the Provincial and Federal governments who have the fiscal firepower to provide necessary funding programs to ensure continued economic prosperity for the City of Welland and Niagara Region.

The Corporate Leadership Team will be providing updated Covid-19 Financial Impact Reports in May and June.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

Sub-Item 2



April 23, 2020

In This Issue

- COVID-19 resources.
- Communications and virtual attendance at council meetings webinars.
- Invitation to member municipalities: Join AMO-Led OPP Detachment Board webinar.
- AMO's latest on broadband & cellular connectivity.
- Diabetes Canada requests municipal assistance to clear garbage from around bins.
- WSIB announces \$1.9 billion in financial relief for employers.
- PJ Marshall Award - deadline extended.
- Updated Waste Diversion information on AMO website.
- Government extending Covid-19 services to low-income seniors & disabled persons.
- Guidance on planning timelines posted.
- Consultation extended on proposal under the *Consumer Protection Act*.
- Digital meeting management for small municipalities.
- AMO 2020: Annual General Meeting and Conference.
- Cancellation deadline extended for exhibitors to July 6 in response to COVID-19.
- AMO's popular social media webinar series available through Municipal Education.
- COVID19 can even affect personal insurance.
- Energy Training despite social distancing: Is this possible?
- Municipal Group Buying program: COVID-19 Updates.
- Municipal Group Buying program vendor webinar: Gasboy/Gilbarco.
- Municipal Group Buying program webinar – Procurement.
- ONE Investment: Two important webinars.
- Limerick resolution concerning the devastating loss of lives in Nova Scotia.

AMO COVID-19 Resources

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources page](#) is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.

Over the last few weeks, AMO has been hosting webinars to support members in communications during COVID-19 and guidance for council meetings with electronic attendance. These are now [available here](#).

AMO Matters

AMO is finalising a discussion paper on the establishment of new OPP Detachment Boards. Members are invited to [register to have a sneak peek](#) at the paper through a webinar presentation on April 24, starting at 11:00 am with Matthew Wilson, AMO Senior Advisor.

Check out AMO's webpage for the [latest news](#) on broadband and cellular connectivity. Any questions on the material can be directed to [Amber Crawford](#).

Diabetes Canada has written an open letter to Canada's mayors and municipalities requesting your help to clear garbage and soiled textiles from their donation bin sites. For more information [click here](#).

WSIB is offering a financial relief package to help alleviate burden from COVID-19. Both Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 employers will benefit from this automatically. For additional information, [click here](#).

The deadline to submit an application for the [PJ Marshall Award](#) has been extended to Friday, May 29, 2020. Please review updated requirements.

With the COVID-19 emergency, waste management operations have been a priority to ensure continued vital collections for the health and well-being of Ontarians. However, the move of all waste diversion programs towards full producer responsibility continue. AMO applauds the government's commitment as these programs will create Ontario jobs and help our economic recovery. The government has committed to deliver a draft Blue Box regulation in summer 2020. At the same time, we have a new Batteries Regulation and development of programs for Electronics and Household Hazardous Waste. Given this, AMO staff have revamped their website to provide the [latest updates](#). For more information, contact [Dave Gordon](#) (Senior Advisor) or [Amber Crawford](#) (Policy Advisor).

Provincial Matters

Working with the [OCSA](#), the government launched a new [Ontario Community Support Program](#) to expand existing Meals on Wheels services to reach low-income seniors, and people with disabilities and chronic medical conditions. The program will also develop the capacity of community organizations to help deliver medication and other essentials. Local 211 services will provide information and referral. For more information on government initiatives to serve vulnerable residents, see the [Ontario Newsroom](#).

A new section to the *Planning Act* (Sec. 70.11) was enacted to help municipal government manage/suspend the planning process while focusing on COVID-19. The [Guidance](#) on how to implement the new [Sec. 70.11](#) of the *Planning Act* and [O.Reg. 149/20](#) has now been posted on the ERO.

The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has extended the [consultation period](#) on the proposal to implement administrative penalties (APs) under the *Consumer Protection Act, 2002* (CPA) by four weeks, to May 25, 2020.

Eye on Events

eSCRIBE, AMO's partner of cloud-based meeting management solutions for public sector boards and councils, has unveiled eSCRIBE Lite. [Register for a webinar](#) on April 29 at noon and learn how this solution can help municipalities with under 20,000 people cross the digital divide.

In person or online, AMO 2020 will connect municipal leaders to the information they need most. Planning is well underway for August 16-19 in Ottawa, but we are also planning for a contingency approach that would transform AMO 2020 into a virtual conference if need be. An update will be provided to AMO members soon. Contact [Poonam Ruparelia](#) with questions. Visit the AMO [website](#) for updates, details and registration information.

Recognizing how quickly things are changing in the environment of COVID-19, and in appreciation of our valued exhibitors, AMO is extending the exhibitor cancellation deadline. Exhibitor information can be [found here](#).

Over the past few weeks, AMO and Redbrick Communications have been supporting members on communications through COVID19. Additional resources are now available for a nominal fee through AMO's Municipal Education Portal. [Register now](#).

LAS

LAS's Home and Auto Insurance Program partner, Cowan Group, keeps you updated with the [latest information](#) on personal insurance news and resources related to COVID19.

Just because we're social distancing doesn't mean we can't learn! In partnership with Stephen Dixon (TdS Dixon), LAS still offers the [same great energy workshops](#) you've come to expect, now ONLINE! These can even include virtual energy hunts! Up to 75% incentive available through the IESO. Contact [Christian Tham](#) to discover the possibilities!

We are working with our Group Buying partner, Grainger, to ensure PPE is available to all municipalities. Be sure to check out our new [COVID-19 Update Page](#) for this and other important information from our Group Buying vendors. [Contact us](#) for more information.

Webinar April 29 @ 11am –Gasboy/Gilbarco, one of many [Municipal Group Buying Program](#) vendors, is hosting a webinar on Fuel Reconciliation and Fuel Audits using Gasboy/Ekos. Interested? [Contact us](#) for registration information.

Webinar April 30 @ 10am – Our Procurement webinar has been rescheduled to next week: Group buying saves time and money, though there are a number of rules that need to be followed. Grab a coffee and join us to learn all about the procurement for our popular [Municipal Group Buying Program](#). [Register here](#).

ONE Investment

Two important webinars hosted by ONE, in conjunction with our external investment managers, discuss in detail how COVID-19 has impacted the ONE Legal List Portfolios. To watch, click [ONE Investment website](#) or [ONE YouTube channel](#).

Municipal Wire

The Township of Limerick [resolution](#) encourages all organizations within the mandate of Ontario municipalities to lower their respective flags to half mast in honour of those who have been lost and to support the residents of Colchester County.

About AMO

AMO is a non-profit organization representing almost all of Ontario's 444 municipal governments. AMO supports strong and effective municipal government in Ontario and promotes the value of municipal government as a vital and essential component of Ontario's and Canada's political system. Follow [@AMOPolicy](#) on Twitter!

AMO Contacts

[AMO Watch File](#) Tel: 416.971.9856

[Conferences/Events](#)

[Policy and Funding Programs](#)

[LAS Local Authority Services](#)

[MEPCO Municipal Employer Pension Centre of Ontario](#)

[ONE Investment](#)

[Media Inquiries](#) Tel: 416.729.5425

[Municipal Wire, Career/Employment and Council Resolution Distributions](#)

Administration

Office of the Regional Clerk

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 1042, Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Telephone: 905-685-4225 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215 Fax: 905-687-4977

www.niagararegion.ca**Sub-Item 3**

April 24, 2020

Council Session CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020**LOCAL AREA MUNICIPALITIES****SENT ELECTRONICALLY**

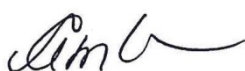
RE: Report CSD 8-2020 Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units
Minute Item 9.2 CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020

Regional Council, at its meeting held on April 23, 2020, passed the following resolution:

That Report CSD 8-2020, dated April 23, 2020, respecting Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units, **BE RECEIVED** and **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

A copy of Report CSD 8-2020 is attached for your information.

Yours truly,



Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

CLK-C 2020-142

cc: T. Harrison, Commissioner, Corporate Services
 H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management and Planning/Deputy Treasurer
 M. Murphy, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy
 R. Fleming, Senior Revenue and Tax Analyst
 K. Beach, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, Corporate Services

Subject: Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, April 23, 2020

Recommendations

1. That report CSD 8-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information.
2. That a copy of Report CSD 8-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities.

Key Facts

- This report is to provide Regional Council with additional information regarding a St. Catharines City Council motion on implementing an optional tax on vacant residential units (“vacant homes tax”).
- Only the units classified in the residential property class (primarily RT) are eligible for a vacant property tax under the Municipal Act.
- The intent of the vacant homes tax is to encourage owners of residential units to sell or rent out secondary residences.
- The vacant homes tax does not apply to vacant residential land (i.e., no structure) nor does it apply to properties that would be included in multi-residential or non-residential property tax classes.
- Region staff consulted Area Treasurers on the vacant homes tax as they are the tax billing authority and would have much of the information required to estimate vacant unit.
- Most Area Treasurers expressed concerns with internal capacity to implement the optional tax as it would require resources to estimate the number of units that would potentially be subject to the vacant homes tax.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications of this report as it is for information only. If Council were to consider proceeding further with considering an optional vacant homes tax, it could not take effect until the 2021 taxation year at the earliest. If implemented any net revenue generated from the tax could be reinvested into affordable housing initiatives similar to the approach adopted by Vancouver and considered by Toronto.

However, it should be noted that the cost of implementation and administration may exceed the projected revenue. At this time, there is not enough information to provide an accurate estimate of projected costs or revenue.

Analysis

St. Catharines Motion Re: Vacant Homes Tax

The Council of the City of St. Catharines, at its meeting held on August 12, 2019, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS St. Catharines currently has a years-long waiting list for social housing, extremely low apartment vacancy rates, rising apartment costs, a need for more shelter spaces and transitional housing, and a residential real estate market that has seen house values grow exponentially in a short period of time; and

WHEREAS these factors combined have resulted in St. Catharines becoming an unaffordable place to live for many, particularly those on fixed incomes, social assistance and those who earn less than the living wage; and

WHEREAS jurisdictions such as British Columbia and Vancouver have successfully implemented vacant property taxes to not only collect more revenue for social housing projects, but also to encourage real estate speculators to rent out vacant homes; and

WHEREAS the Regional Municipality of Niagara has the authority to implement a vacant home tax in St. Catharines (and all other lower-tier municipalities within Niagara);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines endorse the concept of a vacant home tax and vacant residential land tax and call upon the Niagara Region to investigate a vacant home tax that specifically:

- Addresses vacant residential units in St. Catharines*
- Encourages turning empty St. Catharines homes into good housing for people*
- Raises revenue that will directly support affordable housing in St. Catharines*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be circulated to the Office of the City Clerk at the Niagara Region, Niagara Region Housing, the local area municipalities and the City of St. Catharines City Treasurer / Director of Financial Management Services and the Director of Planning and Building Services. FORTHWITH

The implementation of a vacant homes tax is an upper-tier decision, which is consistent with other areas of tax policy, and promotes a regional approach to the imposition of a tax on vacant residential units. Staff consulted with the Province and it should be noted that the legislation does not preclude the Region from implementing in select municipalities based on need in the individual communities.

Overview of Ontario Vacant Home Legislation

In order to provide Council with background on the vacant homes tax, staff compiled information based on an analysis of existing legislation as well as information obtained from the Regional contact with Ontario's Ministry of Finance:

- The vacant homes tax can only be imposed once approved to do so via a Regulation of the Province.
- Once a municipality is designated by the Province for eligibility for implementing the tax, a by-law must be passed in the year to which it relates;
- The tax is to be based on the assessed value (as determined under the Assessment Act) of vacant residential units (similar to general property taxation).
- Eligible properties under the existing legislation are those that are classified in the residential property class only and excludes multi-residential and non-residential tax classes.
- A vacant homes tax by-law must satisfy the following criteria:
 - It must state the tax rate; and
 - It must state the conditions of vacancy that, if met, make a unit subject to the tax.
- A by-law may provide for such matters as Council considers appropriate, including,
 - Exemptions from the tax;
 - Rebates of tax;
 - Audit and inspection powers; and
 - Establishment and use of dispute resolution mechanisms.
- The Minister of Finance has the authority may make regulations prescribing such matters as the Minister considers necessary or desirable, including:

- Designating municipalities to which this the vacant homes tax could apply;
- Prescribing conditions and limits with respect to the imposition of a tax;
- Prescribing persons and entities who are not subject to a tax;
- Defining a “vacant unit”;
- Governing the collection of a tax;
- Governing dispute resolution.

To date, no municipality in Ontario has utilized the authority given by the Province to implement a vacant homes tax. The City of Toronto has been considering the need and ability to implement a vacant homes tax since 2017 but the results of the review have not been finalized.

Review of Other Municipalities

Region staff have conducted a review of both the Vancouver and Toronto vacant homes tax reports and implementation plans. Both Vancouver and Toronto utilized aggregated/anonymized water and hydro meter data to estimate the quantity of vacant residential units in each city which has been presented below in Table 1. An estimate of vacant homes in Niagara has also been included in Table 1 based on information received from a few Area Municipalities as the Region does not have access to water and hydro billing data as both functions are completed by the Area Municipalities or the local electricity authorities. Due to privacy concerns, however, Vancouver was not able to utilize water or hydro data for the purposes of billing for the vacant homes tax. This limitation experienced by Vancouver would also be present in Niagara as well.

Table 1: Estimated Vacant Residential Units

Municipality	Total Count of Units	Estimated Vacant Units	% of Total
Toronto	752,000	15,000-28,000	2-4%
Vancouver	225,000	10,000	4%
Niagara	177,000*	1,757**	1%

* Estimated count of residential units only (exclude multi-residential)

** 76% are seasonal residences (1,341 units)

It is important to note, that only four municipalities were able to provide estimates on vacant residential units. The total residential units in these four municipalities is approximately 75 thousand (42%) of the 177 thousand residential units in Niagara. One municipality stated that they did not have any vacant units that could be identified. Two municipalities estimated minimal vacant residential units. One municipality identified a

significant number of vacant units which were primarily seasonal properties which were estimated to be vacant for approximately 6 months during offseason periods.

Other Implementation Considerations

If a vacant homes tax was to be implemented, a framework would need to be developed with some of the below administrative requirements in mind:

- Public consultation and engagement approach and/or requirements prior to implementation;
- How would vacant homes be identified (mandatory declaration, self declaration, complaint based);
- Determining if the Region or Area Municipalities would administer the program (which would include billing, collections, appeals, etc.) – note that the Region does not currently have taxpayer billing capabilities;
- Determining the appropriate allocation of any net revenues or expense from the tax between Regional service areas/programs or between Region and Area Municipalities;
- Creating a complaint resolution process including audit or enforcement powers; and
- Determining an appropriate reporting approach to understand the effects (i.e., benefits or drawbacks) that the vacant homes tax will have on affordable housing.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives are being presented as this report is for information only. Should Council direct staff complete a more fulsome review (including additional engagement with the public and Area Municipalities) a future report to Council would be required.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

A vacant homes tax for Niagara may assist with retaining, protecting and increasing the supply of affordable housing stock to provide a broad range of housing to meet the needs of the community. This would only apply, however, if the vacant homes tax achieved the desired outcome of having property owners rent available units or in the event that revenues after administration costs were reallocated to affordable housing initiatives.

Other Pertinent Reports

None.

Prepared by:

Rob Fleming, MBA
Senior Tax & Revenue Analyst
Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting, Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Margaret Murphy, Associate Director, Budget Planning & Strategy, and reviewed by Helen Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning.

Appendices

Appendix 1	City of St. Catharines Council Motion Re: Vacant Home Tax
Appendix 2	Municipal Act – Optional Tax on Vacant Residential Units

August 26, 2019

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk Niagara Region
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, P.O. Box 1042 Thorold, ON
L2V 4T7

Sent Via Email:
Ann-Marie.Norio@niagararegion.ca

Re: Vacant Home Tax

Dear Ms. Norio,

Please be advised that the Council of the City of St. Catharines, at its meeting held on August 12, 2019, passed the following motion:

WHEREAS St. Catharines currently has a years-long waiting list for social housing, extremely low apartment vacancy rates, rising apartment costs, a need for more shelter spaces and transitional housing, and a residential real estate market that has seen house values grow exponentially in a short period of time; and

WHEREAS these factors combined have resulted in St. Catharines becoming an unaffordable place to live for many, particularly those on fixed incomes, social assistance and those who earn less than the living wage; and

WHEREAS jurisdictions such as British Columbia and Vancouver have successfully implemented vacant property taxes to not only collect more revenue for social housing projects, but also to encourage real estate speculators to rent out vacant homes; and

WHEREAS the Regional Municipality of Niagara has the authority to implement a vacant home tax in St. Catharines (and all other lower-tier municipalities within Niagara);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City of St. Catharines endorse the concept of a vacant home tax and vacant residential land tax and call upon the Niagara Region to investigate a vacant home tax that specifically:

- Addresses vacant residential units in St. Catharines
- Encourages turning empty St. Catharines homes into good housing for people
- Raises revenue that will directly support affordable housing in St. Catharines

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution be circulated to the Office of the City Clerk at the Niagara Region, Niagara Region Housing, the local area municipalities and the City of St. Catharines City Treasurer / Director of Financial Management Services and the Director of Planning and Building Services. FORTHWITH

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of the City Clerk at extension 1524.



