



Report

Report to:	Mayor and Council
Date:	July 11, 2023
Title:	Northwest and Garner West Secondary Plans – Background Initiation Report

Recommendation(s)

Council receive this report regarding initiation of background work for the secondary plan processes for the Northwest Secondary Plan Area and the Garner West Secondary Plan Area; and

Council authorize staff to advertise a Request for Expression of Interest to seek out interested persons to participate on separate Community Focus Groups to provide regular input over the course of the Secondary Planning exercises.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to initiate two urban expansion area secondary plans. Staff resources are now in place to lead secondary planning for the Northwest Secondary Plan (NWSP) and the Garner West Secondary Plan (GWSP), both would ultimately be implemented through Official Plan Amendments. Council has budgeted for these Secondary Plans and the supporting studies. With Council's approval of this report, staff will proceed with the Request for Proposals process to have the appropriate consultants retained to complete the required technical studies.

The secondary plans aim to meet with municipal growth objectives in conjunction with a vision statement, goals, and objectives, distilled with input from the respective Community Focus Groups (CFG). The location of the NWSP and GWSP are illustrated on Schedule "1" to this report.

The secondary plans will set out policy/direction for each Plan Area to ensure successful implementation and the development of contextually appropriate complete community plans.

Additionally, staff are seeking Council's authorization to solicit interest from community members to sit on separate CFGs, participating and providing input at various stages the secondary plan process. This component starts at the outset of each Plan exercise (the visioning exercise). The CFG role is discussed later in this report.

Background

In July 2022 Niagara Region adopted a new Official Plan (OP) that had included several urban expansion areas being added for community planning in Niagara Falls as a result of the Region's Land Needs Assessment completed in support of their new OP. In November of 2022, the Province approved the Region's new OP, setting in motion the need for local municipalities to update local OPs for conformity purposes.

For Council's general awareness, Niagara Region's new OP requires secondary planning for any new Greenfield settlement expansion area more than 20 ha. The NWSP represents a gross area of approximately 101 ha. while the GWSP is approximately 183 ha. Net developable land will be determined and refined through the secondary planning process.

The overall objective of secondary planning is to create or contribute to the complete community concept; one that considers future neighbourhood structure that is well designed and developed to be vibrant, walkable, transit supportive and respectful of the natural environment, while contributing to helping achieve the City's 2051 housing and employment targets. A secondary plan will also ensure growth occurs in a coordinated and efficient manner (phased as appropriate) and prepared in an open, publicly inclusive, and transparent planning process.

The process will identify opportunities and constraints for development of the respective secondary plan areas and their relationship with surrounding lands, including but not limited to, the extent and sensitivity of existing environments (natural and built), transportation networks including active transportation, municipal servicing networks, and any recreational or socio-economic opportunities where they may exist or be introduced.

Staff, in consultation with the approval authority, shall determine which studies will be required to support the respective secondary plans. Presently, staff anticipate the following studies being required to support both secondary plan areas:

- Subwatershed (or equivalent)
- Functional Servicing Study
- Transportation Impact Study
- Environmental Impact Study
- Archaeological Phase 1
- Agricultural Impact (scoped to interface)

Confirmation on the required studies and/or scoping potential will be finalized with the approval authorities in the near term with an expected RFP release expected in late July or early August of this year.

Analysis

North-West Plan Area

The NWSP area is located west of the QEW, south and west of the Mountain Road interchange. The westerly limit is bounded by Kalar Road and the southerly extent is represented by the existing settlement area boundary along the hydro corridor. Total gross area of the GWSP is approximately 101 ha. (250 ac.).

The existing use of lands are described as:

- Environmental / Natural Features
- Cash crop (majority of lands)
- Place of Worship (and ancillary uses)
- Club Italia (hospitality and event centre)
- Restaurant and short-term accommodation (Regency Athletic Resort)
- Mobile Home Park (Shady Oaks)
- Limited rural residential

Garner West Secondary Plan Area

The GWSP area is centrally located along the westerly boundary of the existing serviced settlement area limits and defined almost in its entirety by boundary roads including, Lundy's Lane (Regional Road 20) to the north, Kalar Road to the east, McLeod Road along the south and Beechwood Road at west. The southerly limit of the Canadian National Railway corridor represents and clips the northwest corner of the Plan Area. The gross total GWSP Plan Area is composed of 183.5 ha. (453 ac.).

