

DATE: November 9, 2020

REPORT NO: PD-148-2020

SUBJECT: **Information Report - Infill & Intensification in West Lincoln**

CONTACT: Brian Treble, Director of Planning & Building

OVERVIEW:

- On November 9th, 2020, part of our Team for the Master Community Plan, urban boundary expansion project will be updating Committee and Council about part of the study that assess opportunities for growth with Smithville.
- Provincial and Regional policy provides significant guidance on the need for infill and intensification as part of any growth strategy, no matter how big or small.
- West Lincoln is investigating intensification and infill for additional unit types that have not typically been seen in Smithville as we have pressures for a greater variety of opportunities.
- Provincial, Regional and Local planning policy state that where appropriate, intensification is encouraged.
- West Lincoln has an intensification target of 15% which means that we should average at least 15% or greater for development and redevelopment within the existing urban boundary over the allotted planned horizon outlined in the Township's Official Plan.
- The memo (attached) from GSP Group has stated that Smithville is running out of land to intensify but does have enough land available to meet a max 15% intensification target should the land be developed to its maximum capacity.
- All levels of planning policy will be required to encourage and require intensification, infill and redevelopment to occur within the built-up boundary of Smithville.
- Intensification, infill, and redevelopment is seen as good planning as outlined in all levels of planning policy.
- Smithville should continue to intensify its built-up boundary where appropriate and provide more housing types to the current and future residents of Smithville, where possible, while we grow towards a more complete community.
- Steve Wever and Richard Vandezande will be in attendance on November 9th, 2020 to review, report and outline their preliminary findings to 2041. Work is now occurring on what should be done to plan for West Lincoln to the year 2051.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That, Report PD-148-2020 regarding “Infill and Intensification in West Lincoln” dated November 9th, 2020, be RECEIVED for information purposes.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #3

- Strategic, Responsible Growth

BACKGROUND:

West Lincoln has been receiving increased interest to develop and redevelop lands for infill and intensification as our available greenspace is being used. Infill and intensification is something that is supported and encouraged by all levels of government including within Provincial, Regional and Local planning policy. As part of the master community plan work, GSP Group as part of the Aecom consulting team is responsible for putting together a report to analyze intensification and greenfield density in Smithville. GSP Group has a history of growth analysis work within West Lincoln. This report breaks down where the infill and intensification comes from, the policy supporting it on a Provincial, Regional and Local level, and provides a small breakdown of the findings of the draft report provided by GSP Group (to 2041 so far). Work on a report to 2051 is currently underway.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Infill and intensification should occur naturally within identified areas of a community. Greenfield areas are vacant lands that have not been developed before. At the same time as the greenfield land is developed, developers should also be looking for new ways to include redevelopment and intensification within built up areas.

Intensification and infill development takes an already developed piece of land and increases the number of units per hectare that can be accommodated on the land. The land that is easier to develop for intensification and infill are logically the first pieces to be redeveloped.

There is policy direction from the both the Province and the Region on Intensification and Infilling. The Province provides policy for how municipalities in Ontario should be growing, and each Region provides more specific detail for how their municipalities can grow in compliance with the Province’s policies. Each municipality then outlines how they should grow in a way that is more specific but still compliant with both the Region and the Province’s policies.

Below is an outline of those policies from the different levels of government.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS)

The PPS outlines how to manage and direct land use in a way that achieves efficient and resilient development and land use patterns. Intensification is one way of achieving this goal as it provides a smaller area to provide the same services to a larger number

of units. The PPS states that enough land shall be made available to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 25 years. This includes lands available for intensification and redevelopment (1.1.2).

Appropriate development standards should be promoted which facilitate intensification, redevelopment, and compact form while avoiding or mitigating risks to public health and safety (1.1.3.4). The Township is required to identify areas within Smithville's existing developed area and achieve the minimum intensification target required by the Province. The Niagara Region had previously applied an intensification target of 15% to West Lincoln within the planning horizon to 2031. The attached report confirms that this target is appropriate to 2041 as well.

The PPS states that in order to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities required to meet projected requirements of current and future residents the Township shall maintain, at all times, land with servicing capacity sufficient enough to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned to facilitate residential intensification and redevelopment.

There is a heavy emphasis in the PPS policies to plan for intensification and redevelopment to ensure a compact and efficient land use where appropriate. Infill and intensification are planning principles that are required through the PPS at a rate to be established by the Region. A rate of at least 15% for Smithville is being contemplated.

Regional Official Plan, 2014 (ROP)

The Niagara Region's Official Plan has further refined the policies from the PPS. It states that a significant portion of Niagara's growth shall be directed to the Built-Up Boundary through intensification. The Built-Up Boundary is the area in Smithville that was already developed as of March, 2006. The ROP dictates the Region will maintain the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of ten years through residential intensification and redevelopment and if necessary, through lands which are designated and available for residential development (4.B.3.1). This policy establishes a priority for intensification and redevelopment before the development of vacant greenfield lands.

