

**DATE:** November 13, 2023

**REPORT NO:** PD-57-2023

**SUBJECT:** Township of West Lincoln Official Plan 5 Year Review

**CONTACT:** Brian Treble, Director of Planning & Building

**OVERVIEW:**

- Regional Official Plan (NOP) was approved on November 4, 2022. This Official Plan included recognition of proposed new boundaries for Smithville as completed through a municipal comprehensive review and as implemented locally by Official Plan Amendment (OPA) No. 62.
- Corresponding to the boundary changes of OPA 62 was the Secondary Plan/Land Use policy of OPA 63.
- These two Official Plan amendments have both been Regionally approved; despite the fact that OPA 63 is currently subject to appeal.
- The remainder of the Township Official Plan is required to be updated within one year of Regional NOP receiving Provincial approval; in other words, before November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- This will not be possible in West Lincoln's case due to staffing limitations and the inability to get a consulting team hired in a timely manner.
- Notwithstanding these issues, West Lincoln is substantially closer to compliance than most other lower-tier municipalities in the Niagara Region.
- This report is written to inform Council of the timeline that will not be met and the fact that Planning staff have notified Regional staff of our delay.
- Staff hope to be close to completion of the review process by the spring of 2024.
- Based on discussions with Regional staff, the Minister's letter of November 2, 2023 (see attachment 1 to report PD-58-23) added another level of complexity to the review process as it is not clear what amendments may be changed/undone. All of the recent bills and the changes yet to come have made the five-year review process much more challenging.
- Staff wish to keep Planning Committee and Council informed of discussions with Regional Planning staff on the Township of West Lincoln Official Plan 5-year review efforts.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That, Information Report PD-57-2023, regarding “Township of West Lincoln Official Plan 5 Year Review”, dated November 13, 2023 be received for INFORMATION purposes.

#### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:**

- **BUILD** a safe, connected, caring and active community.
- **CHAMPION** strategic and responsible growth

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Planning Act requires that lower-tier municipalities update their Official Plan within one year of a Regional Official Plan approval. In this case, a new Regional Official Plan (NOP) was approved by the Province on November 4, 2022. As a result, the lower tier Niagara municipalities had until November 4, 2023 to achieve approval of an amendment.

West Lincoln is generally in good shape as the significant changes are approved through OPA 62 and 63. The remaining changes to agricultural policies and environmental policies etc. will not be as substantial as OPA’s 62 and 63 were.

#### **CURRENT SITUATION:**

The Township Official Plan is required to be updated within one year of Regional NOP approval, in other words before November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This will not be possible in West Lincoln’s case due to staffing limitations and the inability to get a consulting team hired in a timely manner.

Notwithstanding this issue, West Lincoln is substantially closer to compliance then most other lower-tier municipalities in the Niagara Region due to the completion of all of the municipal comprehensive review work.

Based on discussions with Regional staff, the Minister’s letter of November 2, 2023 (see attachment 1 to report PD-58-23) added another level of complexity to the review process as it is not clear what amendments may be changed/undone. Further, new legislation has yet been introduced at Queens Park to provide the Minister with this authority and it is not clear what else might be found within this upcoming bill. All of the recent bills and the changes yet to come have made the five-year review process much more challenging.

This report is written to inform Council of the timeline that will not be met and the fact that Planning staff have notified Regional staff of our delay. Staff wish to keep Planning Committee and Council informed of discussions with Regional Planning staff on the Township of West Lincoln efforts for compliance.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

A capital budget sheet for the Township of West Lincoln Official Plan 5-year Review exists

from previous years and make available up to \$37,500. Staff anticipate that the RFP process may receive bids above this amount, but will report back if a Budget Amendment is required.

**INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:**

OPA 63 and all of the extensive policy work completed for that amendment has ensured that the Township is a substantial way towards completing our Official Plan 5-year review.

**CONCLUSION:**

This report is provided for the information of Committee and Council as staff work towards hiring a consultant. Hopefully within budget, to complete the 5-year review work.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Table of Contents of Regional Official Plan

**Prepared & Submitted by:**



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**Brian Treble**  
**Director of Planning & Building**

**Approved by:**



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**Bev Hendry**  
**CAO**