Bonnie Nistico-Dunk, City Clerk
Legal and Clerks Services, Office of the City Clerk
:kn

PART IX.1

OPTIONAL TAX ON VACANT RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Designated municipality

338.1 The Minister of Finance may, by regulation, designate municipalities to which this Part applies. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Section Amendments with date in force (d/m/y)

Power to impose tax, vacant residential units

338.2 (1) In addition to taxes imposed under Part VIII, a designated municipality may, by by-law passed in the year to which it relates, impose a tax in the municipality on the assessed value, as determined under the *Assessment Act*, of vacant units that are classified in the residential property class and that are taxable under that Act for municipal purposes. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Requirements for by-law

(2) A by-law described in subsection (1) must satisfy the following criteria:

1. It must state the tax rate.
2. It must state the conditions of vacancy that, if met, make a unit subject to the tax. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Other contents of by-law

(3) A by-law described in subsection (1) may provide for such matters as the council of the municipality considers appropriate, including,

- (a) exemptions from the tax;
- (b) rebates of tax;
- (c) audit and inspection powers; and
- (d) except as otherwise provided for in the regulations, the establishment and use of dispute resolution mechanisms. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Section Amendments with date in force (d/m/y)

Regulations re: power to impose tax

338.3 (1) The Minister of Finance may make regulations prescribing such matters as the Minister considers necessary or desirable in relation to this Part, including,

- (a) designating municipalities to which this Part applies;
- (b) prescribing conditions and limits with respect to the imposition of a tax under a by-law made under this Part;
- (c) prescribing persons and entities who are not subject to a tax imposed under this Part;
- (d) defining "vacant unit" for the purposes of this Part;
- (e) governing the collection of a tax imposed under this Part;
- (f) prescribing provisions of this Act that apply or do not apply for the purposes of this Part and providing for such modifications to those provisions as the Minister considers appropriate;
- (g) governing the manner for apportioning an assessment that is attributable to vacant units;
- (h) governing dispute resolution. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Same

(2) On the recommendation of the Minister of Finance, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations defining any word or expression used in this Part. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Retroactive

(3) A regulation under this section may be retroactive to a date not earlier than January 1 of the year in which the regulation is made. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Conflicts

(4) In the event of a conflict between a regulation made under this section and a provision of any Act or regulation, the regulation made under this section prevails. 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

Section Amendments with date in force (d/m/y)**Effect re: Part VIII**

338.4 This Part does not limit the authority of a municipality under Part VIII (Municipal Taxation). 2017, c. 8, Sched. 19, s. 5.

**Administration**

Office of the Regional Clerk

1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way, PO Box 1042, Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Telephone: 905-685-4225 Toll-free: 1-800-263-7215 Fax: 905-687-4977

www.niagararegion.ca

April 24, 2020

Council Session CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020***DISTRIBUTION LIST******SENT ELECTRONICALLY***

**RE: Report CSD 30-2020 COVID-19 Preliminary Overview of Financial Impacts
Minute Item 9.1.1 CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020**

Regional Council, at its meeting held on April 23, 2020, passed the following resolution:

That Report CSD 30-2020, dated April 23, 2020, respecting COVID-19 Preliminary Overview of Financial Impacts, **BE RECEIVED** and the following recommendations **BE APPROVED**:

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to lobby provincial and federal levels of government for financial assistance to support Niagara Region's COVID-19 emergency response;
2. That Niagara Region **BE DIRECTED** to participate in efforts with other municipalities seeking financial support from senior levels of government for the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and
3. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to forward this report to local Members of Parliament, local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities Ontario and the Local Area Municipalities.

A copy of Report CSD 30-2020 is attached for your information.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann-Marie".

Ann-Marie Norio

Regional Clerk

CLK-C 2020-140

Distribution List:

D. Allison, MP, Niagara West
C. Bittle, MP, St. Catharines
T. Baldinelli, MP, Niagara Falls
V. Badawey, MP, Niagara Centre
S. Oosterhoff, MPP, Niagara West
J. Stevens, MPP, St. Catharines
W. Gates, MPP, Niagara Falls
J. Burch, MPP, Niagara Centre
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Local Area Municipalities
T. Harrison, Commissioner, Corporate Services
H. Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management and Planning/Deputy Treasurer
M. Steele, Associate Director, Reporting and Analysis
K. Beach, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, Corporate Services

Subject: COVID-19 Preliminary Overview of Financial Impacts

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, April 23, 2020

Recommendations

1. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to lobby provincial and federal levels of government for financial assistance to support Niagara Region's COVID-19 emergency response; and
2. That Niagara Region **BE DIRECTED** to participate in efforts with other municipalities seeking financial support from senior levels of government for the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; and
3. That the Regional Clerk **BE DIRECTED** to forward this report to local MPs, local MPPs, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities Ontario.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide an early indication of the potential financial impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on the Niagara Region. Estimates and assumptions in this report are fluid and changing on a weekly basis.
- Staff expect that a budget adjustment related to the changes in services, incremental cost and lost revenue associated with the COVID-19 emergency response will be required. At this time, full impacts are unknown and staff will bring back a proposed budget adjustment for Council approval when more clarity around funding sources and full cost is available.
- The Region's preliminary estimate of the net cost of COVID-19 pandemic before funding announcements up to June 30, 2020 is \$9.3 million.
- Incremental costs and lost revenue estimates total \$9.6 million and may be offset by identified cost savings and mitigations of \$5.7 million for a current net budget impact \$3.9 million. The remaining \$5.4 million cost relates to already budgeted resources unavailable to work or redeployed to directly support the emergency response.
- The Region has received confirmed funding announcement of \$4.2 million in specific areas. Review of the eligible cost criteria for this funding is underway and restrictions do apply. Staff are looking for ways to fully leverage this funding and it is expected to support some costs that occur after our June 30, 2020 cost projection above.

Financial Considerations

Given the amount of uncertainty around timelines and availability of funding sources, it is difficult at this time to quantify the full impact of individual items as well as the overall impact to the Region. That being said, staff are of the preliminary view that ultimately the pandemic will result in a 2020 operating shortfall at year-end. Discussions have commenced with respect to opportunities for cost savings across operating and capital budgets. In addition, there are certain actions that the Region could take to offset a shortfall including use of the Taxpayer Relief Reserve. Staff will provide updates to Council with respect to year-end projections and any action that may be required as more details become known.

As of December 31, 2019 the Taxpayer Relief Reserve balance was \$23.8 million which is 4.2% of gross budgeted expenditures excluding agency boards and commissions (our minimum reserve target per the reserve policy is 10% of gross budgeted operating expenses or \$56 million at December 31, 2019).

In addition, staff recommend exploring all opportunities for financial assistance from senior levels of government and will provide updates to Council on any actions being undertaken by Provincial and Federal governments as they are announced. The Province and Federal governments have delayed the release of their respective 2020/21 budgets.

Analysis

Staff have been monitoring and assessing the potential financial impacts to the Region since the onset of the pandemic. Only two months after approving the 2020 Regional budget, a variety of operating expenditures and revenues are now expected to be impacted. While it is still too early to fully understand and quantify all of the potential impacts, some preliminary projections have been made.

To facilitate this analysis, projected costs and savings related to the pandemic have been made up to June 30, 2020

The Region has categorized impacts into 4 high-level categories

1. **Total costs supported by our approved base budget.** This category represents cost of resources unavailable to work or redeployed from their main work functions to directly support the emergency response. While the Region does have an established base budget to support these expenditures, it is important to note that the work these resources are performing during the emergency is not as originally contemplated in the base budget. This may result in delays in work plans and/or backlogs after the emergency is complete.

2. **Costs incremental to base budget.** This category represents all incremental costs over and above the approved 2020 base budget directly related to supporting the emergency.
3. **Lost revenue.** This category represents the loss of revenue that had been planned to fund the 2020 budget.
4. **Cost savings and mitigations.** This category represents identified cost savings the Region may expect to realize as a result of COVID-19 measures and managing the emergency.

The following is a summary of the financial impacts.

	Spent & Committed As of Date	Spent & committed	Projected to June 30	Total
Costs supported by our approved base budget				
EOC Dedicated Resources ¹	09-Apr	\$ 615,424	\$ 1,994,740	\$ 2,610,164
Lost Productivity – Staff Unable to Work ²	04-Apr	443,137	1,831,633	2,274,770
Redeployed Resources ³	04-Apr	86,149	356,083	442,232
Total costs supported by our approved base budget		1,144,710	4,182,456	5,327,166
Costs incremental to base budget				
Additional labour related costs ⁴	04-Apr	748,294	3,092,949	3,841,243
Purchases made or committed ⁵	09-Apr	1,770,942	2,104,081	3,875,023
Total costs incremental to base budget		2,519,236	5,197,030	7,716,266
Lost Revenue ⁶		-	1,914,708	1,914,708
Cost savings/mitigations ⁷		-	(5,673,142)	(5,673,142)
Net cost impact before funding announcements		\$ 3,663,946	\$ 5,621,052	\$ 9,284,998

¹ Assumes 100% of salary and benefit costs to any staff member fully activated in the Regional EOC, Public Health EOC, and EMS EOC.

² Staff unable to work due to self-isolation, needing to care for family members or being sick directly associated with COVID-19.

³ Currently only quantified for resources redeployed to the public health call centre. Redeployment in other areas in the organization has started to occur and will be quantified in the future.

⁴ Additional salary, benefits and overtime costs related to managing the emergency.

⁵ Additional purchase commitments made to directly support the emergency (e.g. cleaning supplies and services, personal protective equipment, emergency shelter, screening, advertising).

⁶ Estimated loss of expected revenue sources (e.g. rental income on owned units, transit fare revenue, business licensing revenue, development applications, parental fees, POA infraction revenue).

⁷ Estimated cost savings and mitigations (e.g. gapping of vacant positions, reduced non-emergency repair work, travel costs, transit service costs, electricity, cancelled events).

Impacts by department can be found in Appendix 2. Some of the more significant incremental costs and lost revenue items included in the estimate are outlined below:

- **Niagara Regional Transit:** fare revenue reduction due to reduced ridership and cancellation of Niagara College on-campus spring/summer classes;
- **POA Court:** Reduced POA revenue due to lower ticket volumes and court closure, with some related expenditure savings offsets;
- **Public Health:** Increased staffing and overtime, supplies (including personal protective equipment) and cleaning costs; additional staff to support higher call volumes;
- **Paramedic Services:** Increased staffing, overtime, supplies (including personal protective equipment), and cleaning;
- **Housing:** Increased cleaning costs in common spaces; lower tenant income levels would result in higher rent subsidies at community housing units and lower rent payments at NRH units;
- **Homelessness programs:** Increased costs to support homelessness agencies, housing allowances and expenses relating to the rent, staffing, cleaning, personal protective equipment and food for a self-isolation center;
- **Children's Services:** Loss of parent fee revenue due to closure of regionally operated child care centres;
- **Seniors' Services:** Increased cleaning, staffing, security and personal protective equipment costs; and
- **Technology Services:** Additional costs relating to increased licenses to ensure sufficient capacity for staff working remotely.

Other estimated savings across multiple services and departments include:

- **Labour related savings:** not filling non-essential vacant positions.
- **Fuel:** Short/medium term savings due to significant drop in world oil and local fuel prices.
- **Niagara Regional Transit/Niagara Specialized Transit:** reduction in daily service schedules resulting from decreased demand will result in significant savings;

-
- **Non-emergency maintenance work:** limiting work at NRH owned units to emergencies and move-outs;
 - **Operational savings:** reduced travel, meeting expenses, and conferences due to travel restrictions and cancelled events.

COVID-19 is causing an unprecedented amount of uncertainty and volatility in financial markets. Federal governments around the world are responding through both monetary policy (e.g. through the lowering of interest rates) and fiscal policy (e.g. by introducing spending and tax relief measures for residents and businesses). The impact of these measures is not yet known and as a result there is the possibility of major longer term impacts depending on the duration and severity of the pause in economic activity. The following items have been identified as potential costs or loss revenues, but have not been quantified in the analysis above due to uncertainty around them.

- **Cost of borrowing:** a lower cost of borrowing for planned 2020 debenture issues would lower the amount of debt servicing costs required in the 2021 budget;
- **Investment returns:** a lower investment rate would impact 2020 interest income and interest allocations to reserves. Also any cash flow challenges experienced as identified and discussed in CSD 31-2020 could further reduce interest income;
- **Property taxes:** the economic disruption could lead to a material increase in tax write-offs and lower net assessment growth for 2020 and into 2021;
- **Building Activity:** if construction activity is materially reduced, there would be a lower amount of supplementary taxes collected and lower assessment growth during the year and in future years. This would also lead to a reduced level of development charge collections, potentially impacting the Region's ability to fund growth-related capital projects, and potentially a reduction in development charge exemption costs;
- **Additional support to housing providers:** the economic disruption could lead to housing providers seeking additional support from NRH;
- **Recycling end markets:** the economic disruption could lead to volatility in prices for the sale of recyclables in waste management; and
- **Provincial gas tax:** the economic disruption could impact Niagara Regions gas tax allocation in 2021 and 2022 if we experience a greater decrease in ridership relative to other municipalities or if the total provincial gas tax collected declines due to less gas purchases.

In addition to the above, the Region is currently reviewing all capital projects and determining if any project deferrals are appropriate. It is important to note that deferring capital projects does not result in direct savings that could be used to mitigate the current COVID-19 financial impacts. Most capital projects are funded from previous contributions to reserves or debt issuance. The deferral of capital projects will strengthen the Region's cash flow position as further discussed in CSD 31-2020.

Funding announcements

The Region has also received announcements for three confirmed funding sources identified below. Review of the eligible cost criteria with this funding is underway and restrictions do apply. The team is looking for ways to fully leverage this funding and it is expected to support some costs that occur after our June 30, 2020 cost projection period identified above.

Description	Funding Agency	Amount
Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative *	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	\$2,408,100
Reaching Home Funding *	Employment and Social Development Canada	1,253,271
Long-term Care Emergency Funding	Ministry of Long-term Care	600,000
		<u>\$4,261,371</u>
* Incremental funding to cover full fiscal year of April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021		

While no formal funding announcements have been made, the Province has indicated that it plans to work with municipalities to support Children's Service operations to minimize shortfalls.

Ontario Works also expects to see a substantial increase in subsidy claim payments to Ontario Works clients based on Provincial announcements. This increase will be directly offset by additional funding from the Province.

Additionally the Province has announced it plans to defer further reductions to the public health funding formula in 2021.

Budget Implications

As previously mentioned the full magnitude of the financial implications for the COVID-19 emergency on the Niagara Region's 2020 budget is not yet known. With that said, staff do expect the impact will require a gross budget adjustment that will exceed \$1 million requiring Council approval.

In order to avoid multiple adjustments and approvals, staff recommend that a budget adjustment will be completed once impacts, including funding announcements, are more clearly understood.

Should a funding shortfall materialize after all additional funding and cost mitigation strategies have been exhausted, Council could consider:

- An in-year budget amendment in accordance with the Budget Control Bylaw to draw on the Taxpayer Relief Reserve. This would require giving public notice.
- Making a recommendation through the year-end transfer report as per the Operating Surplus/Deficit Policy.

The decision on which approach would be recommended by staff will depend on the timing and magnitude of the required adjustment. Staff hope to be able to more fully outline the potential adjustment with the completion of the Q2 financial update report.

Staff will continue to provide Council with financial impact information in the weekly COVID-19 memo and will report back with a formal report outlining the budget adjustment prior to its completion.

Procurement Process

The Region has leveraged its existing Procurement By-law where appropriate to secure goods and services that are critical to our response to COVID-19. These purchases have utilized the special circumstance provision, which provides for both:

- an event that is exceptional or could not be foreseen and is likely to pose a threat to the health, safety or welfare of the public
- an emergency as defined in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9, as amended, or any successor legislation thereto

At the time of writing this report, the Region has executed 12 special circumstance purchases over \$10,000 for a total value of \$1.3 million. These purchase consist mainly of personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies/services, emergency shelter, and screening services. Staff will continue to rely on the special circumstance provisions in the procurement by-law on an as-required basis and report back to Council as needed.

Alternatives Reviewed

Staff are working with both the area municipality treasurers within Niagara Region and with colleagues across the province (through the Ontario Regional and Single-Tier Treasurers group) to share ideas and strategies to respond to the financial and operational impacts of this pandemic.

Staff will also work with Standard and Poor's (who provide the Region's credit rating) to discuss potential implications on the ratings of the municipal sector as a whole across the country.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

Supporting the COVID-19 emergency response directly supports Council's strategic priority of a Healthy and Vibrant Community.

Other Pertinent Reports

CSD-31 2020 Concessions to Local Area Municipalities regarding Taxes and Water Wastewater Billings

Prepared by:

Melanie Steele, MBA CPA CA
Associate Director, Reporting & Analysis
Corporate Services

Recommended by:

Todd Harrison, CPA, CMA
Commissioner/Treasurer
Corporate Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with regional departments and EOC members, and reviewed by Helen Chamberlain, Director, Financial Management & Planning/Deputy Treasurer.