The existing use of lands are described as:

- Environmental / Natural Features
- Cash crop (majority of lands)
- Place of Worship (and ancillary uses)
- Niagara Falls Golf Club
- Kingsway Motel (in existing serviced urban area boundary)
- Limited rural residential

These secondary plan areas are identified for “community” growth purposes. This consists primarily of residential neighbourhoods composed of a mix of housing types and densities and population related employment opportunities (a mix of commercial, office, community services, institutional uses such as schools and libraries) and will carry a minimum density target to be confirmed during the planning process, but in no instances should it be planned below the minimum of 53 persons/jobs per hectare for Greenfield lands as contained in the Niagara Falls OP.

The secondary planning exercises will be City led and undertaken with regard for regional and provincial policy direction as contained in the Provincial Policy Statement 2020, Provincial Growth Plan (2020), as well as the recently approved Niagara Region Official Plan.

Public Engagement

The secondary planning process established for the City is one that is consultation focused. Public engagement is a cornerstone to the process and will see several key points of engagement over the course of the Plans development. The Let's Talk Niagara Falls will be used to establish websites for both secondary plans, offering access to all published reports, background studies, upcoming key dates for meetings and document release. The platform will serve as a single location where public can maintain contact with responsible individuals and track progress of the Plan development to its conclusion.

In addition, each secondary plan will enlist a "Community Focus Group" (CFG) for each of the Plan Areas. The CFGs are involved at the outset, playing a role in formulating a vision statement for the future community, as well as establishing goals and objectives the process will aim to achieve, while gaining an understanding of what constraints may exist for each of the respective Plan areas. The CFG will be engaged at several key points of the process to offer comments and serve as a barometer on whether the Plans are heading in the envisioned direction.

Each CFG would typically consist of a cross section from the immediate community with 10-12 members representing new and long-term residents, youth, seniors, business owners and developers. An invitation for interested persons to submit their names for participation on the Community Focus Group via "Request for Expression of Interest" will be advertised. To ensure a good cross section of the community and a balanced representation on the CFG, criteria and a terms of reference will be developed to help identify persons meeting with a preferred composition profile, and to set parameters/expectations for selected members. Staff will be looking to ensure a variety of perspectives are represented based on self-described interests of each individual expressing interest in participation.

Regardless of structuring a CFG, any member of the public may provide comments at any time during the process for Staff's consideration. All comments received directly or through scheduled public engagement activities will be available to Council through administrative reporting during the secondary plan process.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be established that will supply critical insight and information on the community building blocks and parameters associated with cross-jurisdictional matters, core service timing and environmental protections. TAC engagement and guidance will assist in identifying efficient and phased development progress, while setting out realistic expectations on capital commitments to facilitate growth.

The TAC will be comprised of City, Regional and Conservation Authority representatives and will engage active consultants working on background studies and consult other key agencies where required (such as Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of the Environment).

Next Steps

Planning staff are working to finalize the Terms of Reference with other departmental staff and will subsequently be consulting with Niagara Region (the approval authority) and the Conservation Authority for any input or scoping ability for the required background work. Once complete, the City will issue an open Request for Proposal for qualified consulting firms to undertake and complete the required background study work. City planning staff will maintain the planning function through the process.

Planning staff anticipate release of the RFP during Q3 of this year.

While the RFP process is being undertaken, staff can concurrently issue the Request for Expressions of Interest for the respective Community Focus Groups to begin their mandate outlined earlier in this report.

Financial Implications/Budget Impact

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The NWSP and GWSP each have an approved budget allocation of \$350,000 for background study work while staff activity is already a part of Planning's operational budget.

Strategic/Departmental Alignment

The development of the NWSP and GWSP are consistent with the Vibrant and Diverse Economy, Healthy Safe and Livable Community, and Diverse and Affordable Housing priorities.

