The Regional Municipality of Halton

Report To: Chair and Members of the Planning and Public Works Committee
From: Art Zuidema, Commissioner, Legislative and Planning Services
Date: October 4, 2017

RECOMMENDATION


2. THAT the Regional Clerk forward a copy of Report No. LPS44-17, to the City of Burlington, the Town of Halton Hills, the Town of Milton, the Town of Oakville, Conservation Halton, Credit Valley Conservation Authority, Grand River Conservation Authority, Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, for their information.

REPORT

Executive Summary

- Report No. LPS110-16 - Halton Region Official Plan Review - Phase One: Directions Report endorsed by Council on October 12, 2016, outlined the necessary elements of a Communication and Engagement Strategy in accordance with the Phases 2 and 3 work plans (Q1 2017 - Q2 2020) for the Regional Official Plan Review.

- Regional staff have prepared this Communication and Engagement Strategy to guide and promote public participation and stakeholder engagement activities during Phases 2 and 3 of the Regional Official Plan Review.

- Key elements of the Communication and Engagement Strategy include:
  - guiding principles and objectives for public engagement;
  - identification of key audiences;
  - descriptions of communication and engagement tools; and
  - monitoring and reporting.
Regional staff recommends that Regional Council endorse the Communication and Engagement Strategy so it can be implemented during Phases 2 and 3 of the Regional Official Plan Review.

Background


On October 11, 2016, Regional Council endorsed Report No. LPS110-16 "Halton Region Official Plan Review - Phase One Directions Report" which identified the scope of policy matters to be reviewed and a general work plan for completion of the Regional Official Plan Review (ROPR). The Directions Report also outlined requirements to develop a Strategy to guide communication and public engagement efforts during Phase 2 (background analysis and development of discussion papers stage) (Q1 2017 to Q2 2019) and Phase 3 (policy development stage) (Q2 2019 – Q2 2020) of the ROPR.

The first task outlined in the ROPR Phase 2 work plan was to develop a Communication and Engagement Strategy. The Strategy encourages public, stakeholder and agency participation, and promotes public and stakeholder engagement activities during Phases 2 and 3 of the ROPR.

This report provides an overview of Regional staff’s recommended Communication and Engagement Strategy and recommends that Regional Council endorse the Strategy so it can be implemented during Phases 2 and 3 of the ROPR (Q1 2017 – Q2 2020).

Discussion

The attached Communication and Engagement Strategy has been developed to guide the development of communication initiatives and public engagement activities, and encourage public participation in the ROPR. The Communication and Engagement Strategy will ensure this process is accountable, transparent, inclusive, responsive and respectful and occurs throughout the process. The Communication and Engagement Strategy, including the anticipated consultation timelines during Phases 2 and 3 (Q1 2017 – Q2 2020) of the ROPR, is included as Attachment #1 to this report.

The key elements of the Strategy are summarized below.
Guiding Principles and Objectives

The Strategy embraces five guiding principles (accountability, transparency, respect, inclusivity and responsiveness) to ensure meaningful opportunities for community engagement are provided during the ROPR process.

The Strategy also identifies five objectives for the Official Plan Review Phases 2 and 3:

1. Recognize the shared partnership between the Province, Region and Local Municipalities to coordinate land use planning;

2. Generate widespread awareness among stakeholders of the opportunity to participate in ROPR;

3. Provide multiple ways for stakeholders and the public to learn about land use planning in the Region and provide feedback throughout the review process;

4. Document the feedback through an engagement process and demonstrate how the input contributed to the planning/decision-making process; and

5. Demonstrate how this input has contributed to the planning and decision-making process.

Statutory Requirements

The Planning Act requires public open houses and statutory public meetings and identifies notification requirements and timing for the ROPR processes. Recent amendments to the Planning Act through Bill 73 have provided flexibility to enhance consultation and notification techniques for notification and engagement during the ROP Review. The Strategy exceeds the Planning Act requirements by providing opportunities for digital notification and engagement, as well as more online and face to face consultation beyond statutory public open houses and meetings.

Key audiences

The Communication and Engagement Strategy outlines mechanisms to actively seek input from a broad range of stakeholders throughout the ROPR process. These key stakeholders include, but are not limited to: Halton’s Local Municipalities, Regional Advisory Committees, the Ministries of Municipal Affairs, Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change, Agriculture and Food and Rural Affairs, Conservation Authorities, Indigenous Communities, Community Organizations, Business Associations, Ratepayer Associations, and the broader public.
Engagement and Communication Tools

The Communication and Engagement Strategy identifies a number of digital, as well as traditional engagement and communication tools to be used throughout the ROPR process to promote participation and broaden stakeholder and public engagement. Digital tools that are recommended to be used include: online education and resources, social media and email notifications, web and mobile surveys, and posting of all materials on the Regional website. Traditional tools such as face to face statutory public meetings and public information centres, newspaper notifications, and educational products and materials are also recommended to be used throughout the process. The Communication and Engagement Strategy included as Attachment #1 to this report provides more information.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Communication and Engagement Strategy sets out a process to monitor data on the level of public and stakeholder participation and will track to determine effectiveness of tools and events, as well as level of interest and interaction during the ROPR process. While there are certain limitations to the collection of demographic data imposed by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, voluntary information from stakeholders and the public will be collected to assist in gaining a record of public participation, including demographic analysis, in the ROPR process.

A consultation report on all input and comments received through engagement activities, together with Regional staff responses, will be presented to Regional Council at the conclusion of each phase of the ROPR. At the conclusion of the ROPR, a final engagement report, including all input received will accompany the final report to Council on recommended policy amendments to the Regional Official Plan.

Conclusion

This Report recommends endorsement of the attached “Communication and Engagement Strategy” for implementation throughout Phase 2 and 3 of the Regional Official Plan Review (Q1 2017 – Q2 2020).
FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

Funding required to facilitate the Official Plan Review is included in the 2017 Capital Budget and Forecast under project T8021A (Regional Official Plan 2005). All tasks and deliverables will occur within the approved budget.

Respectfully submitted,

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Art Zuidema  
Commissioner, Legislative and Planning Services

Approved by

Jane MacCaskill  
Chief Administrative Officer

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Attachments:  Attachment #1 – Regional Official Plan Review – Communication and Engagement Strategy