Section 4.C of the ROP focuses on Intensification and Greenfield Growth. It states that municipalities shall generally encourage intensification throughout the Built-Up Boundary, identify specific intensification areas to support the achievement of the intensification targets (downtown, nodes and corridors, etc), plan intensification areas to attract a significant portion of population and employment growth, among a number of additional policies (4.C.2.1). The ROP gives West Lincoln an intensification target of 15%

Township Official Plan (OP)

The Township's OP contains policy for Growth Management within West Lincoln. Some of the objectives are to encourage and facilitate redevelopment, infill and intensification within the Urban Settlement area of Smithville. Infill and intensification will help West

Lincoln achieve its target for the forecasted population and employment growth. Again, West Lincoln has been assigned a forecasted 15% increase in housing units through intensification and infill inside the Built Boundary.

There is an intensification area identified within Smithville. These lands have already been developed and have been identified to be the best lands available within Smithville for infill, intensification and redevelopment. The 15% target as written into the current Township Official Plan notes that we need to accommodate an additional 200 units over the course of the Official Plan's planning horizon to 2031. The draft consultant report now predicts the need for an additional 820 units to achieve a 15% intensification target by 2041.

Section 5.9 of the OP contains policies outlining an intensification strategy, these include:

- 1) Directing the majority of intensification to the identified intensification area identified in Schedule B-5;
- 2) Setting minimum density targets for the intensification areas
- 3) To provide a diverse mix of land uses that complement and support the overall development of a complete community
- 4) Higher density apartment development shall be directed to locations in the intensification area that are designated for either High Density Residential, Mixed-Use or Commercial Core;
- 5) All infill and intensification within the built boundary shall be subject to site plan control and shall ensure that the built form and physical look of the built form is compatible with the neighbourhood and shall comply with any urban design guidelines adopted by the Township;
- 6) To facilitate intensification, the Township may offer incentives (cash-in-lieu instead of parkland dedication, reduced parking standards, as of right zoning, etc.);
- 7) Intensification shall be phased in over time to ensure a balance of redevelopment and greenfield development.

Affordable housing is particularly encouraged in the intensification area due to accessibility to existing community and institutional services such as schools and commercial areas (6.1.11).

GSP Intensification and Infill Memo

The current version of the draft GSP Memo analysed intensification and infill within Smithville by the target year of 2041. The memo concluded that there will be a decline to the intensification growth rate that West Lincoln has recently seen from 2003 to 2019. This is because there is a declining supply of land available for intensification in Smithville. To help combat the projected declining rate of infill, the memo states the OP should continue to support the designated intensification area of Smithville as the primary location for significant redevelopment. Future intensification will become increasingly dependent on opportunities in this area as other infilling areas build out.

The memo has identified building heights, built form and density, mix of land uses, place making, public realm improvements, and a number of other items as key elements for further review and planning for the intensification area.

The memo states that there is a planned and potential supply of 820 units if the land available for redevelopment is built up as much as possible. This would be sufficient to meet a proposed 15% intensification target to 2041.

Updates to the Township's Community Improvement Plans should be considered following the MCP process to refresh and prioritize the promotion and implementation of the incentive programs and public realm improvement initiatives to support intensification and complete community development.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications relating to this report at this time.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

Inter-departmental comments are not applicable to this report at this time. A full presentation of the GSP report has occurred at the master community/urban boundary expansion TAC meeting of June 12, 2020.

The Township MCP/UBE process is occurring with direct input from the Region who has been extremely connected in the Infill and Intensification draft consultant report to 2041 and is currently being consulted for an updated growth report to 2051.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, intensification through infill and redevelopment is a development form that is required and encouraged by Provincial, Regional and Local policy. The draft memo prepared by GSP Group has indicated that the supply of land available for intensification is getting smaller every year. If the land is developed to its maximum capacity, there will be an adequate amount of land available to meet a min 15% intensification target. What this means for Smithville is that we will be able to provide a wider range of unit types in order to achieve the required intensification target.

The range of new unit types may include the introduction of back-to-back townhouses, basement apartment units and apartment buildings to complement the existing singles, semis, and townhouses in Smithville.

Including these new housing unit types will help West Lincoln to achieve its required intensification target and help build a complete community. Infill and intensification, where appropriate, is good for West Lincoln and Smithville in order to continue growing in a way that exemplifies good planning as outlined in Provincial, Regional and Local policy. Building these new unit types will provide support for future commercial and employment growth as well.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Provincial Intensification Memo
2. GSP Group DRAFT Memo

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