Appendices

Appendix 1 COVID-19 Financial Impact by Department

Appendix 1 - COVID-19 Financial Impact by Department

	Total costs supported by our approved base budget	Total costs incremental to base budget	Lost Revenue	Cost savings & mitigations	Net cost/(savings) impact before funding announcements
Corporate Administration	\$ 395,761	\$ 134,827	\$ -	\$ (199,943)	\$ 330,645
Corporate Services	466,285	389,735	166,900	(517,785)	505,135
Court Services	36,970	3,431	196,875	(103,914)	133,362
Planning	87,909	8,055	120,000	(109,207)	106,757
Niagara Regional Housing	-	86,055	600,000	(844,065)	(158,010)
Niagara Regional Police Service *	71,674	110,471	-	-	182,145
Transportation	177,362	92,361	604,933	(3,249,355)	(2,374,699)
Public Health					-
Public Health	1,405,563	1,371,691	-	-	2,777,254
Emergency Medical Services	1,384,672	1,419,631	26,000	(62,000)	2,768,303
Sub-total Public Health	2,790,235	2,791,322	26,000	(62,000)	5,545,557
Community Services					-
Childrens Services	133,360	79,939	200,000	-	413,299
Seniors Services	783,506	2,707,961	-	-	3,491,467
Social Assistance & Employment Opportuniti	126,836	5,453	-	-	132,289
Homelessness Services	18,099	1,142,788	-	-	1,160,887
Sub-total Community Services	1,061,801	3,936,141	200,000	-	5,197,942
Total Levy Supported	5,087,997	7,552,398	1,914,708	(5,086,269)	9,468,834
Waste Management	211,669	105,429	-	(63,890)	253,208
Water/Wastewater	27,500	58,439	-	(522,983)	(437,044)
Total Rate Supported	239,169	163,868	-	(586,873)	(183,836)
Total	\$ 5,327,166	\$ 7,716,266	\$ 1,914,708	\$ (5,673,142)	\$ 9,284,998

*NRPS are preparing their own analysis of financial impacts they will be sharing with their board. The only costs included in the analysis above are those the Region is aware of as they are purchase order commitments or actual costs recorded in our financial system or members participating in our EOC.

**Administration**

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April 24, 2020

Council Session CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020***DISTRIBUTION LIST******SENT ELECTRONICALLY***

**RE: Report PDS 19-2020 2019 End of Year Growth Report
Minute Item 9.2 CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020**

Regional Council, at its meeting held on April 23, 2020, passed the following resolution:

That Report PDS 19-2020, dated April 23, 2020, respecting 2019 End of Year Growth Report, **BE RECEIVED** and **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities, the Niagara Conservation Authority, Niagara Home Builders Association, Niagara Industrial Association, and the local Chambers of Commerce and School Boards.

A copy of Report PDS 19-2020 is attached for your information.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ann-Marie".

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk

CLK-C 2020-144

Distribution List:

Local Area Municipalities

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Niagara Home Builders Association

Niagara Industrial Association

M. Balsom, President/CEO, Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce

D. Fabiano, Executive Director, Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce, Port Colborne/Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce, Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce

J. Thomson, Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce

Greater Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce

R. Shelley, Executive Director, Grimsby Chamber of Commerce

D. Potter, Executive Director, West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

J. D'Amico, Chair, Niagara Board of Trade and Commerce
S. Mabee, Niagara District School Board
M. Ladouceur, Conseil scolaire Viamonde
S. Whitwell, Niagara Catholic District School Board
A. Aazouz, Conseil Scolaire de District Catholique Centre-Sud
G. Bowie, Planner, Planning & Development Services
R. Mostacci, Commissioner, Planning and Development Services
N. Oakes, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, Planning and Development Services

Subject: 2019 End Of Year Growth Report

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, April 23, 2020

Recommendations

1. That Report PDS 19-2020 **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That a copy of Report PDS 19-2020 **BE CIRCULATED** to the Local Area Municipalities, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, Niagara Home Builders Association, Niagara Industrial Association, local Chambers of Commerce and School Boards.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to inform Planning and Economic Development Services Committee and Council about growth trends over the past 5 years.
- Niagara Region's population has increased by over 25,000 people since 2015, reaching an estimated total of 479,183 as of July 1, 2019.
- Housing Starts, Completions and Building Permits have all increased since 2015 and show a growing diversification of housing types being built.
- The average sale price of a home in Niagara Region increased 56% from 2015 to 2019, reaching \$444,500 in 2019.
- Over \$5 Billion in building permits were issued since 2015, with 2019 alone reaching nearly \$1.5 Billion.

Financial Considerations

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report. Metrics in this report inform Niagara's financial strategies. Increased residential, commercial and industrial development in Niagara, combined with increasing property assessments, has a direct impact on revenues collected by the Region.

Analysis

The Planning and Development Services department has been producing the annual growth report since 2017. Previous iterations of this report have focused on year-to-year trends throughout the Region. This report focuses on the past 5 years collectively to provide a more comprehensive analysis on growth metrics. This is possible since the Region has been collecting more detailed data over the past 5 years.

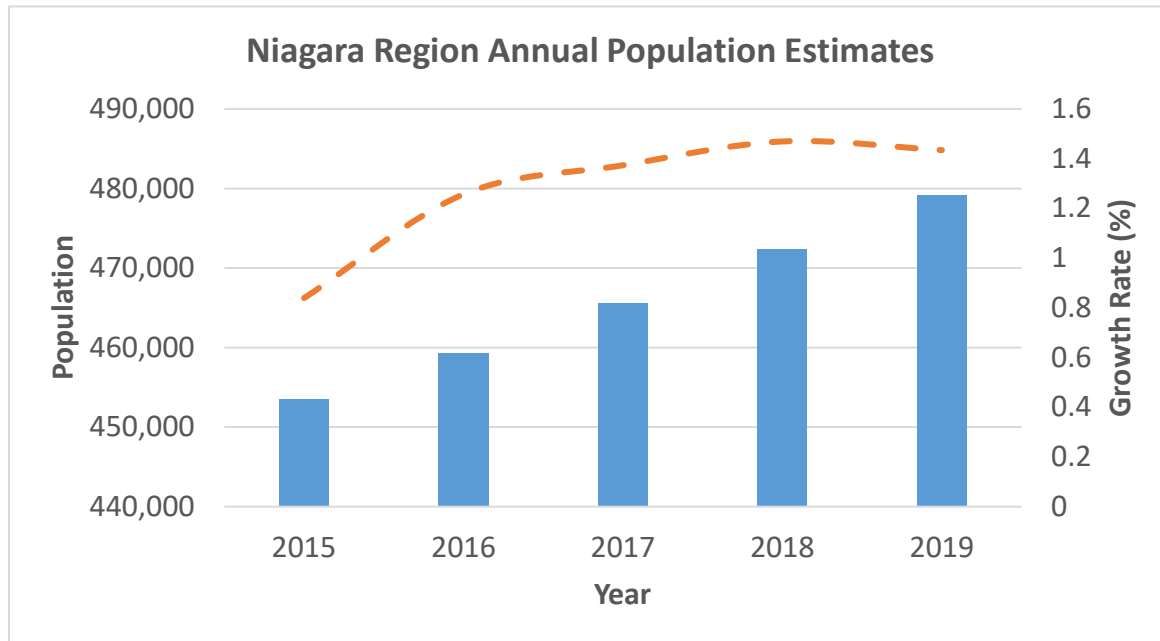
The Region has experienced significant growth across all areas set out in this report. This information is being presented as a means to update Regional Council on how growth has evolved over the last half decade and feeds directly into numerous Council Strategic Priorities.

Population

Pace of Population Growth

Both population and the pace of growth have increased significantly for Niagara since 2016. On average, the Region's population has increased by nearly 6,500 people per year since 2016, nearly double the pace of growth experienced previously between 2011 and 2016. Figure 1 provides a summary of population growth per year since 2015.

Figure 1: Niagara Region Annual Population Estimates



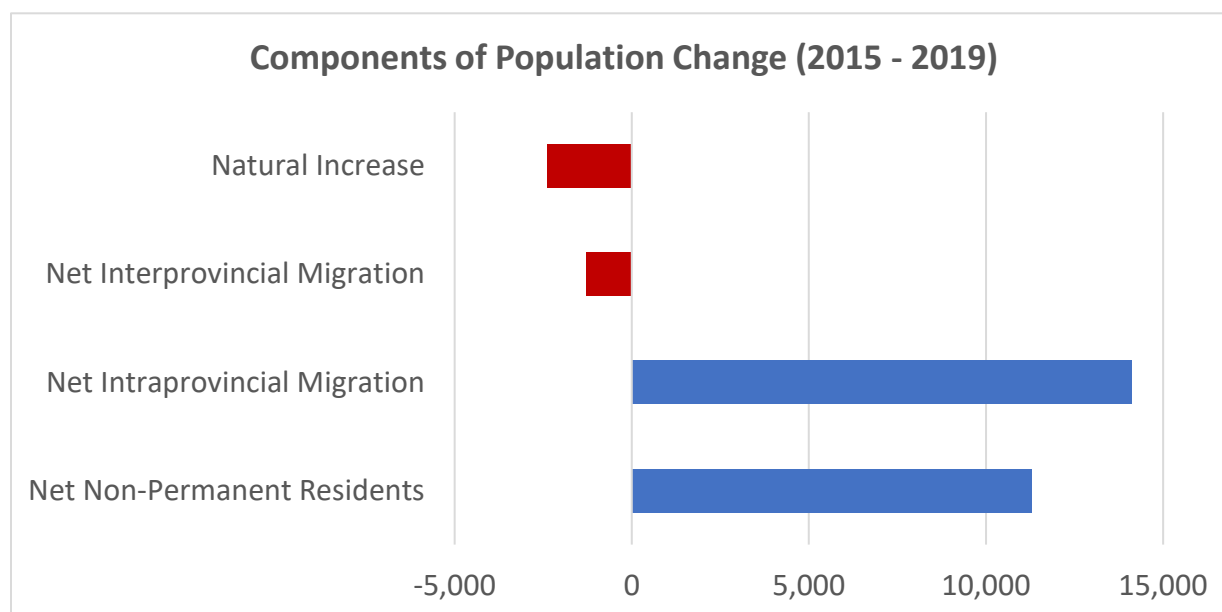
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0140-01

While the pace of population growth may seem substantial, it is only within the last 5 years that the Niagara Region has started to match the pace contemplated in the Provincial population forecasts provided in *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019*. This is a noteworthy development as the Region must plan to achieve the forecasts set out in the *Growth Plan* and base infrastructure and development charges on the same forecasts.

Components of Population Growth

Niagara's population growth continues to be driven entirely by international and intraprovincial migration (highlighted in figure 2).

Figure 2: Components of Population Change (2015 - 2019)



Source: Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0140-01

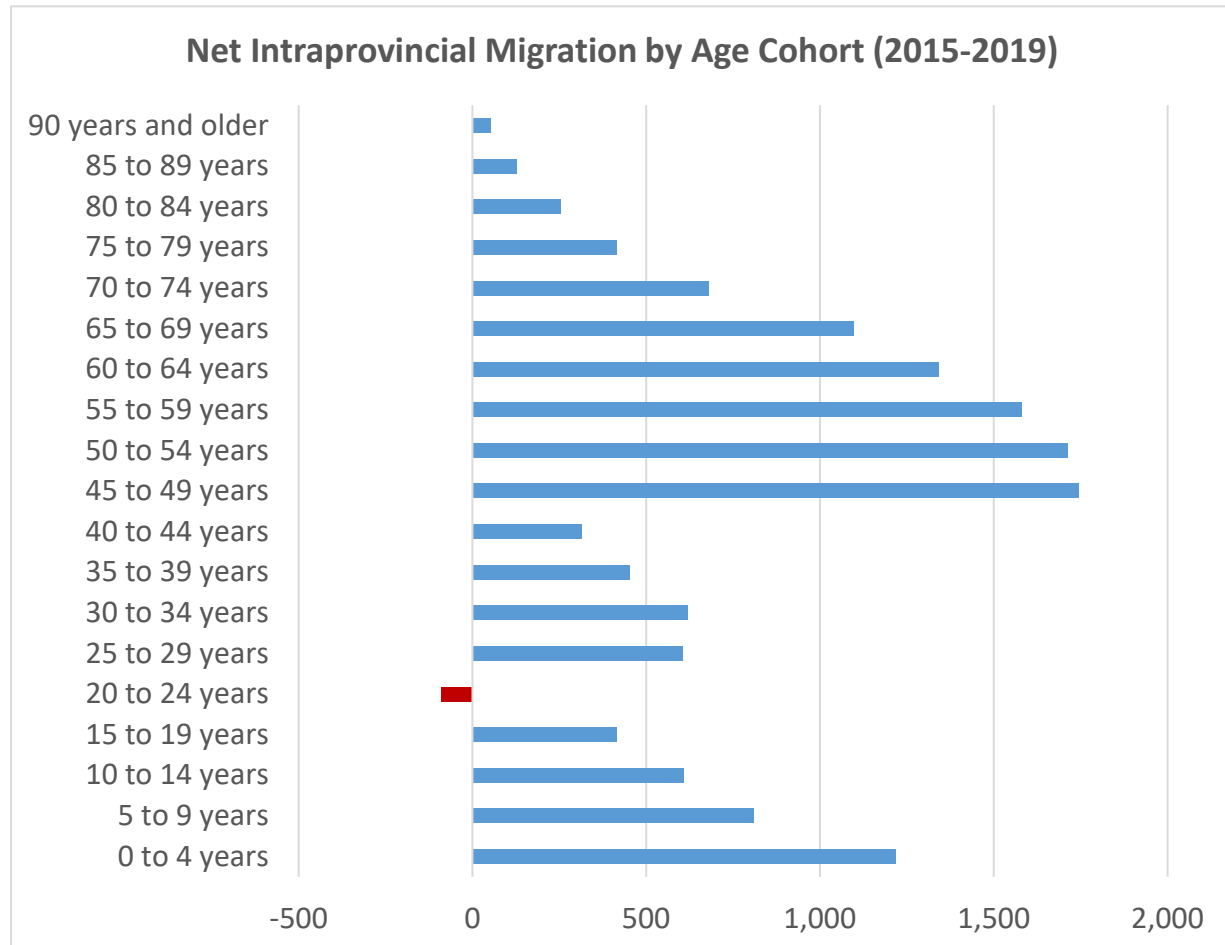
Ontario, in general, has seen a significant increase in international students over the past decade and municipalities with post-secondary institutions have received the greatest share of this growth. Since Niagara Region is home to Brock University and Niagara College, the Region has been able to capitalize on this influx.

From an intraprovincial perspective, there has been an outflow of population from Toronto and Peel Region to more affordable regions in Ontario.¹

Of the population growth Niagara received through intraprovincial migration, the vast majority have been above 44 years of age. As highlighted in PDS 21-2019, the influx of a population that is generally older than the Region's current median age of 45.6 will contribute to an already aging population. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of intraprovincial migration into Niagara Region by age cohort.

¹ Toronto CMA Losing Existing Population of All Ages to More Affordable Regions in Ontario (link): <https://www.ryerson.ca/cur/Blog/blogentry46/>

Figure 3: Net Intraprovincial Migration by Age Cohort (2015 - 2019)



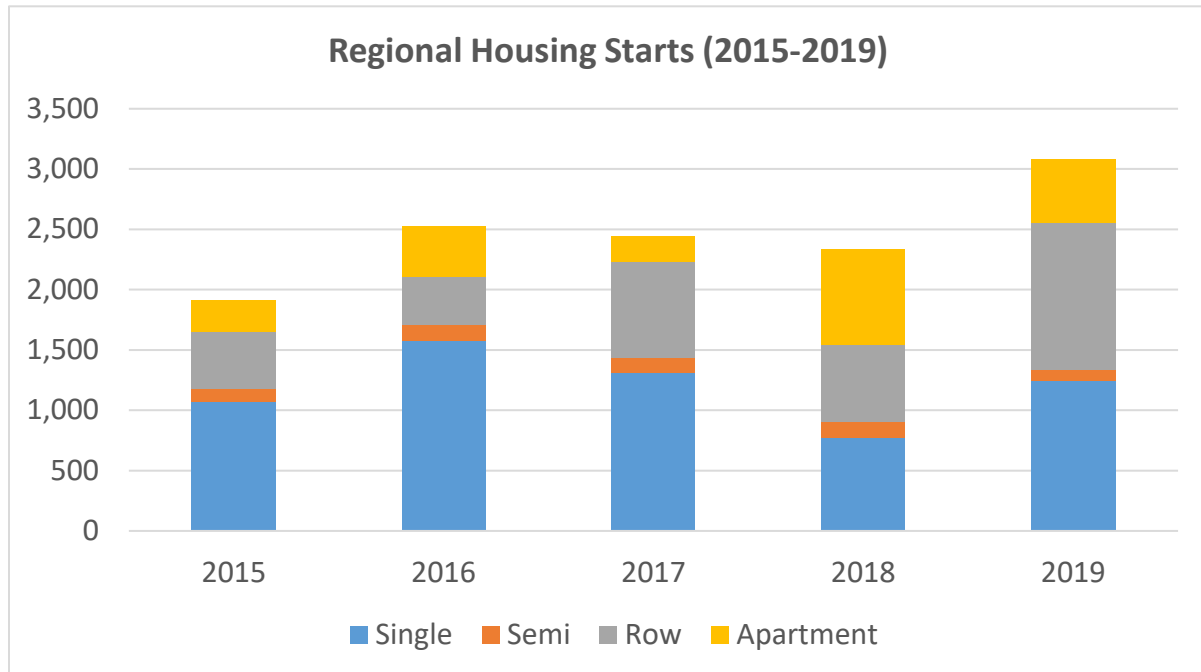
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0140-01

Housing Developments

Housing Starts have steadily risen over the last 5 years. In 2015, there were 1,911 starts; in 2019, there were 3,077 starts (a 61% increase). Within starts, we can also see a shifting dynamic in housing choice as single-detached housing has made up less than 50% of starts over the past 2 years.

A critical factor of meeting population forecasts in the *Growth Plan* and, importantly, achieving affordable housing targets, is Niagara's ability to offer a wider range of housing options for residents. Figure 4 provides an overview of housing starts per year by housing type.