List of Attachments

[Schedule 1: Location Map](#)

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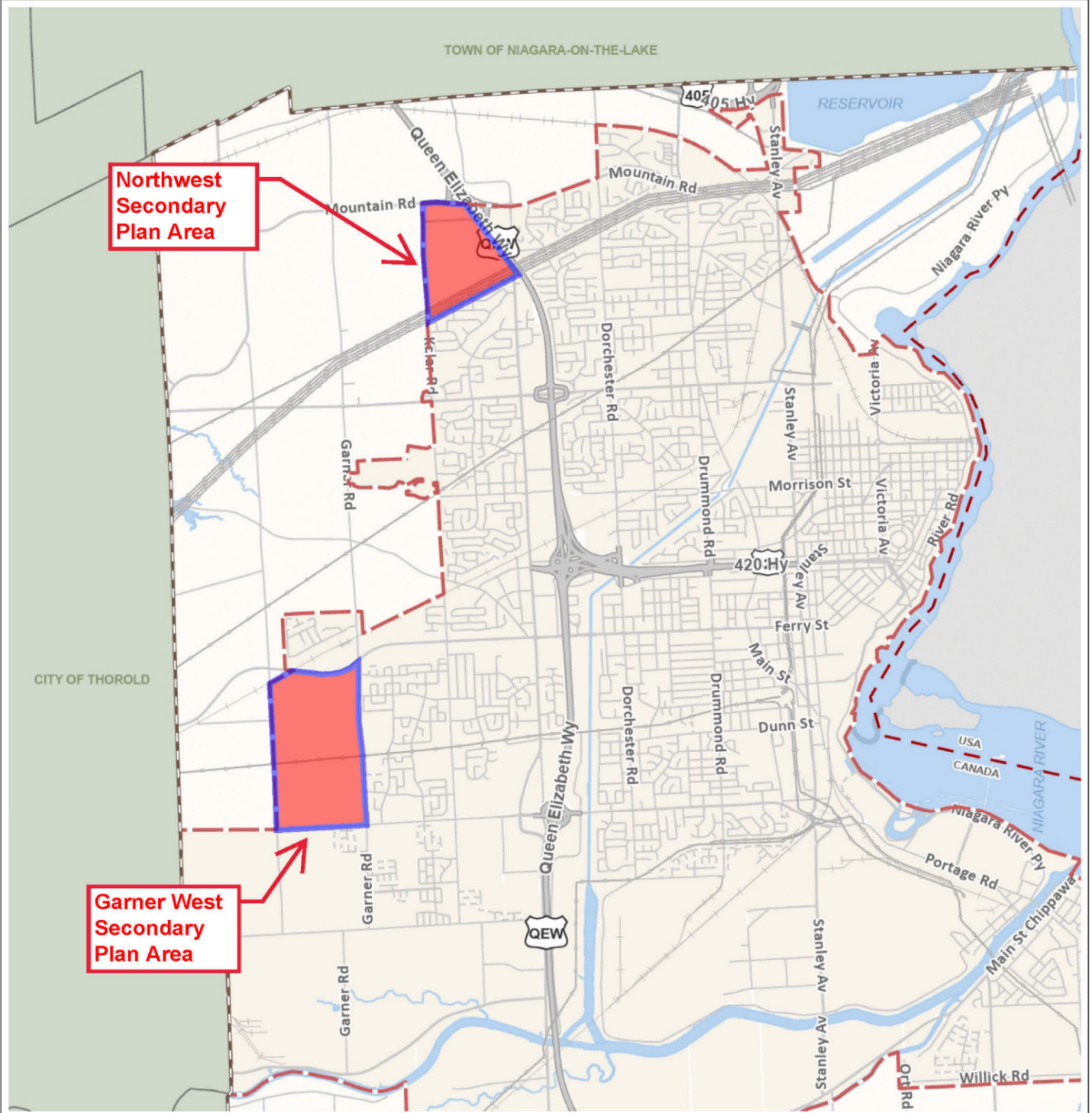
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- 03 Jul
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Schedule 1

(Location Map)



Northwest Secondary Plan Area and Garner West Secondary Plan Area - Location Map



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