

DATE: April 13, 2026

REPORT NO: PD-13-2026

SUBJECT: **Recommendation Report
New Township Official Plan Project Award**

CONTACT: Gerrit Boerema, Director, Growth and Sustainability

OVERVIEW:

- The Planning Act Requires that municipalities to update their official plans not less than 10 years from the date the plan came into effect in the case of a new comprehensive official plan.
- This is to ensure the plan is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and that it conforms with other provincial plans as required, while addressing local priorities and changing community needs.
- Township Council budgeted \$130,000 in the 2026 budget to retain a consultant to complete the Township's New Comprehensive Official Plan.
- The new Official Plan will replace the Township's current official plan, as well as the Niagara Official Plan which was downloaded to each of the 12 lower tier municipalities in 2025.
- After reviewing the RFP proposal submissions that were submitted for this project, Administration is recommending that Council award the new official plan project to O2 Planning and Design, in the amount of \$125,997.50, not including HST.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Recommendation Report PD-13-2026, titled "Recommendation Report PD-13-2026 - New Township Official Plan Project Award", dated April 13, 2026, be received; and,
2. That O2 Planning and Design be retained to complete the New Township's Official Plan, as outlined in RFP GS-01-2026.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme #

- **Champion Strategic and Responsible Growth**
- **Build a Safe, Connected, Caring and Active Community**

- **Enrich our Strong Agricultural Legacy**

BACKGROUND:

The Township’s Existing Official Plan was originally approved in 1998 with several major reviews and updates since that time, the last being in 2014. The Planning Act requires that Municipalities review their official plans at least every 10 years in the case where the municipality will be adopting a new official plan.

Since the last major review of the local official plan there have been significant changes both in Provincial and regional planning policy. Namely the Province approved a new Provincial Planning Statement in 2024, replacing the former Provincial Policy Statement and the Places to Grow Growth Plan. In 2025 the Province also removed planning responsibilities for the Region resulting in the Niagara Official Plan being downloaded to the twelve local municipalities. Lastly, in 2022 the Region and the Township both approved significant expansions to Smithville to accommodate future growth, which was adopted in the Official Plan as OPA 62 and 63 (With OPA No. 63 still under appeal).

As it has been over ten years since the last major review and revision to the Official Plan, Township Council included in the 2026 budget a new official plan project for a total of \$130,000.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Township posted the Request for Proposals (RFP) on the Bids and Tenders platform in February and received ten proposals in response. These proposals have been evaluated using the matrix included in the RFP, evaluating the proposals based on related experience, overall clarity and understanding of the project, community consultation plan, work plan and schedule, value added, and project cost.

Base on Administrations review the following scores were assigned:

Firm	Score
O2	83
Planscape/Fuselight	75.5
GSP	73
Nethery	72.5
WW+P	69.5
MHBC	69.5
WSP	69
Biglieri	67
Landwise	66.5
RE:Public	66

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This project has an approved budget of \$130,000 within the 2026 Township budget. \$125,000 of this has been allocated towards the consulting fees, while the remaining portion will be used for newspaper notices and advertisements.

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

This report has been reviewed by the CAO, Acting Director of Corporate Services and the Manager of Finance/Deputy Treasurer.

CONCLUSION:

Administration is recommending that O2 Planning and Design be awarded the New Official Plan Project and retained for a project budget of \$125,997.50, not including HST.

Prepared & Submitted by:

Approved by:

**Gerrit Boerema
Director, Growth and Sustainability**

**Truper McBride
CAO**