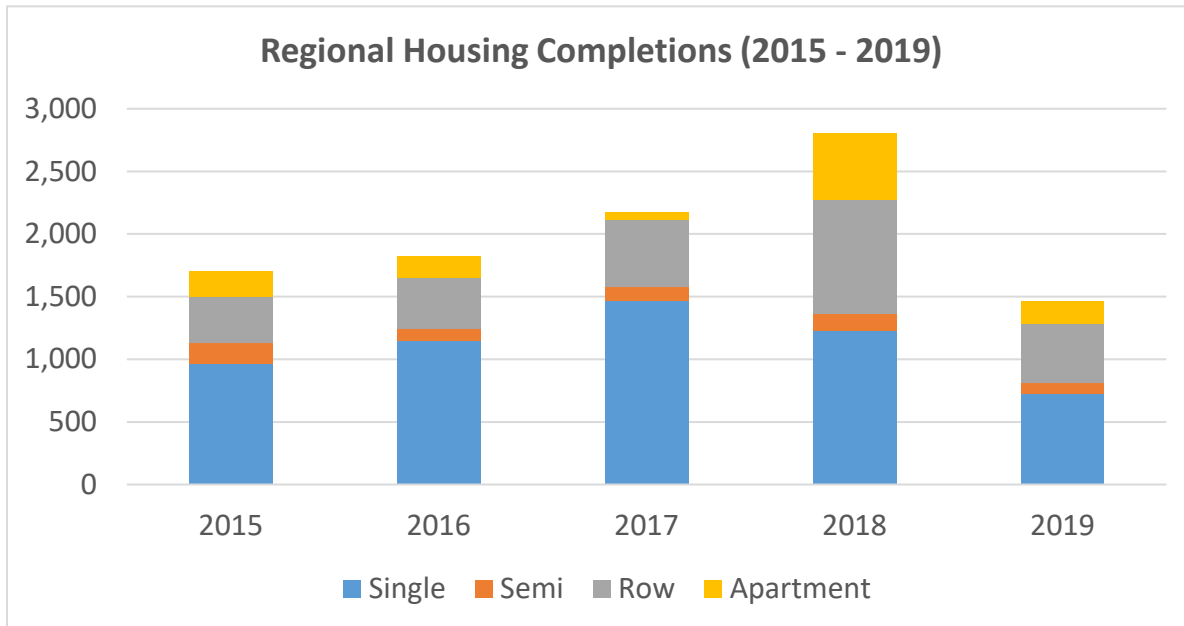
Figure 4: Regional Housing Starts (2015 - 2019)



Source: CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal

Housing completions steadily increased from 2015 to 2018 before dropping over 50% in 2019. The decline in housing completions is linked to the changing mix of housing starts as apartment developments take considerable more time to complete than single-detached and row/townhouse developments. It is anticipated that housing completions rebound in 2020 as starts that are currently under construction are complete. Figure 5 provides an overview of housing completions between 2015 and 2019.

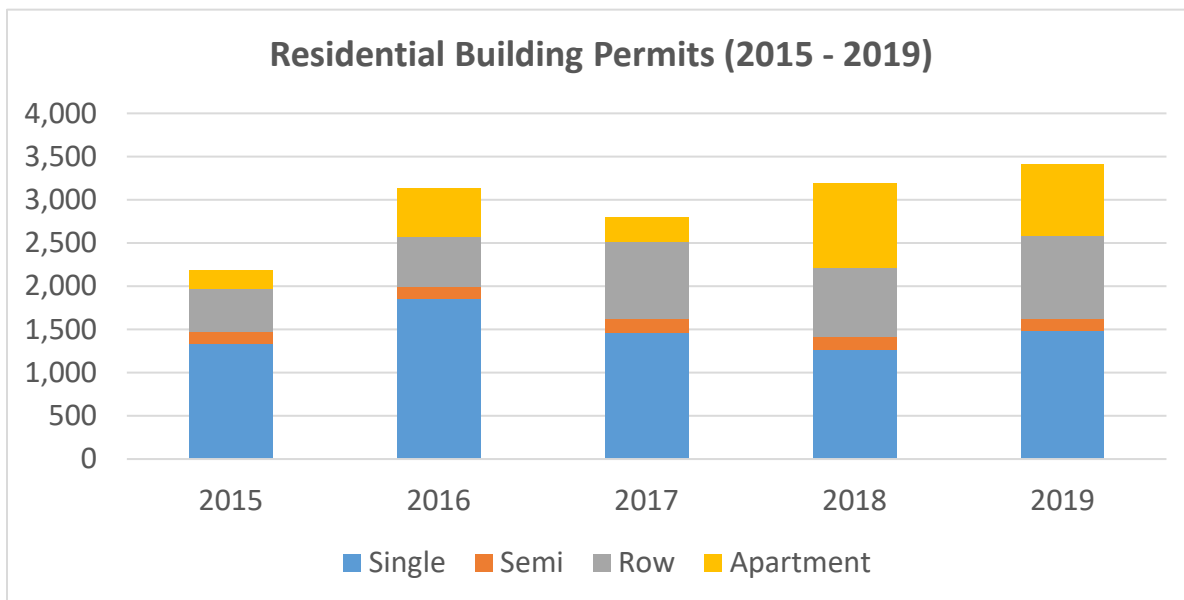
Figure 5: Regional Housing Completions (2015 - 2019)



Source: CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal

New housing units, issued by building permit, also grew consistently over the previous half decade, reaching 3,415 units in 2019. Figure 6 provides an overview of building permits (housing units) since 2015.

Figure 6: Residential Building Permits (2015 - 2019)

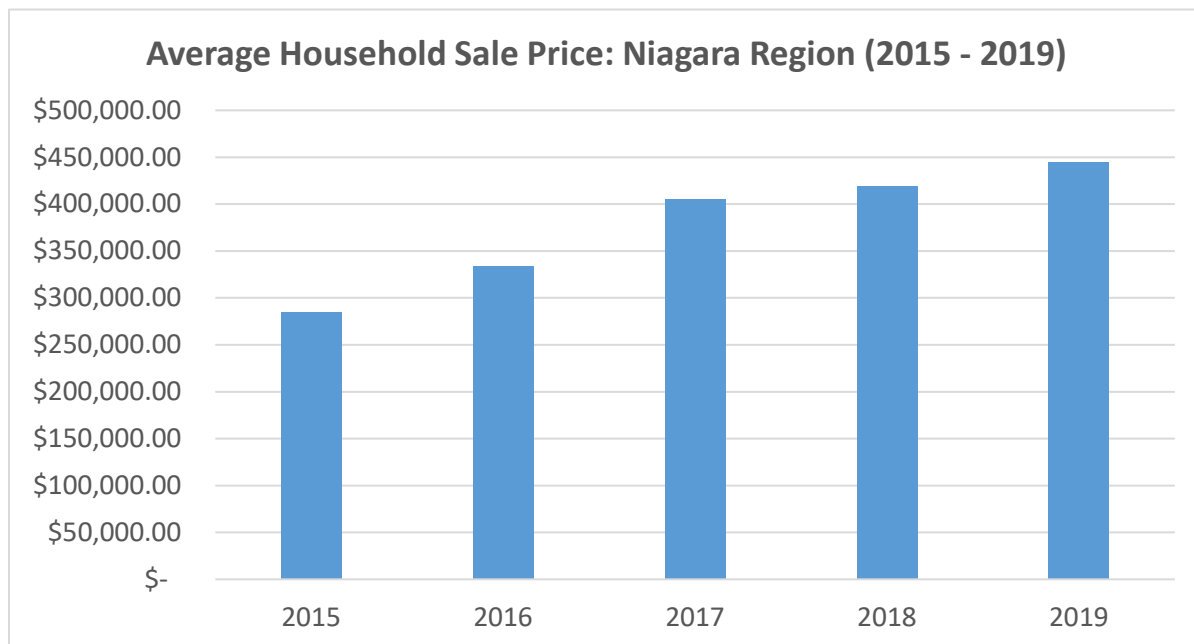


Source: Niagara Region Planning and Development Services

Housing Market

The housing market in Niagara has been on the rise since 2015 with significant increases to average sale price in 2016 and 2017. Between 2015 and 2017, the average sale price of a home in Niagara increased nearly 40%, from \$284,000 to \$405,000. Average sale price has continued to increase in 2018 and 2019 but at a lower rate of 4% and 6% respectfully. Overall, the average sale price for a home in Niagara increased 56% from 2015 to 2019.² Figure 7 provides a breakdown of average sale price by year.

Figure 7: Average Household Sale Price (2015 – 2019)



Source: Niagara Association of Realtors and Realtors Association of Hamilton-Burlington

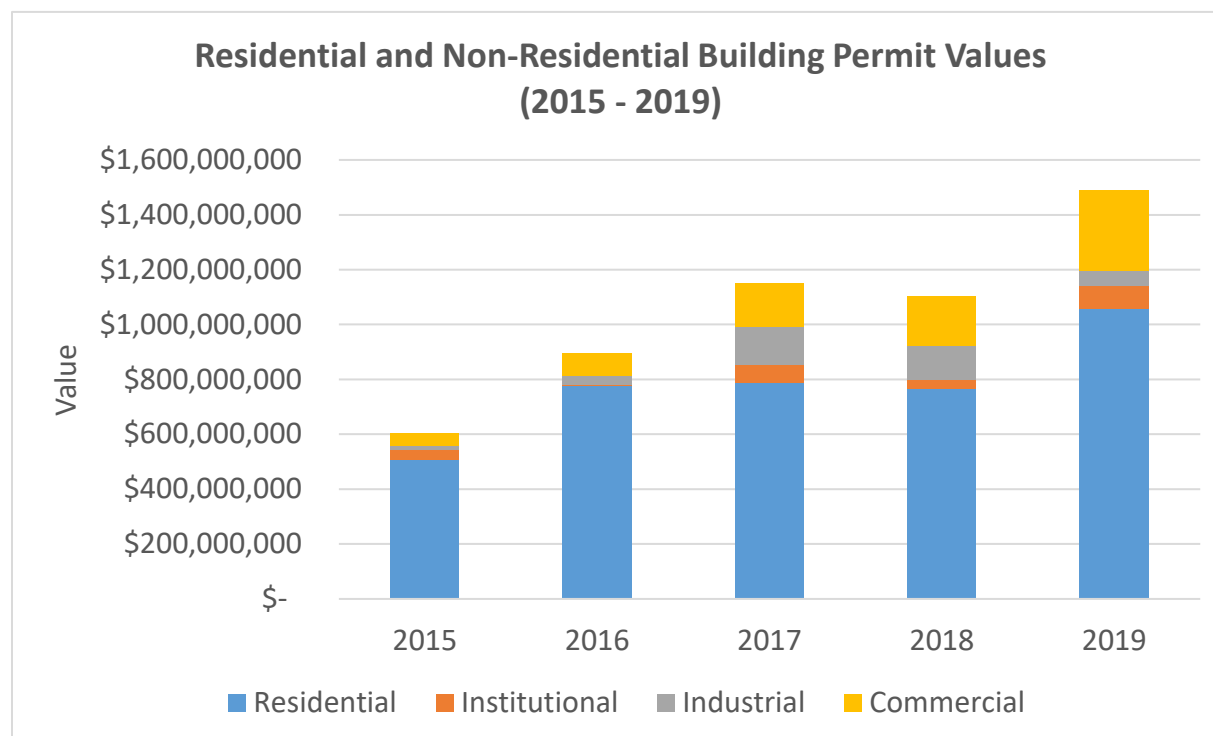
Building Permit Values

Building permit values, just like population and housing development, increased over the past 5 years, growing from \$600 million in 2015 and reaching nearly \$1.5 billion in 2019. The increased diversity of permits is particularly notable; non-residential permits

² Average sale price for 2019 is based on the data from January 2019 to June 2019. In July 2019, the Niagara Association of Realtors changed how sale price is reported on their website, opting for an HPI Benchmark value rather than the previous reporting of average sale price.

grew from 15% in 2015 and 2016 to 30% in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increased ratio of non-residential building permit values is more inline with the Region's Development Charges Background Study. Figure 8 provides an overview of building permit values from 2015 to 2019.

Figure 8: Residential and Non-Residential Building Permit Values (2015 - 2019)



Source: Statistics Canada Building Permit Values and Niagara Region Planning and Development Services

Alternatives Reviewed

The scope and detail of annual growth reports will be revisited following the adoption of the forthcoming new Regional Official Plan. Future iterations of the report will provide additional metrics and commentary on the implementation of the Regional Official Plan and achievement of policy objectives and targets.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

- Supporting Businesses and Economic Growth

-
- This report discusses trends in population, housing and building permit values over the past 5 years. This information is important for Regional Council to have as they make decisions that impact the Regional economy.
 - **Healthy and Vibrant Community**
 - This report highlights trends in housing sale prices that relate directly to housing affordability in Niagara.
 - **Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning**
 - The population increase over the past 5 years will be a critical component in advancing Regional Transit and GO Rail Service. A greater population, as well as increased densities around proposed GO Station areas, will support development and provide greater use of the service.
 - Tracking and reporting upon residential and economic growth provides direction on maintaining existing infrastructure and assists in asset management.

Other Pertinent Reports

- PDS 9-2017: Niagara Region Annual Growth Report
- PDS 25-2018: Niagara Region End of Year Growth Report 2017
- PDS 21-2019: Niagara Region End of Year Growth Report 2018

Prepared by:

Greg Bowie
Planner
Planning and Development Services

Recommended by:

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner
Planning and Development Services

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was reviewed by Isaiah Banach, Manager of Long Range Planning.

**Administration**

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April 24, 2020

Council Session CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION AND PARKS
LOCAL AREA MUNICIPALITIES

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

RE: Report PDS 13-2020 2019 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities
Minute Item 9.2 CL 6-2020, April 23, 2020

Regional Council, at its meeting held on April 23, 2020, passed the following resolution:

That Report PDS 13-2020, dated April 23, 2020, respecting 2019 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities, **BE RECEIVED** and **BE CIRCULATED** to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and the Niagara Area Municipalities.

A copy of Report PDS 13-2020 is attached for your information.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann-Marie".

Ann-Marie Norio
 Regional Clerk

CLK-C 2020-143

cc: I. Stetic, Project Manager
 R. Mostacci, Commissioner, Planning & Development Services
 N. Oakes, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner, Planning & Development Services

Subject: 2019 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities

Report to: Regional Council

Report date: Thursday, April 23, 2020

Recommendations

1. That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
2. That a copy of this report **BE CIRCULATED** to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and Niagara Area Municipalities.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the reserve treatment capacities at Niagara's Water and Wastewater Treatment facilities. This reporting is required by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP).
- The data contained in this report assists in commenting on new development proposals and related servicing as well as planning for future treatment capacity.
- All of Niagara Water Treatment Plants (WTPs) and Wastewater Treatment Plants (WWTPs) are positioned to accept growth beyond the minimum 10 year horizon.

Financial Considerations

This report provides Council with historical and projected treatment capacity and flow data. There are no direct financial implications in receiving this report.

The reserve treatment capacities at the water and wastewater (W&WW) facilities are considered in commenting on new development proposals and related servicing and, as a result, could result in a financial impact related to specific future applications.

Analysis

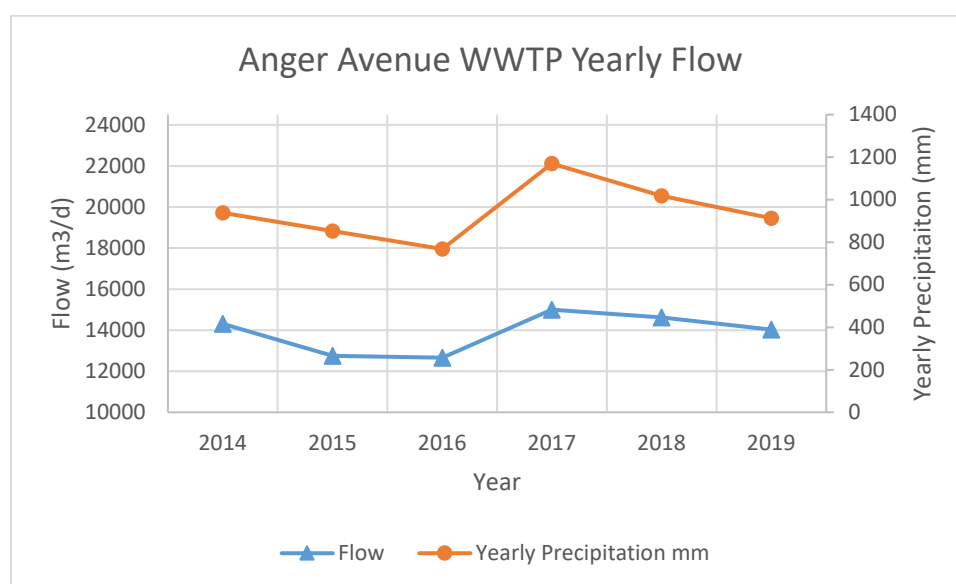
The Infrastructure Planning and Development Engineering section of Planning and Development Services Department annually reports on an assessment of the average daily W&WW flows based on the previous five years, as recorded at our various facilities compared to MECP rated capacities for the facilities. Included in the analysis are the 10-year growth projections in accordance with Niagara 2041 (*How we Grow, Flow and Go*).

A key objective of this report is to highlight potential capacity constraints and allow sufficient lead time to plan for future capacity increases through the W&WW capital programs so that development may continue unencumbered. This is a 'desktop' exercise, which compares five-year (annual) average flows to the respective MECP Environmental Compliance Approval(s), formerly known as Certificate of Approval(s) for each facility, then incorporates 10-year growth forecasts into the calculation. Ongoing phasing and staging strategy works with our local municipal partners will further refine this assessment for understanding development capacity.

