

## MEMORANDUM

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Paul Freeman  
Chief Planner

Date: September 19, 2019

Re: Growth and Infrastructure Alignment

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This memo provides an update on key points following additional consultation on the Growth and Infrastructure Alignment staff report that was presented to Committee of the Whole on June 13, 2019. This staff report was referred by Council to the September 19, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting.

### **Consultation meetings have been held with all nine local municipalities**

Over the summer months, the CAO, Chief Planner and the Commissioners of Environmental Services, Finance and Transportation Services met with senior local municipal staff at all nine local municipalities to discuss aligning growth with infrastructure and related issues. Local municipal staff are generally in agreement with the principle of aligning growth and infrastructure as well as advancing development in areas that have existing servicing infrastructure for growth areas identified by the Region in the staff report. Local municipal staff provided updates on the current state of local infrastructure, the ability to accommodate development and the outlook for future growth, including short-term outlooks for growth with the strongest potential to generate development charges.

### **There was general consensus for an Integrated Growth Management approach to land use planning, servicing and fiscal accountability**

A primary purpose of undertaking the Municipal Comprehensive Review is to update the Regional Official Plan to plan for population and employment growth to 2041, and conform to the Growth Plan. The Growth Plan requires that municipalities use an integrated and coordinated approach to infrastructure planning, together with land use planning and infrastructure investment, including consideration of the fiscal impacts of growth.

Substantial investment in servicing and transportation infrastructure has been made by York Region that can accommodate significant levels of population growth. Growth-related debt accumulated in the late 2000s and early 2010s, coupled with lower than expected population growth and development charge revenue, prompted Regional Council's adoption of a Fiscal Strategy in 2014. Aligning growth and infrastructure allows the Region to manage debt and better align capital spending with growth.

There was general consensus that prioritizing growth in areas with existing infrastructure capacity in the short-term will help position the Region to manage debt and deliver the next phase of infrastructure investments required to accommodate growth to 2041 in a timely manner.

**As part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review, staff are preparing a growth forecast to 2041 that conforms with Growth Plan policy direction and targets while optimizing infrastructure for planned growth**

As discussed in the June 2019 report, recalibration of the current Regional Official Plan 2031 population and employment forecasts by local municipality is required to take account of:

- Actual population in each municipality that, in some cases, is lower than previously forecast
- Recent levels of growth being slower than anticipated
- Timing of approved and active development applications
- Timing of planned infrastructure, accounting for EA approval delays, and
- The principle of maximizing efficient use of existing transportation and water and wastewater infrastructure

**Short-term forecasts need to rely on generating development charge revenue from existing infrastructure**

Basing the distribution of growth to 2041 on the principle of staging infrastructure to align with the timing of growth is key. Planned growth will be staged based on prioritizing areas with existing infrastructure capacity in the short-term. In this way, the Region can manage growth-related expenditures as well as the timing and certainty of revenues, which is a key direction in the Region's Fiscal Strategy.

## **Longer-term forecasts, through 2041, will only be achievable through robust development charge collections**

The recommended approach respects development permissions for currently planned growth areas in the Region and stages growth to optimize existing infrastructure investments before triggering investments in additional infrastructure following approval. Staging of growth in this manner will create the fiscal room for the next generation of infrastructure projects to accommodate growth to 2041. The Region is fully committed to providing the infrastructure projects required to meet the 2041 growth projections.

## **All local municipalities are expected to grow, through 2041 and beyond**

Regional will staff will continue to work with the Province, local municipalities, the development industry and other stakeholders in implementing an integrated growth management approach. Recent consultations with industry stakeholders have been undertaken to enhance communication to the Province on the timely approval of infrastructure. Regional staff will continue to meet to discuss aligning growth and infrastructure with stakeholders as part of the Municipal Comprehensive Review.

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Chief Planner

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Chief Administrative Officer

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