This assessment does not reflect specific compliance, quality, sustainability, risk, or operational deficiencies at the treatment plants or trunk conveyance/transmission systems, which may affect the Region's ability to approve new development or permit servicing extensions.

For municipal wastewater treatment, weather is the key factor that results in peak wet weather flows, which impacts the collection and trunk sewers in both local and regional systems through "Rainfall Derived Inflow and Infiltration" (RDI&I). Even though, it is expected to record higher flows due to population growth, the annual average daily flows to the WWTPs are higher due to the wet weather flows entering the systems. Just for an example, Figure 1 illustrates a direct correlation of wastewater plant flows and yearly precipitation at Anger Avenue WWTP.

Figure 1: Correlation of Wastewater Flows with Precipitation



Wet weather flows can have substantial impact on available WWTP capacities and a direct impact on the limitations of available servicing capacity for future growth.

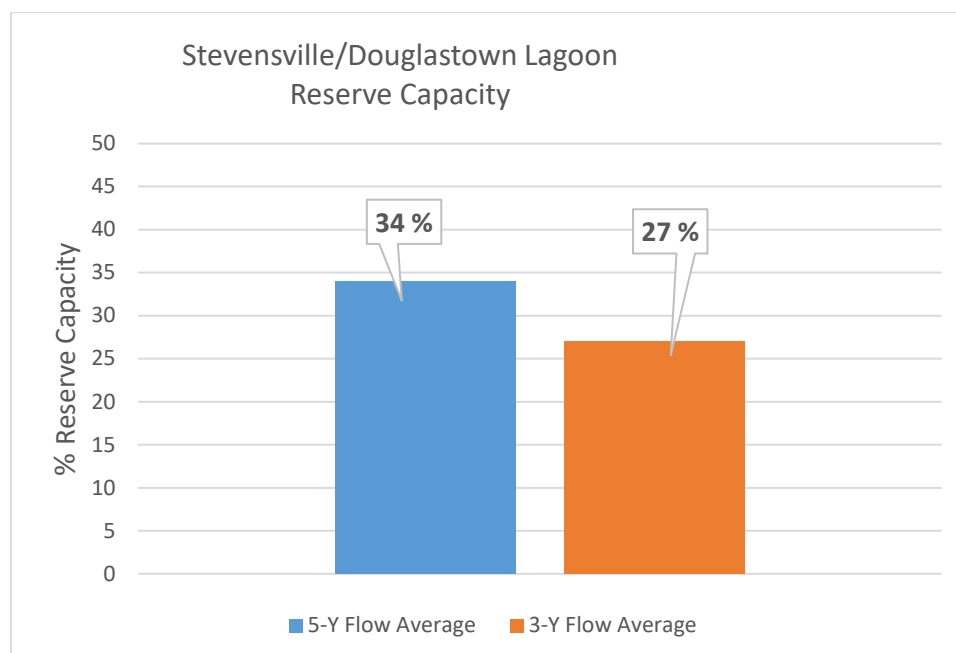
Appendix 1 and 2 provide the annual average daily flows and five year average from 2015 to 2019 for the water and wastewater treatment plants, respectively. Appendices 3 and 4 provide a summary of Niagara's six water treatment facilities and eleven wastewater treatment facilities presenting their respective reserve capacities.

It is worth noting that growth rates in recent years show a momentous increase compared to the previous trend in Niagara, which consequently may impact the way this 'desktop' exercise conducts the reserve capacity calculations.

Averaging daily flows over a five-year period versus a three-year period in calculations show a compelling difference in the resulting reserve capacities. This can create a skewed sense of a greater reserve capacity available for the future if the annual daily flows are averaged over longer period of time.

Figure 2 shows an example in a resulting reserve capacity difference for Stevensville/Douglastown Lagoon when flows are averaged over different time periods in calculations.

Figure 2: Reserve Capacity of Annual Flows Averaged over 5-Year and 3-Year



A potential change to incorporate the annual daily flows averaged over the last three-year period into the reserve capacities calculation instead of using the last five-year average presently will be discussed with the Municipal partners and the Ministry during 2020.

At present, all of Niagara's WTPs and WWTPs are positioned to accept growth beyond the minimum 10-year period (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4).

Wet Weather Management

In order to accommodate the anticipated growth from Niagara 2041, the 2016 W&WW Master Servicing Plan (MSP) investigated capacity upgrades (upgrades to trunk sewers, pumping station capacities, etc.), upstream management (storage, peak shaving, diversion), and peak flow management (flow reduction, Inflow & infiltration (I&I) reduction projects) for every wastewater system. Based on this review, there are wet weather projects listed with identified areas for targeted I&I removal to offset the requirement to upgrade and expand more expensive infrastructure all the way to the WWTPs. It is crucial to achieve the I&I reductions in order to offset the capacity needs from growth, to protect the environment, and mitigate potential basement flooding.

The Region and Area Municipalities are continuing to work collaboratively to facilitate ongoing development throughout the region and provide the requisite servicing and capacity allocation in a responsible way to service the communities. In addition, the Region has been aiding Area Municipalities by funding the CSO Control program under the Wet Weather Management Program to support various I&I related projects and programs on the municipal side. This program has been reducing the impacts of I&I and has been a benefit to both, the Region and the Area Municipalities.

The Wet Weather Management team is working with the Development Industry including Public Works Officials, Building Officials, Developers, Consultants and Contractors to raise awareness on the wet weather management issues and potential upcoming changes to address this.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives were studied.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The report aligns with Council's Priority of Responsible Growth and Infrastructure Planning by highlighting the reserve capacity available to growth at all Regional Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities.

The report also provides MECP and local municipal partners operational summary and reserve capacity projections for Region's Water and Wastewater Treatment facilities.

Other Pertinent Reports

- PDS 29-2019, August 7, 2019, 2018 Reserve Water and Wastewater Treatment Capacities
- PW 22-2017, May 30, 2017, 2016 Water and Wastewater Master Servicing Plan Update

Prepared by:

Ilija Stetic, B.Sc., PMP
Project Manager
Planning and Economic Development

Recommended by:

Rino Mostacci, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner
Planning and Economic Development

Submitted by:

Ron Tripp, P.Eng.
Acting Chief Administrative Officer

This report was prepared in consultation with Phill Lambert, Director Planning and Development Services, John Brunet, AD Water Operations and Staff Development and Jason Oatley, Manager WW Quality & Compliance.

Appendices

Appendix 1	Annual Average Daily Flow 2015 to 2019 WTP	Page 6
Appendix 2	Annual Average Daily Flow 2015 to 2019 WWTP	Page 7
Appendix 3	Water Reserve Capacity Calculations for 2019	Page 8
Appendix 4	Wastewater Reserve Capacity Calculations for 2019	Page 9

APPENDIX 1

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY FLOW 2015 TO 2019 WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Water Treatment Facility Location	Rated Capacity (m ³ /d)	Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d) 2015	Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d) 2016	Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d) 2017	Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d) 2018	Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d) 2019	5 Year Average Daily Flow (m ³ /d) 2015 to 2019
Decew Falls WTP	227,300	53,723	54,903	54,321	56,090	53,303	54,468
Grimsby WTP	44,000	16,652	15,699	14,020	14,866	14,029	15,053
Niagara Falls WTP	145,584	45,186	47,350	45,192	44,780	43,400	45,182
Port Colborne WTP	36,000	8,908	7,719	8,735	8,864	7,282	8,302
Rosehill WTP	50,026	13,182	13,148	12,388	12,862	11,188	12,554
Welland WTP	65,000	20,164	21,858	21,590	22,538	22,579	21,746

Note 1: Welland WTP rated capacity changed from 102,300 m³/d to 65,000 m³/d due to Operational constraints.

APPENDIX 2

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY FLOW 2015 TO 2019 WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS

	Rated	Average	Average	Average	Average	Average	5 year
	Capacity	Daily Flow	Daily Flow	Daily Flow	Daily Flow	Daily Flow	Average
Wastewater Treatment	(m³/d)	(m³/d)	(m³/d)	(m³/d)	(m³/d)	(m³/d)	Daily Flow
Facility Location							(m³/d)
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2015 to 2019
Anger Avenue WWTP	24,500	12,755	12,661	15,000	14,624	15,146	14,037
Baker Road WWTP	31,280	17,549	16,999	20,897	19,975	20,910	19,266
Crystal Beach WWTP	9,100	5,005	4,676	5,915	5,874	6,276	5,549
Niagara Falls WWTP	68,300	40,782	35,880	44,684	41,489	41,360	40,839
NOTL WWTP	8,000	3,911	4,021	4,561	4,687	5,237	4,483
Port Dalhousie WWTP	61,350	30,091	29,616	34,823	35,095	36,681	33,261
Port Weller WWTP	56,180	30,856	29,650	32,090	36,881	39,211	33,738
Queenston WWTP	500	234	278	234	198	213	231
Seaway WWTP	19,600	11,064	9,103	12,082	12,580	13,472	11,660
Stevensville/Douglastown Lagoon	2,289	1,192	1,314	1,635	1,670	1,729	1,508
Welland WWTP	54,550	32,164	29,728	35,407	34,643	37,137	33,816

APPENDIX 3

Regional Water Treatment Facilities Reserve Capacity Calculation for 2019

Treatment Facility	Permit To Take Water (1) (ML/D)	Rated Treatment Capacity (ML/D)	Peaking Factor (2)	Theoretical Average Day Capacity (ML/D)	90% of Average Day Capacity (3) (ML/D)	5-Year Average Day Flow (ML/D)	% of Total Capacity Used	Reserve Treatment Capacity (Based on 90%) (ML/D)	Design Flow Rate (275 l/c/d)	Reserve Serviceable Population (Equivalents)	10-Year Forecast For Population (Residential & Employment)	Surplus Population Over 10-Year Projection
DeCew Falls WTP	227.0	227.3	1.496	151.9	136.7	54.5	36%	82.2	275	298,909	30,398	268,511
Grimsby WTP	44.0	44.0	1.587	27.7	24.9	15.1	54%	9.9	275	36,000	14,771	21,229
Niagara Falls WTP	145.5	145.5	1.577	92.3	83.1	45.2	49%	37.9	275	137,818	23,782	114,036
Port Colborne WTP	45.5	36.0	1.640	22.0	19.8	8.3	38%	11.5	275	41,818	1,552	40,266
Rosehill WTP	78.0	50.0	1.482	33.7	30.3	12.6	37%	17.8	275	64,727	6,375	58,352
Welland WTP	110.0	65.0	1.486	43.7	39.3	21.7	50%	17.6	275	64,000	12,292	51,708

(1) Original MOE approved quantity of raw water permitted (Permit To Take Water).

(2) The peaking factors used are based on an average of actual flow rates of maximum day versus average day flows over the past three years at each facility.

(3) Region's W&WW MSP (GM BluePlan, 2017) requires planning process for expansion when plant capacity exceeds 80%, and expansion should be completed when capacity exceeds 90%.

APPENDIX 4

Regional Wastewater Treatment Facilities Reserve Capacity Calculation for 2019

Treatment Facility	MOE Plant Rated Capacity (m ³ /day)	90 % of Plant Capacity (1) (m ³ /day)	5-Year Average Daily Flow (m ³ /day)	% of Total Capacity Used	Reserve Treatment Capacity (Based on 90%) (m ³ /day)	Design Flow Rate (4) (365 L/c/d)	Reserve Serviceable Population (Equivalents)	10-Year Forecast For Population (Residential & Employment)	Surplus Population Over 10-Year Projection
Anger Avenue (Fort Erie) WWTP	24,500	22,050	14,037	57%	8,013	365	21,953	4,277	17,676
Baker Road (Grimsby) WWTP	31,280	28,152	19,266	62%	8,886	365	24,346	16,791	7,555
Crystal Beach (Fort Erie) WWTP	9,100	8,190	5,549	61%	2,641	365	7,236	1,443	5,793
Niagara Falls WWTP	68,300	61,470	40,839	60%	20,631	365	56,523	19,980	36,543
NOTL WWTP	8,000	7,200	4,483	56%	2,717	365	7,443	2,644	4,799
Port Dalhousie (St. Catharines) WWTP	61,350	55,215	33,261	54%	21,954	365	60,148	15,005	45,143
Port Weller (St. Catharines) WWTP	56,180	50,562	33,738	60%	16,824	365	46,094	10,052	36,042
Queenston (NOTL) WWTP (3)	500	450	231	46%	219	365	599	99	500
Seaway (Port Colborne) WWTP	19,600	17,640	11,660	59%	5,980	365	16,383	1,622	14,761
Stevensville/Douglstown Lagoon	2,289	2,060	1,508	66%	552	365	1,512	795	717
Welland WWTP	54,550	49,095	33,816	62%	15,279	365	41,860	12,912	28,948

(1) Region's W&WW MSP (GM BluePlan, 2017) requires planning process for expansion when plant capacity exceeds 80%, and expansion should be completed when capacity exceeds 90%.

(2) The Niagara Falls WWTP assessment includes the sewage flows from the St. David's area of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

(3) The Queenston WWTP in Niagara-on-the-Lake has a unique capacity commitment of 226 m³/d for the following properties: Niagara Parks Commission (75 m³/d), Niagara Falls Bridge Commission (63 m³/d), Shalamar Campground (38 m³/d) and Ontario Power Generation (50 m³/d). Due to these commitments and limited UAB, limited residential growth is expected within the next 10 year period within the tributary area.

(4) Design Flow Rate incorporated 90 L/c/d of extraneous flow allowance

City Council Outstanding Reports List

Sub-Item 7

Reports by Strategic Pillar

Cultural 1 **Economic** 1
Environmental 3 **Social** 3

Reports Related to Strategic Plan 8
Reports Unrelated to Strategic Plan 19

Updated: April 24, 2020

Relation to Strategic Plan	ORL #	Requested	Requested by	Request	Lead Dept.	Expected Return Date	Comments
Cultural	2019-44	2-Dec-19	Porter	That staff be directed to gather the appeal processes for all grant programs and report back to Council	CRCS	Q2 2020	From BSC minutes of October 28, 2019
Economic	2020-01	13-Jan-20	Kushner	Multi-year budgeting	FMS	Q2 2020	Report going to BSC prior to going to Council
Environmental	2019-13	29-Apr-19	Townsend	Feasibility of green alternatives to road salts for City's winter program	MW	Q2 2020	Report going to BSC in March prior to going to Council
Environmental	2019-20	24-Jun-19	Mayor Sendzik	Corporate waste reduction strategy including best practices for municipal waste diversion and organics at city facilities, parks, beaches, public spaces and events at City facilities, including an implementation strategy and budget for	EFES / MW	Q1 2020	Report going to Environmental Sustainability Committee prior to going to Council
Environmental	2019-39	4-Nov-19	Townsend	Single-use plastic bag ban	EFES / LCS / EDTS	Q4 2020	
Social	2019-03	11-Feb-19	Porter	Policy and funding methods for how the City could support requests for assistance for affordable housing endeavors in the future	PBS	April	To be incorporated in CIP Review Process
Social	2019-49	16-Dec-19	Mayor Sendzik	That the needle pick-up team be a pilot project that includes tracking of the number of needles picked up, the cost of cleaning up spaces that have been subjected to abuse by people using needles and other drugs; and other issues around homelessness and addictions found in city parks and that the findings be reported back to Council by November 2020; and That data be used to secure future funding from Regional, provincial and federal governments to deal with this epidemic	MW		Requested return November 2020
Social	2020-02	13-Jan-20	Townsend	E-Scooter report with results of consultation with stakeholder groups and risk management analysis	EDTS / EFES / MW		Follow up report. Initial report (EDTS/CRCS-006-2020) approved January 13, 2020
None	2019-12	15-Apr-19	Porter	Review of Citizen Appointments to Boards and Committees Policy	LCS	Q2 2020	Once current appointment process is completed
None	2019-22	15-Jul-19	Townsend	Amend sign by-law to permit digital signage on City-owned properties and buildings, including the appropriateness and ability to include third-party advertising as part of digital signage on City-owned properties.	PBS / COMMS	Q2 2020	Appeal Information Report - Application for Sign By-law Variance; 142 St. Paul Street; Owner: 2400795 Ontario Inc. was deferred 8-12-19 until ORL #2019-22 is presented to Council. Requested return Q4 2019
None	2019-23	15-Jul-19	Littleton	Opportunities and strategies for the City to support neighbourhood associations and neighbourhood-based community groups, including best practices and information gathered from the forum	CRCS	Q2 2020	Staff report will come forward following the neighbourhood association forum
None	2019-26	12-Aug-19	Siscoe	Renaming of parkette at 91 York Street	CRCS	Q4 2020	
None	2019-29	09-Sep-19	Littleton	Report back on the existing street naming process with ways to include more public engagement, perhaps similar to the park naming process	PBS	Q2 2020	
None	2019-31	09-Sep-19	Garcia	Creation of a new rental category for use of vacant and unused City properties by Community-based Volunteer Groups (not to be used for commercial purpose)	FMS / CRCS	Q1 2020	Rental fees to be waived in total for volunteer groups. Groups still need proper insurance and to help with maintenance
None	2019-33	09-Sep-19	Townsend	Naloxone training for City staff and City Councillors, including availability of Naloxone kits in the trunks of City vehicles and Councillors' vehicles.	CSS		Was brought to Feb 10, 2020 meeting. Referred to staff by Coun. Littleton for additional information

Relation to Strategic Plan	ORL #	Requested	Requested by	Request	Lead Dept.	Expected Return Date	Comments
None	2019-34	23-Sep-19	Mayor Sendzik	That additional staffing be considered for RZone in the 2021 budget deliberations and come back to Council with a report in Q3 2020	CRCS	Q3 2020	Return requested for Q3 2020
None	2019-40	2-Dec-19		That staff report back to Council with a schedule for Deputy Mayors	LCS	Q3 2020	
None	2019-41	2-Dec-19	Littleton	That staff report back regarding the Conversion of Grantham South to a one-way street heading north from Queenston Street to Eastchester Avenue	EFES	Q3 2020	
None	2019-43	2-Dec-19	Kushner / Phillips	That staff utilize the EngageSTC portal to gather public feedback and report back end of Q1 2020 regarding a national ban on handguns and the joining with other municipalities that are advocating for a national ban on handguns.			Return requested for Q1 2020
None	2019-45	16-Dec-19	Porter	That staff be directed to consult with the public and report back to Council in Q2 with recommendations for how to use the telephone town hall money	FMS		Report going to BSC Public Engagement Task Force prior to going to Council. Return requested for Q2 2020
None	2019-46	16-Dec-19	Porter	That staff report back after completion of the WE Day event, including how many staff hours were spent			
None	2019-47	16-Dec-19	Miller / Mayor Sendzik	That the request for funds to be used to record in-camera meetings be referred to 2020 for a report including the upgrading of screening services for all meetings (open and closed sessions).	LCS		
None	2019-48	16-Dec-19	Dodge	That the request to add cutting of cul-de-sacs and boulevards be referred to staff for a report.	MW		Report going to BSC in March prior to going to Council
None	2020-03	15-Jul-19	Porter	Living Wage Employer Implementation Plan, including financial impacts to the City.	CSS		Follow up report. Initial report (CAO-144-2019) approved July 15, 2019
None	2020-04	27-Jan-20	Mayor Sendzik	Public process of naming the Lakeside Pavilion and include Neil Peart as a potential name for consideration, including the ongoing Engage STC public consultation;	CRCS		Consult with the Peart family and the band's representatives regarding any naming, memorials, events and concerts in Neil's honour or Lakeside Park. Any further requests to honour Neil Peart in St. Catharines (including memorials, events and concerts) be included in a report to Council as part of the naming process upon completion of the public consultation.
None	2020-05	24-Feb-20	Littleton	Family Care and Accommodation Policy			Develop a family care and accommodation policy (including but not limited to barrier-free access to childcare, transportation, dependent care) to improve equitable access and reduce systemic barriers to public participation in all city-initiated public meetings, citizen advisory committees and statutory meetings. Report to go to BSC prior to Council
None	2020-07	24-Feb-20	Porter	Revised Graffiti Program: Consult with the community, the relevant cultural committees and downtown stakeholder groups to modernize the graffiti program and by-law by 2021.			



Corporate Report City Council

Report from: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Date: May 6, 2020 **Meeting Date:** May 6, 2020

Report Number: CAO-072-2020 **File:** 10.4.19

Subject: COVID-19 Update – May 6, 2020

Strategic Pillar:



Recommendation

That the City of St. Catharines continues to work to keep essential services running for residents and businesses during the rapidly evolving global COVID-19 pandemic from a strategic and proactive approach while also suffering plummeting revenues;

That organizations such as the Association of Ontario Municipalities (AMO), the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO) have urged upper levels of government to provide emergency operating funding to municipalities to maintain municipal service levels;

That the City of St. Catharines continues to endorse the advocacy work of the above organizations on behalf of municipalities to upper levels of government and affirms the need for direct and flexible emergency relief for municipalities;

That the City continues to focus on recovery efforts while working with the above organizations as well as upper levels of government to address short and long-term financial impacts, recovery efforts, and economic stimulus; and

Further that the City of St. Catharines will forward this resolution with the Prime Minister of Canada, Canada's Minister of Finance, the Premier of Ontario, Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ontario's Minister of Finance, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario. FORTHWITH

Summary

The purpose of this report to provide Council with ongoing updates on the City's Municipal Emergency Control Group's (MECG) planning activities to address the rapidly evolving global COVID-19 pandemic from a strategic and proactive approach. The report illustrates the MECG's ongoing commitment to their four objectives.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

City staff are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as it has affected the economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability of the City. City staff have remained focused on plans to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the community, ensure continuity of essential services and support the sustainably pillars through new and innovative ways.

Background

On March 12, 2020, the City of St. Catharines partially activated its Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), to support the work of the Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) in their response to COVID-19 pandemic.

As staff and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) primarily focus on the managing the impact of COVID-19 and providing essential services, responses to non-essential matters will be delayed as resources are focused on immediate needs

The MECG has regularly meeting virtually to address the impact of COVID-19 on the community and essential City services.

The initial MECG's planning stages to address the pandemic consisted of preparedness, response and future planning. Details can be found in report [CAO-063-2020](#), provided to council on April 8, 2020. Staff provided an update to Council on April 22, 2020 with additional information regarding the four key objective of the MECG. Details can be found in report [CAO-064-2020](#).

Report

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a serious threat to the community as well as the City's ability to provide all levels of service in the same manner as before.

The City's Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) continues to respond to the pandemic with prepared reactions and has been diligently planning for potential future developments. The MECG continues to be dedicated to the safety of staff and the community, while ensuring essential services continue to be delivered without interruption and focusing on business continuity.

The following outlines the MECG's planning to continue to address the pandemic in its current and possible future states, while guided by their four objectives.

Four Objectives of MECG

As the pandemic continues to evolve, the MECG has adapted accordingly to continue to address it proactively. There are five pillars of emergency management that are used within Ontario: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. As the pandemic develops, the MECG is adjusting their four key objectives to align with the transitioning into the recovery phase.

MECG's planning and decisions are guided by their amended four key objectives:

- To focus on recovery while continuing to provide essential services
- To ensure the health, safety and security of the public and staff during the pandemic and through the recovery process.
- To continue to be able to support Niagara Health, Public Health, Niagara Region and our other partners.
- To ensure the organization remains in a financially stable condition during this pandemic.

Focus on Recovery and Providing Essential Services

The MECG has amended their first two key objectives to ensure recovery planning is at the forefront of the group's focus.

On April 27, 2020, the provincial government released a stage-by-stage approach to reopening the economy, A Framework for Reopening our Province, to ensure there are appropriate measures in place so workplaces can open safely. Public health officials will carefully monitor each stage for two to four weeks, as they assess the evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak to determine if it is necessary to change course to maintain public health:

Stage 1

For businesses that were ordered to close or restrict operations, opening select workplaces that can immediately modify operations to meet public health guidance. Opening some outdoor spaces like parks and allowing for a greater number of individuals to attend some events. Hospitals would also begin to offer some non-urgent and scheduled surgeries, and other health care services.

Stage 2

Opening more workplaces, based on risk assessments, which may include some service industries and additional office and retail workplaces. Some larger public gatherings would be allowed, and more outdoor spaces would open.

Stage 3

Opening of all workplaces responsibly and further relaxing of restrictions on public gatherings. Although large gatherings such as sporting events and concerts would likely not yet occur.

Throughout each stage, continued protections for vulnerable populations must be in place, along with the continued practice of physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, and significant mitigation plans to limit health risks.

To reopen the economy, the provincial government will consider factors such as the risk of the spread of COVID-19 and the ability to implement protective measures to keep workplaces safe. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts will provide advice to the province about easing public health measures using a range of set criteria, including:

- A consistent two-to-four week decrease in the number of new daily COVID-19 cases;

- Sufficient acute and critical care capacity, including access to ventilators and ongoing availability of personal protective equipment;
- Approximately 90% of new COVID-19 contacts are being reached by local public health officials within one day, with guidance and direction to contain community spread; and
- Ongoing testing of suspected COVID-19 cases, especially of vulnerable populations, to detect new outbreaks quickly.

Ensuring the health and safety of the public and workers will continue to be a top priority as Ontario transitions to a new normal. The government will partner with businesses and other sectors to lead Ontario's economic recovery. The focus will be on creating jobs and opportunity across the province, while working to restore long-term prosperity.

Recovery Planning Team

As previously reported a recovery planning team has been established to help the City build a robust Recovery Plan with actions and objectives to help our employees, residents, community partners and businesses recover from the impacts of COVID-19 mid-to-long-term. Committee Co-Chairs – Phi Cristi, Director of CRCS and Brian York, Director of EDT have worked with SLT to identify and recruit a cross-section of highly qualified and motivated members of the corporation to work as a team. The team continues to meet virtually utilizing an online engagement platform with a defined focus on the following three pillars of recovery;

1. Economic
2. Organizational
3. Psychosocial

Recovery plans will be aligned with any guidelines and orders issued by upper levels of government.

The City's Transit and Library operations are also planning for recovery. They continue to collaborate with City MEGG teams and provide the following information regarding their individual recovery planning activities.

St. Catharines Transit Recovery Planning

Transit Commission staff are anticipating a different look to transit as the recovery process unfolds. Physical distancing and personal protective equipment will likely be the new normal. To ensure a safe work environment for transit operators, the Commission is working diligently to build and test a protective barrier for the bus operator. The operator will be protected in the driver compartment and this allow for front door boarding and revenue collection.

St. Catharines Public Library Recovery Planning

Although it is not yet clear when the Library will re-open to the public, the Library anticipates that the new normal will be very different than the past and as such, library operations will be significantly impacted and the service model will also need to be adjusted.

Five re-opening sub-committees have been formed to collaboratively develop a re-opening plan and ensure that all areas of operations, including circulation, programs, and physical spaces, are considered.

The Library has also been working with other Canadian urban libraries to reimagine service delivery with the conditions of continued physical distancing measures and more stringent disinfectant and sanitization processes.

St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee

Following Council's approval of amended by-laws to allow electronic meetings, the St. Catharines Heritage Permit Advisory Committee held their first virtual meeting on April 30, 2020. The meeting was conducted on the Zoom platform. Public notice of the meeting was provided through normal channels and the meeting was live-streamed on YouTube so that the public can observe the proceeding. All appointed members were able to attend. Applicants were able to present applications and answer questions of the members.

Committee of Adjustment

Following Council's approval of amended Procedural By-laws to allow electronic meetings, the Committee of Adjustment will hold their first virtual meeting on May 13, 2020. Public notice of the meeting is being provided through normal channels and the meeting will be live-streamed on YouTube so that the public can observe the proceeding. Electronic delegations will be permitted however written delegations are encouraged.

Workforce Reductions

As part of the City's response to Provincial orders to further reduce services, the City has made the difficult decision to extend workforce reductions within the full-time employee population. Identifying that some employees may be interested in stepping away from the workplace during the pandemic, staff from CUPE Locals 150 and 157 were offered the option to volunteer to be included in pending workforce reductions.

Municipal Infrastructure Construction

On Friday, May 1, 2020, the Province of Ontario amended their Emergency Orders to allow construction projects and services that support the operations of, and provide new capacity in municipal infrastructure to commence, subject to compliance with workplace guidelines that construction and contractors are expected to follow.

Ensure Safety and Security of Public and Staff

By-Law Enforcement of Provincial Orders

Citizens First

For the month of April, 2020, Citizens First received 6,137 calls with an average answer speed of 49 seconds. Calls continued to span all departments with the most frequent calls being related to water or tax billing.

COVID Related calls – 411

COVID Complaints – 476 (includes calls, emails and complaint forms)

Average Calls during week – 333 per day

Average Calls on weekend – 27 per day

Complaints received by Citizens First that allege the operation of non-essential businesses are triaged by Economic Development staff who connect with the business owners to advise of the nature of the Provincial Orders and provide assistance by advising of methods of compliance. For the month of April, 2020, Economic Development staff have responded to more than 300 calls.

The By-law Sections of the Planning and Building Services department and Municipal Works continue to review and enforce if necessary, complaints regarding potential violation of Provincial emergency orders related to opening of non-essential workplaces including non-essential construction and social gatherings on public property.

The enforcement action commenced on April 6, 2020 and as of April 28, 2020, By-law Enforcement staff have processed 70 complaints. Of those complaints, 31 were regarding non-essential workplaces, three regarding non-essential construction, and 36 related to social gathering. All complaints have been resolved or are under investigation.

The following table summarizes the complaints by-law enforcement has received as of April 28, 2020. The table illustrates complaints that were escalated to By-law Enforcement, after triage from Economic Development and represent Monday to Friday only.

Type of Emergency Order	Total Number of Complaints	Valid	Not Valid	Investigation in Progress	Resolution
Non-Essential Business	31	13	12	6	Workplace closed
Non-Essential Construction	3	2	1	0	Construction ceased
Social Gathering	36	17	19	0	Crowd dispersed

Municipal Works

On weekends, Municipal Works staff receive and follow up on complaints.

Weekend	Total Number of Complaints
April 3-5	15
April 9-12 (Easter)	33
April 18-19	17
April 25-26	12
Total	77

In all instances, staff have successfully obtained compliance and resolution through education without the need of issuing tickets.

Staff have noted that decreases in complaints are noted on days with poor weather and will continue to monitor incoming complaints for increases as the weather improves.

Commitment to Mental Health

The MECG has remained cognizant of the stress and anxiety that COVID-19 may create for both staff and the community. The group has made mental health and wellbeing a priority and taken conscious efforts to assist those that may be struggling at home and in the workplace.

Staff Mental Health

The City has extended its Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) to all part-time employees, including those that were part of the workforce reduction. This would allow these employees and their immediate family to have access to a variety of professional support services such as counselling, family support, legal support, health coaching, naturopathic and nutritional services.

Community Mental Health

The Community, Recreation and Culture Services (CRCS) department has identified services and activities that can be delivered to the public online, to ensure citizens who depend on services for health, wellness and mental wellbeing can continue to receive them throughout the pandemic.

Virtual Experience Portal

In conjunction with the City's Communications department, CRCS is creating a Virtual Experiences Portal on the City's website to provide a user-friendly one-stop location to discover all of the virtual programming that the City will be offering. The portal will also include virtual programming provided by the Library, FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre and Meridian Centre.

Virtual Programming

CRCS continues to host a number of virtual programming options for residents which are being continuously measured to track engagement. As a result, CRCS has seen thousands of engagements across a number of platforms (including Zoom, Social Media, e-mail, and blog) and continue to curate content on a regular basis to keep residents engaged.

St. Catharines Museum

St. Catharines Museum is offering free lesson plans, activities, resources, programs, tours, and exhibits online, including blog posts, podcast recordings, live and pre-recorded videos, online exhibits, social media contests, craft ideas, and e-news updates for regular membership and subscribers.

CRCS museum staff created a Legacy of a Pandemic program and is asking the community to contribute their journals, diary entries, photos and memories to the Museum collection to create an archive of how the community has experienced and viewed this pandemic.

Culture

The Culture Ink! Newsletter continues to provide a weekly updates on Culture-related news and activities and has been received by an average of 1,588 subscribers per week and 7,844 total in the past five e-blasts.

Supporting the Community's Older Adults

Telephone calls to all Older Adult Centre (OAC) members were initiated shortly after City facilities closed to the public. All 875 OAC members have been called twice as of April 30, 2020, some joined the Senior Centres without Walls program and approximately 100 have asked for more frequent follow-up calls because they are feeling socially isolated.

The Senior Centres without Walls program continues to be a success with the program expanding to celebrate June is Seniors Month. This telephone program is useful for older adults who do not utilize current technology to connect with the community. The current participants have indicated that hearing other's voices, sharing a laugh and having a chance to speak to one another is invaluable.

Each program is either interactive or lecture style with questions at the end. One of the goals of this program is to include a variety of program styles to cover fun and light hearted programs as well as sharing information and being educational.

The maximum participants for interactive programs is 15 in order to manage the group. The maximum participants for lecture style programs is limitless. As of April 30, 2020, CRCS has had 64 participants in total with 28 of those participants being non-members of the City's Older Adult Centres.

The Seniors Centre without Walls program will continue to be covered by the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility through the Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario for the month of May.

Community Gardens Program

On Saturday, April 25, 2020, the Province announced an amendment to their March 30, 2020 emergency orders whereby community gardens were removed from the outdoor recreational amenity list that were to close. Therefore, the City is permitted to prepare use of community and allotment gardens (in compliance with directives from public health officials). Staff are working with public health officials to develop guidelines and protocols to ensure the gardens are operated safely. Staff will be working closely with the Community Garden user groups to assist with a seamless transition to the growing season. Once public health requirements are in place and new agreements are signed, the user groups will then be able to begin work in the community gardens.

Should the staff recommendation on advisory committees and task forces be approved for these groups to meet virtually, the Green Advisory Committee will be able to meet and award the annual Community Gardens Program Funding to provide assistance to community gardens.

St. Catharines Farmers Market

CRCS is working closely with Niagara Region Public Health, Farmers Markets Ontario and the Farmers Market Vendors Association and to develop a plan to safely open the Farmers Market. Target opening would be closer to the end of May. Farmers Markets have been deemed as essential services by the Province and opening the Farmers Market greatly helps to contribute to reopening the economy. Additionally, the Farmers Market is investigating opportunities for an online ecommerce platform for its vendors.

Community Engagement and Development Surveys

The large volume in responses to the various surveys that CRCS advertised to the public, indicates that the City is successful in keeping the public engaged.

- Aquatics Facilities Strategy Community Survey – 244 respondents
- Lakeside Park Pavilion Naming – 743 respondents
- Rodman Hall Community Survey – 302 respondents

Support of Partners

Needle Pickup Pilot Project Update

This section is intended to provide an update on the Needle Pickup Pilot Project approved by Council during the 2020 budget process.

Originally, the plan for the pilot project included tracking of the number of needles picked up, the cost of cleaning up spaces that have been subjected to abuse by people using needles and other drugs; and other issues around homelessness and addiction found in city parks. Municipal Works crews were to be augmented with additional City staff and paired with outreach workers from the Region of Niagara for seven-day coverage.

With the declared state of emergency, this plan has been adjusted. Municipal Works staff will be providing clean up services and tracking needle pickup. Further, with the staff reductions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, City crews will only be available from Monday to Friday. If there is an emergency on the weekends, City staff will be called in to deal with the situation.

While the COVID-19 emergency has led to significant changes in the City's operations work plan, the social issues within our parks and throughout the downtown remain. In recognition, the City will be engaging directly with Gateway Residential and Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. and Niagara Resource Service for Youth (The RAFT) to provide outreach support to our staff when dealing with issues requiring social service support. These agencies were successful under a Niagara Region Community Services Request for Proposal for Assertive Street Outreach. Through direct engagement, City staff will be able to rely on three trained workers who can respond directly and immediately to a person's needs by bringing coordinated services from across the Homeless-Serving System, and encouraging and supporting clients to access shelter, housing and other social supports. The cost of the revised program is \$120,000 as compared to the original budget of \$350,000.

These services aim to:

- Proactively engage with people sleeping rough to facilitate pathways into housing
- Minimize the harmful effects of rough sleeping while working towards long-term housing solutions
- Provide standardized intake, triage, and assessment to assess a person's vulnerability and assist in the identification of appropriate housing resources
- Deliver case coordination in collaboration with government and non-profit organizations to support those who may be reluctant to access traditional services
- Provide an intensive and coordinated team approach to identify and work towards personal goals.

During the pandemic, the outreach workers will also ensure that clients are regularly assessed for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, educated on pandemic safety, provided access to medical assessment as required, and the self-isolation facility. Interactions and case planning with clients will be documented in a common database to ensure all homeless agencies are aware of services offered, referrals made and client goals.

It is the intention that utilizing the services of trained outreach workers will allow Municipal Works staff to focus on park and downtown maintenance while outreach provides the necessary supports to the individuals in need within our community.

Boards and Commissions

The City continues to work with its board and commissions to take a unified approach to addressing the pandemic. On Friday, April 24, 2020, the City's CAO, Shelley Chemnitz, sent an email to Mayor and Council with an update on steps that St. Catharines Library Board and Transit Commission are taking to address the pandemic. This information has been included as Appendix 1.

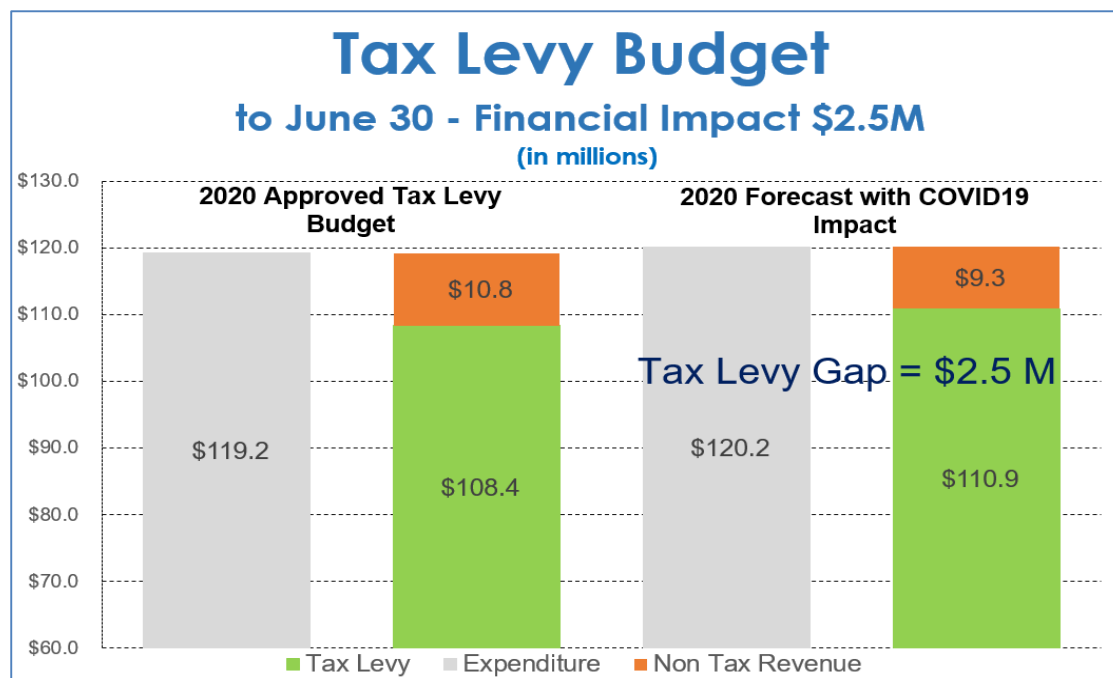
Ensure Organization Remains in a Financial Stable Condition

The MECG remains of the position that the COVID-19 pandemic will have a significant financial impact on the City as well as all municipalities across Ontario.

COVID-19 update report [CAO-063-2020](#), initially forecasted a financial impact of a \$2.4 million dollar tax levy gap, based on information available as of April 2, 2020 and for the period up to the end of May 2020.

Tax Levy Budget – Up to June 30, 2020

Given the fluidity of COVID-19, Financial Management staff are continually monitoring the pandemic's financial impact and making adjustments accordingly. Forecasting financial impacts reflective of the period of June 30, 2020 indicate a \$2.5 Million tax levy gap as illustrated below.



The most significant impact on City's operating budget finances is related to loss of revenues, increased costs to address the pandemic and mitigation measures and savings.

Loss of Revenues – Total \$8.0 Million

- FirstOntario PAC and Meridian Centre: \$2.1 million
- Transit Commission: \$2.0 million
- Arenas and Recreation Programming: \$1.4 million
- General Revenue: \$1.4 million
- Building and Planning Permit Fees: \$1.1 million

COVID-19 Response Costs – Total of \$200,000

- Labour Hours
- Disinfection supplies
- IT costs (Zoom Licences, headsets, other work from home supplies)
- Signage (for facilities and playgrounds)

Mitigation Measures and Savings - \$5.7 Million

- Staffing Impacts (workforce reductions and deferred hiring): \$2.2 million
- FirstOntario PAC and Meridian Centre: \$1.5 million
- Transit Commission: \$1.0 million
- Utilities: \$800,000
- Service Reduction in Parks Operations \$200,000

Water and Wastewater Budget – Up to June 30, 2020

The City's water and wastewater budget will also experience financial hardships through foregone revenues estimated at a total of \$500,000 due to the deferral of 2020 rate

increase and the waiving of interest and penalties. Mitigation measures and savings are estimated at \$600,000 with a \$100,000 favourable impact.

Parking Budget – Up to June 30, 2020

The City's parking budget will also experience financial hardships through foregone revenues estimated at a total of \$600,000, due to limited parking enforcement, and some mitigation measures and savings estimated at \$100,000, with a \$500,000 unfavourable impact.

Net Financial Impact – Up to June 30, 2020

The net financial impact on City finances, up to June, 30, 2020, is estimated to be \$2.9 million unfavourable.

Given the uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, this financial forecast will continue to change. Updates to Council will be provided as they become available.

Provincial and Federal Support

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of St. Catharines has been an active participant in several government relations networks and associations. These organizations have been able to provide effective advocacy for municipal interests at the provincial and federal level.

On April 6, 2020 a joint letter signed by Large Urban Mayors' Caucus of Ontario (LUMCO), Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Mayor and Regional Chairs of Single Tier Cities and Regions (MARCO) to Minister McNaughton (Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development of Ontario) and copying Minister Clark (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing), advocated to request the temporary work redeployment and staffing measures put in place for Public Health Boards effective April 1, 2020, under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, be expanded to include municipalities, local boards, municipal corporations, District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) and Library Boards. Minister Clark confirmed to LUMCO members at the April 28, 2020 teleconference that having that letter in hand was "critical" to putting the emergency order through on April 17, 2020

LUMCO's advocacy efforts have also extended to Minister Mulroney (Minister of Transportation), in a letter on April 9, 2020 to begin a dialogue to identify solutions to public transit challenges, including emergency relief funding to replace lost operating revenue, emergency grants for those facing liquidity issues and support for the procurement of personal protective equipment, cleaning agents and disinfectants.

On April 23, 2020, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) made an urgent request on behalf of cities and communities across the country, calling for emergency operating funding for municipalities to keep essential services running and Canadians safe and protected. Minister Clark told LUMCO members that he had briefed the Premier on FCM's position, and that municipalities and the province need to collectively support FCM's call on the federal government to provide emergency funding.

At LUMCO's most recent meeting on April 28, 2020, via teleconference, LUMCO mayors and chief administrative officers identified the financial pressures associated with providing critical services while suffering unprecedented revenue losses as an emerging crisis for municipalities, which are unable to run budgetary deficits and have limited revenue generating tools. Without fiscal relief from other levels of government, municipalities will be forced to reduce services. LUMCO passed a resolution stating that Ontario's big-city mayors are united in their position that running deficits as a way to manage municipal financial challenges resulting from the pandemic is not in the public interest. LUMCO's next meeting will be on May 8, 2020.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Details on the MCEG's focus on the City's financial health during the pandemic can be found in the body of this report.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

There are no environmental sustainability implications associated with this report.

Conclusion

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, the MCEG will continue to implement measured responses that keep the well-being of the community top of mind.

The MCEG will continue to work with the Province, the Region and staff to continue to deliver essential services to residents and place the City in a strong position for recovery.

For the latest information on the City's response to COVID-19, please visit www.stcatharines.ca/COVID19 and the City's social media platforms.

Prepared and Submitted by

The City of St. Catharines Municipal Emergency Control Group (MCEG)

Approved by

Shelley Chemnitz
Chief Administrative Officer

David Oakes
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Email from City of St. Catharines CAO, Shelley Chemnitz, to Mayor and Council regarding St. Catharines Library Board and Transit Commission COVID-19 updates.

From: [Sorrenti, Trish](#) on behalf of [Chemnitz, Shelley](#)
To: [Sorrenti, Trish](#); [Chemnitz, Shelley](#)
Subject: Library and Transit Update
Date: Friday, April 24, 2020 9:44:34 AM

Good Morning Mayor and Council,

As mentioned in the CAO COVID-19 update report at Wednesday's council meeting, the City has been working closely with our Boards and Commissions to take a unified approach to address the pandemic and offer assistance.

Both the Library and Transit leadership connect regularly with myself and our MECG. The following updates are provided for Council's information.

LIBRARY

Library staff have been very proactive and responsive to this rapidly changing situation and working closely with city officials to make decisions promptly and communicate information to stakeholders.

Their Key Priorities (areas of focus) are as follows:

1. Addressing immediate issues related to library closure
2. Enhancing digital services during library closures
3. Preparing for library reopening

Priority #1: Addressing Closure

Communication: Staff have been focused on providing communication internally and externally. Managers continue to work with the City to share messages and coordinate news releases on the library website and social media to ensure consistency. The Library has been posting messages related to library closure, overdue fines, holds, memberships, electronic resources, information services, programming and also updating closure signage at all branches when needed.

Board: Management has kept the Board informed via emails and in contact with the Board Chair when issues arise. Library has been working towards an electronic platform to hold upcoming board meetings virtually.

On April 2, 2020, layoff notices were sent to part time employees, the Union and managers.

Priority #2: Enhancing digital services during library closure

Electronic resources: Staff have been updating the Library website and making announcements on social media to promote digital resources. The Library also has allotted additional funds to purchase e-books.

Online programming: Staff have been planning and developing online programs that benefit patrons while at home, such as online story time and online book club.

Membership registration: Staff have been offering 90 day temporary memberships to patrons who were not a member before the pandemic or whose privilege was suspended due to unpaid fines so they can access digital resources. Patrons who are granted temporary membership are required to validate their eligibility and pay off fines owing to the Library after the Library reopens.

The standard wrote an article that captures the Library's digital success

<https://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/news-story/9939235-huge-spike-in-online-library-patrons-in-st-catharines/>

Priority #3: Preparing for library reopening

Preparing staff for reopening: Given that some staff are on temporary layoff and the Library needs to prioritize its tasks before reopening, management will recall staff in stages.

Library is working with the City's Recovery Planning Committee to look ahead at:

- Enhanced cleaning of facilities and collections
- Coordinated return to work timeline for staff
- Social distancing guideline and building capacity guideline
- Staffing and service level (such as library hours)
- Protective supplies – Plexiglas, gloves, hand sanitizers, face masks, and wipes
- Proper signage and floor markings (social distancing, limiting patrons)
- New service model (more virtual programming, less in-person programming, automation)

ST. CATHARINES TRANSIT

The Commission has worked to proactively respond to the pandemic. Due to large scale closures such as Brock University and the potential for increased employee absenteeism, the Commission reduced service to a “Saturday” level on March 16, 2020. This insured the workforce would be available to ensure service continuity and provided a measured first step in service scale down.

On April 5, 2020 the Commission rolled out a further service to reduction to hourly frequency and a shorter service day. This level of service was decided upon to provide a functional schedule for essential trips and essential workers. Ridership has stabilized at about 85% below normal levels. The second service change has resulted in the layoff of 60 Commission employees.

Paratransit

Remains running at a reduced service level for essential trips only.

Ensuring Passenger and Employee Safety

The challenges in responding to this crisis have been many. Ensuring employee and passenger safety has guided decision making throughout. To ensure proper physical distancing, the process of rear door boarding was introduced. This allows passengers to board the bus without interaction with the driver or farebox. This has been implemented in many transit systems in Ontario. The consequence of this is no fares are collected. The Commission has been messaging that transit is for essential trips only.

Transit has also set capacity limits for buses to provide safe physical distancing for essential passenger trips and additional buses are used to maintain these load size restrictions. Seats on the bus are blocked to help with compliance.

Other measures taken are the closure of facilities to the public, provision of appropriate personal protective equipment to employees and extensive cleaning and disinfecting.

The Commission will continue to monitor developments and evaluate the appropriateness of both the service level and the protective measures put in place.

There is also transit representation on the City's Recovery Team.

The City will continue to work with its Boards and Commissions and provide Council with updates as new information becomes available.

Thank you

Shelley Chemnitz CPA, CA
Chief Administrative Officer
Email: schemnitz@stcatharines.ca
Tel: 905.688.5601 x1541




Corporate Report City Council

Report from: Financial Management Services, Director

Report Date: April 21, 2020 **Meeting Date:** May 6, 2020

Report Number: FMS-045-2020 **File:** 10.57.12

Subject: 2020 Property Tax Rates

Strategic Pillar: 

Recommendation

That Council confirm the property tax rates as detailed in Appendix 1; and

That the City Solicitor be directed to prepare the necessary by-laws. FORTHWITH

Summary

The confirmation of the 2020 property tax rates is a function of the annual budget process with Council approving the 2020 Operating Budget on December 16, 2020 and the 2020 Capital Budget on October 7, 2020. The Regional Municipality of Niagara approved the 2020 tax ratios at its meeting of April 23, 2020, including its 2020 tax rates and passed the appropriate by-laws. This approval is required in order for the City to complete its last stage in the annual budget process being the confirmation of the City's 2020 property tax rates. On January 22, 2020, the City received notification that the Provincial Government approved the 2020 Education Property Tax Rates. The City is now in position to finalize the City's 2020 Property Tax Rates.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

The 2020 Property Tax Rates report supports the Economic Prosperity by formalizing the City's commitment to building and growing a diverse and resilient economy through fiscal responsibility, urban regeneration and collaborative partnerships.

Background

The total property tax bill is comprised of levies from the City of St. Catharines, Regional Municipality of Niagara and the School Boards. It is the normal course of procedure around this time of year to bring forward for Council's formalization the property tax rate report as the final stage in the annual budget process. It occurs at this time of year as the final tax rates are dependent not only on the City and Regional annual budget processes to be completed, but also based on the approval of tax policy by Regional Council and notification by the Province of Ontario with the education rates. As of April 23, these other level of government approvals have concluded.

Property taxes are calculated by multiplying the Current Value Assessment (CVA) by the tax rate for that class of property. The CVA is established by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). MPAC is a not for profit corporation with every municipality in Ontario being a member, which is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of taxpayer, municipal and provincial representatives. MPAC's main responsibility is to classify and value all properties in Ontario for taxation purposes according to the legislation and regulations set by the Provincial Government.

Report

A tax rate is established for each class of property by dividing the tax levy requirement by the weighted assessment. The assessment is weighted by the tax ratios.

There are seven major property classes:

- Class 1 Residential
- Class 2 Multi-residential
- Class 3 Commercial
- Class 4 Industrial
- Class 5 Pipeline
- Class 6 Farm
- Class 7 Managed Forests

In addition to these major classes, the Region has the following:

- Class 8 New Multi-residential
- Class 9 New Commercial
- Class 10 Office Building
- Class 11 Shopping Centre
- Class 12 Parking Lots and Vacant Land
- Class 13 Large Industrial
- Class 14 New Industrial
- Class 15 New Large Industrial

The tax ratio reflects how a property class's tax rate compares with the residential tax rate. The residential tax ratio is equal to "one."

Business Improvement Area (BIA) Levies

The purpose of the Business Improvement Area (BIA) is the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned land and to promote the area as a business or shopping area. The BIA levy is raised from the commercial and industrial properties in the BIA area.

The City currently has one BIA - St. Catharines Downtown BIA, which was established in 1973 pursuant to the Ontario Municipal Act, and operates to revitalize and promote the downtown core of St. Catharines. The St. Catharines Downtown Association, at their General Membership meeting held February 25, 2020, approved its 2020 Budget in the amount of \$384,431 (2019 levy of \$384,431).

The former BIA - Port Dalhousie BIA, which was established in 1986 pursuant to the Ontario Municipal Act, operated to revitalize and promote the Port Dalhousie Business Improvement Area. The BIA was since dissolved by City Council on January 13, 2020. Therefore, there is no longer a levy requirement in 2020.

Regional General Tax Rate

The Region approved its general tax rates on April 23, 2020. These rates are detailed on Appendix 1.

Education Rates

The education rates for 2020 are included in Appendix 1. The City received notification on January 22, 2020, that the Provincial Government approved the 2020 Education Property Tax Rates.

The Province of Ontario announced the 2020 uniform residential education tax rate would be reduced from the 2019 rate. The 2020 uniform residential education tax rate is set at 0.153 per cent. (0.161 per cent in 2019).

Regional Waste Management

The Region has two primary authorities to raise its waste management costs:

1. An upper tier levy - special (Section 311 (4) of the Municipal Act 2001).
2. Fees and Charges (Section 390 of the Municipal Act 2001).

The Region has decided to levy its waste management cost by a special levy tax rate for 2020. This is consistent with prior years. The 2020 Regional Waste Management Services (RWMS) net budget increased by 9.8% from 2019. In 2019, the Region of Niagara awarded a new waste management collection contract expected to commence in October 2020, which had a larger increase which partially attributes to the increase in the 2020 RWMS budget. The other contributing factor is the decline in end market recycling revenues which has an unfavourable impact on the RWMS 2020 budget. The City of St. Catharines portion of the RWMS budget has increased by 8.47% from 2019 allocation. The Regional Waste Management rates are included in Appendix 1.

Tax Ratios

Under Provincial Legislation, responsibility for taxation policy (including establishing tax ratios) rests with the Region, as the upper tier in a two-tier structure. The Region at its April 23, 2020 meeting, established the following tax ratios:

Property Class	2020 Ratio	2019 Ratio
Residential and Farm	1.0000	1.0000
Multi-residential	1.9700	1.9700
Multi-residential - New	1.0000	1.0000
Commercial	1.7349	1.7349
Industrial - Residual	2.6300	2.6300
Large Industrial	2.6300	2.6300
Pipelines	1.7021	1.7021

Farmlands	0.2500	0.2500
Farmland Awaiting Development I	1.0000	0.7500
Farmland Awaiting Development II	Class Ratio	Class Ratio

The only change is the tax ratio for the “Farmland Awaiting Development I” class, which increased from 0.7500 to 1.0000 in 2020.

City Tax Rates

The City approved its 2020 Operating Budget at its December 16, 2019 Council meeting and the 2020 Capital Budget at its meeting of October 7, 2020. The confirmation of the 2020 property tax rates is the final stage in the annual budget process. Now that Regional Council has approved the 2020 tax policy and its rates, the City is able to conclude the final phase of the annual budget process.

Niagara Health System Funding Pre Levy

City Council, at its May 26, 2008 meeting, approved that a separate tax rate be levied for hospital purposes beginning in 2008 in the amount of \$2,029,605. This levy is intended to accumulate funds to meet the City’s commitment with regard to the new hospital. The approved payment schedule indicates the amount of \$2,208,915 be levied in 2020 (2019 levy of \$2,208,973). The hospital pre levy rates are included in Appendix 1.

Infrastructure Levy

City Council, at its March 8, 2016 meeting, approved that a separate infrastructure tax rate be levied to help address the existing infrastructure deficit. An infrastructure levy is a tool that will help address the infrastructure deficit and demonstrate accountability and transparency to the taxpayers about how funds are allocated and for what purpose.

With its approval of the City’s contribution to the Canada Summer Games Sport and Ability Centre and its release of the \$10 million funding share, Council at its meeting of November 18, 2019 confirmed the 0.5% increase in the infrastructure levy for 2020. This increase will generate infrastructure levy dollars of \$523,000 for the Canada Summer Games Sport and Ability Centre and Henley Rowing Centre in 2020. The infrastructure levy rates are included in Appendix 1.

2020 Tax Rates and Associated Schedules

In summary, the following are included as Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - 2020 Tax Rates
- Appendix 2 - 2020 Current Value Assessment
- Appendix 3 - 2020 Tax Levy
- Appendix 4 - 2019-2020 Tax Comparison for Median Household

Tax Installments for Protected Classes

Business tax capping was introduced by the Province in 1998 to ensure the impact of CVA reform was manageable for taxpayers in the Multi-Residential, Commercial and

Industrial property classes. The system was originally intended to last just three years, with increases on these classes limited to 10% in 1998, 15% in 1999 and 20% in 2000 (referred to as 10-5-5). More than 20 years later, the tax capping program in Niagara continues, although the number of properties impacted has shrunk significantly. The Multi-Residential capping was eliminated in 2017. Industrial capping was eliminated in 2019 and the commercial properties will be eligible for elimination in 2020.

Financial Implications

The confirmation of the City's 2020 property tax rates is the final stage in the annual budget process. The tax rates from all three governments; Regional, Education and City is necessary to calculate the 2020 property tax rates. These tax rates are then multiplied by the appropriate assessment to calculate the individual homeowner's 2020 tax levy.

Environmental Sustainability Implications

The annual operating budget supports the Corporations environmental sustainability efforts such as waste mitigations and greenhouse gas emission reduction work.

Conclusion

The confirmation of the City's 2020 property tax rates is the final step in the annual budget process. City Council approved the City's 2020 operating budget on December 16 and its 2020 Capital Budget on October 7. The Niagara Regional Council has approved the 2020 tax policy, including its 2020 tax rates. The Province of Ontario has notified the City of the 2020 Education Rates. Therefore, St Catharines City Council may now confirm the 2020 property tax rates.

Prepared and Submitted by

Lisa Read
Manager of Revenue

Lucia Chen, CPA, CMA
Manager, Budgets and Procurement

Approved by

Kristine Douglas, CPA, CMA
Director, Financial Management Services / City Treasurer

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - 2020 Tax Rates
- Appendix 2 - 2020 Current Value Assessment
- Appendix 3 - 2020 Tax Levy
- Appendix 4 - 2019-2020 Tax Comparison for Median Household

City of St. Catharines
2020 Tax Rates

1

Class	Tax Class	Infrastructure Levy					Region		School	Total		Total Urban
		General	City Hospital	Urban	Total		General	Waste		General	Urban	
Residential	RT	0.539594%	0.012451%	0.073688%	0.008844%	0.634577%	0.577985%	0.066605%	0.153000%	1.358479%	1.432167%	0.073688%
Multi-Residential	MT	1.063000%	0.024528%	0.145165%	0.017422%	1.250115%	1.138630%	0.131212%	0.153000%	2.527792%	2.672957%	0.145165%
New Multi-Residential	NT	0.539594%	0.012451%	0.073688%	0.008844%	0.634577%	0.577985%	0.066605%	0.153000%	1.358479%	1.432167%	0.073688%
Commercial Occupied	CT,XT,CH	0.936142%	0.021601%	0.127841%	0.015343%	1.100927%	1.002746%	0.115553%	0.980000%	3.071385%	3.199226%	0.127841%
Commercial - Excess Land	CU,XU,CK	0.655299%	0.015121%	0.089489%	0.010740%	0.770649%	0.701922%	0.080887%	0.980000%	2.443969%	2.533458%	0.089489%
Commercial Other - Occupied	DT,GT,ST,YT,ZT	0.936142%	0.021601%	0.127841%	0.015343%	1.100927%	1.002746%	0.115553%	0.980000%	3.071385%	3.199226%	0.127841%
Commercial Other Excess Land	DU,SU,ZU	0.655299%	0.015121%	0.089489%	0.010740%	0.770649%	0.701922%	0.080887%	0.980000%	2.443969%	2.533458%	0.089489%
Commercial Vacant Land	CX,CJ	0.655299%	0.015121%	0.089489%	0.010740%	0.770649%	0.701922%	0.080887%	0.980000%	2.443969%	2.533458%	0.089489%
Industrial - Occupied	IT,LT,IH	1.419132%	0.032746%	0.193799%	0.023259%	1.668936%	1.520101%	0.175171%	1.250000%	4.420409%	4.614208%	0.193799%
Industrial - Excess Lands	IU,LU	0.993393%	0.022922%	0.135660%	0.016281%	1.168256%	1.064070%	0.122620%	1.250000%	3.469286%	3.604946%	0.135660%
Industrial - Vacant Lands	IX,IJ	0.993393%	0.022922%	0.135660%	0.016281%	1.168256%	1.064070%	0.122620%	1.250000%	3.469286%	3.604946%	0.135660%
Industrial - New	JT,KT	1.419132%	0.032746%	0.193799%	0.023259%	1.668936%	1.520101%	0.175171%	0.980000%	4.150409%	4.344208%	0.193799%
Industrial - New Excess Lands	JU,KU	0.993393%	0.022922%	0.135660%	0.016281%	1.168256%	1.064070%	0.122620%	0.980000%	3.199286%	3.334946%	0.135660%
Pipelines	PT	0.918443%	0.021193%	0.125424%	0.015053%	1.080113%	0.983788%	0.113368%	0.980000%	3.031845%	3.157269%	0.125424%
Farmlands	FT	0.134899%	0.003113%	0.018422%	0.002211%	0.158645%	0.144496%	0.016651%	0.038250%	0.339620%	0.358042%	0.018422%
Farmlands Awaiting Dev I	R1,C1	0.404696%	0.009338%	0.055266%	0.006633%	0.475933%	0.433489%	0.049954%	0.114750%	1.018860%	1.074126%	0.055266%

Other	Tax Rate
Downtown Association	
Commercial - Occupied	0.281717%
Commercial - Vacant	0.197202%
Port Dalhousie BIA	
Commercial - Occupied	0.000000%
Commercial - Vacant	0.000000%
Industrial - Occupied	0.000000%

City of St. Catharines**Current Value Assessment - 2020**

Property Class	2020	2019	Change \$	%
<u>Taxable Assessment</u>				
<u>General Tax Rates:</u>				
Residential	12,261,380,202	11,794,504,916	466,875,286	3.96%
Multi-Residential	683,669,568	671,819,914	11,849,654	1.76%
New Multi-Residential	83,316,920	58,774,801	24,542,119	41.76%
Commercial Residual - Low Band	1,247,102,472	1,194,582,945	52,519,527	4.40%
Commercial - Residual - Excess Land - Low Band	11,969,054	11,818,432	150,622	1.27%
Commercial Other (excluding residual)	746,357,305	754,501,382	-8,144,077	-1.08%
Commercial Other (excluding residual) Excess	1,640,633	4,241,918	-2,601,285	-61.32%
Commercial - Vacant Land	16,722,100	14,729,679	1,992,421	13.53%
Industrial - Occupied	152,153,648	151,616,907	536,741	0.35%
Industrial - New	4,113,700	4,067,775	45,925	1.13%
Industrial - Excess Lands	5,014,260	4,623,799	390,461	8.44%
Industrial - New Excess Lands	57,600	57,200	400	0.70%
Industrial - Vacant Land	25,209,900	25,185,527	24,373	0.10%
Pipelines	31,123,000	30,447,179	675,821	2.22%
Farmlands	137,636,000	127,695,843	9,940,157	7.78%
	<u>\$15,407,466,362</u>	<u>\$14,848,668,217</u>	558,798,145	3.76%
<u>Urban Service - City</u>				
Residential	\$11,955,689,902	\$11,498,952,810	456,737,092	3.97%
Multi-Residential	683,669,568	671,819,914	11,849,654	1.76%
New Multi-Residential	83,316,920	58,774,801	24,542,119	41.76%
Commercial Occupied	1,818,565,964	1,805,386,945	13,179,019	0.73%
Commercial - Vacant Units and Excess lands	8,508,500	12,263,543	-3,755,043	-30.62%
Commercial - Vacant Land	16,711,800	14,719,379	1,992,421	13.54%
Commercial - New Construction	158,157,513	127,548,518	30,608,995	24.00%
Commercial - New Construction-Vacant land	4,004,487	2,806,203	1,198,284	42.70%
Industrial - Occupied	147,484,748	147,224,591	260,157	0.18%
Industrial - Vacant units and Excess Lands	5,014,260	4,623,799	390,461	8.44%
Industrial - Vacant Land	25,156,900	25,133,527	23,373	0.09%
Industrial - New Construction	4,113,700	4,067,775	45,925	1.13%
Industrial - New Construction - Vacant Lands	57,600	57,200	400	0.70%
Pipelines	31,123,000	30,447,179	675,821	2.22%
Farmlands	7,155,700	6,704,540	451,160	6.73%
	<u>\$14,948,730,562</u>	<u>\$14,410,530,724</u>	538,199,838	3.73%
	<u>97.02%</u>	<u>97.05%</u>		
<u>Total Assessment</u>				
Taxable Properties	\$15,407,466,362	\$14,848,668,217	558,798,145	3.76%
YMCA - Education only	12,526,000	11,997,000	529,000	4.41%
Payment in Lieu	93,018,300	90,287,722	2,730,578	3.02%
Exempt Properties	1,188,082,200	1,127,727,715	60,354,485	5.35%
	<u>\$16,701,092,862</u>	<u>\$16,078,680,654</u>	<u>622,412,208</u>	<u>3.87%</u>

Reassessment in 2019 based on January 1, 2016 valuation day. Phased in over 4 years.

3

City of St. Catharines**2020 Tax Levy**

Tax Levy	City of St. Catharines					Region of Durham			School	Total Tax Levy
	General	City Hospital	Urban	Infrastructure Levy	Total	General	Waste	Total		
Residential	66,161,672	1,526,664	8,809,909	1,084,372	77,582,617	70,868,938	8,166,692	79,035,631	18,779,076	175,397,324
Multi-Residential	7,267,408	167,690	992,449	119,111	8,546,658	7,784,467	897,057	8,681,523	1,046,014	18,274,195
New - Multi Residential	449,573	10,374	61,395	7,368	528,710	481,559	55,493	537,053	127,475	1,193,237
Commercial - Occupied	11,674,650	269,387	2,324,873	191,344	14,460,254	12,505,270	1,441,064	13,946,334	12,221,604	40,628,192
Commercial - Excess Land	78,433	1,810	7,614	1,285	89,143	84,013	9,681	93,695	117,297	300,134
Commercial Other - Occupied	6,986,964	161,221	202,190	114,514	7,464,889	7,484,068	862,438	8,346,506	7,314,302	23,125,697
Commercial Other- Excess Land	10,751	248	3,584	176	14,759	11,516	1,327	12,843	16,078	43,680
Commercial - Vacant Land	109,580	2,529	14,955	1,796	128,860	117,376	13,526	130,902	163,877	423,638
Industrial Occupied	2,159,261	49,824	285,824	35,390	2,530,299	2,312,889	266,529	2,579,418	1,901,921	7,011,638
Industrial New	58,379	1,347	7,972	957	68,655	62,532	7,206	69,738	40,314	178,708
Industrial - Excess Land	49,811	1,149	6,802	816	58,579	53,355	6,148	59,504	62,678	180,761
Industrial - New Construction - Vacant Land	572	13	78	9	673	613	71	684	564	1,921
Industrial Vacant Land	250,433	5,779	34,128	4,105	294,444	268,251	30,912	299,163	315,124	908,731
Pipelines	285,847	6,596	39,036	4,685	336,164	306,184	35,284	341,468	305,005	982,637
Farmlands	185,670	4,285	1,318	3,043	194,315	198,879	22,918	221,796	52,646	468,758
Total	95,729,004	2,208,915	12,792,127	1,568,972	112,299,018	102,539,912	11,816,347	114,356,258	42,463,976	269,119,252

Comparison to 2019	City of St. Catharines					Region of Durham			School	Total Tax Levy
	General	City Hospital	Urban	Infrastructure Levy	Total	General	Waste	Total		
2019 Tax levy	91,907,950	2,208,973	12,690,223	1,005,247	107,812,393	97,079,728	10,873,280	107,953,008	43,114,641	258,880,042
Change - \$	3,821,054	-58	101,904	563,725	4,486,625	5,460,184	943,067	6,403,250	-650,665	10,239,210
Change - %	4.16%	0.00%	0.80%	56.08%	4.16%	5.62%	8.67%	5.93%	-1.51%	3.96%

City of St. Catharines**Tax Comparison for Median Household
Residential**

	2020	2019	Change Amount	%
<u>Tax Rates:</u>				
City - General	0.539594%	0.536100%	0.003494%	0.65%
City - Urban	0.073688%	0.075640%	-0.001952%	-2.58%
City - Hospital	0.012451%	0.012885%	-0.000434%	-3.37%
City - Infrastructure Levy	0.008844%	0.005864%	0.002980%	50.82%
Total City Tax Rate	0.634577%	0.630489%	0.004088%	0.65%
Region - General	0.577985%	0.566267%	0.011718%	2.07%
Region - Waste	0.066605%	0.063424%	0.003181%	5.02%
Total Region Tax Rate	0.644590%	0.629691%	0.014899%	2.37%
School	0.153000%	0.161000%	-0.008000%	-4.97%
Total Tax Rate	1.432167%	1.421180%	0.010987%	0.77%

Taxes (Median with Current Value of \$254,000)

City - General	1,370.57	1,318.81	51.76	3.92%
Region - General	1,468.08	1,393.02	75.06	5.39%
Region - Waste Management	169.18	156.02	13.16	8.43%
Urban - City	187.17	186.07	1.10	0.59%
City - Infrastructure Levy	22.46	14.42	8.04	55.76%
School	388.62	396.06	-7.44	-1.88%
Total Urban Rate	3,606.08	3,464.40	141.68	4.09%
City - Hospital	31.63	31.70	-0.07	-0.22%
Total Urban Rate with Hospital	\$3,637.71	\$3,496.10	\$141.61	4.05%