

JULY 9, 2025

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

REPORT NO. PAC-002-2025

GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - UPDATE AND REASSESSMENT

**CHERIE MILLS
MANAGER OF PLANNING SERVICES**

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT following the 90-day pause, the subsequent update from staff, and the reassessment by the Committee, the Planning Advisory Committee recommends that the Growth Management Strategy process be reactivated; and

THAT staff be instructed to advise the consulting team to proceed with the Growth Management Strategy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The consultants have advised that there are no added budget implications for the 90-day pause in the Growth Management Strategy timeline. The current budget for the Strategy is \$112,495 and it is currently being funded through the Planning/Legal Reserve, as identified in the 2025 budget.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Pillar 1: Invest in roads, bridges, infrastructure, and sustainable growth. **Goal 1.2:** Implement a balanced approach to planning; respectful of the reality our urban, rural, and agricultural roots. **Initiative 1.2.2:** Update population projections and undertake a Growth Strategy with a Phase 2 Development Charges Background study.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

Under the Planning Act, adaptation to a changing climate is a provincial interest that the Counties shall have regard to in land use planning matters to which the Act applies. The Provincial Planning Statement and the Counties Official Plan both have land use planning policies encouraging lessening the impacts of climate change and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate through land use and development patterns.

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This report can be provided in alternative accessible formats on request. Under the Planning Act, accessibility is a provincial interest that the Counties shall have regard to for all facilities, services and matters to which the Act applies.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

This report has been posted on-line as part of the Planning Advisory Committee agenda. Following the reactivation of the Growth Management Strategy, staff will be adding a dedicated study webpage to keep stakeholders up to date.

BACKGROUND

In December 2024, the Growth Management Strategy was initiated. Its purpose is to undertake and to allocate population, dwelling and employment projections and to identify areas to focus growth and/or development, in consultation with local municipalities. The Strategy will provide information for the Counties Official Plan review scheduled to be started in 2026.

On March 20, 2025, Council endorsed the recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) as follows:

That the Planning Advisory Committee recommends that staff direct the consultants to pause the Growth Management Strategy process for 90 days; and

That the matter be brought to the Committee for an update and reassessment at the conclusion of the 90-day period.

This report is to provide PAC with an update regarding the Growth Management Strategy to assist them in their reassessment following the 90-day pause.

DISCUSSION/ALTERNATIVES

The Growth Management Strategy is intended to meet Provincial requirements and to prepare background information and a draft official plan amendment that can be used in the Counties Official Plan review.

The Growth Management Strategy and the Development Charges Background Study are being conducted through one project using a two-phase approach. Hemson Consulting Ltd. were retained to undertake both phases of the project. The Development Charges Background Study is proposed to be undertaken as a separate phase following the Growth Management Strategy.

The Growth Management Strategy began once the successful consulting team was endorsed by Council in December and the contract entered into. As part of the Project Initiation Stage, Counties staff met with the consultants to finalize the Technical Advisory Group membership and to review and confirm the work plan, deliverables, timing and consultation. Also discussed was the required background information to be collected from local municipalities. All municipalities were requested to appoint a representative to the Technical Advisory Group.

The Information Gathering Stage began in January with an email and a list of information requested from each municipality. In addition, a virtual meeting was held with local municipalities to discuss the information request. The request included items such as any background planning studies, building permit data, and development information on both residential and non-residential uses/proposals. Information was gathered from the Counties Planning, GIS, Housing and Economic Development departments. Background information has been received by the consultants from all local municipalities. The consultants made an overview presentation of the Strategy to PAC in March.

Next Steps

During July and August, it is anticipated that the Information Gathering Stage will be completed and the Draft Forecasts and Land Requirements Stage started.

The next step in the Information Gathering Stage is to obtain information from other sources such as Statistics Canada, the Ministry of Finance, and CMHC. The consultants will review all the background studies and information gathered and complete a policy review of the Counties Official Plan and its conformity to the new Provincial Planning Statement (2024). Further, they will examine and analyze the regional and local economic trends.

Towards the end of the Information Gathering Stage, meetings will be held with each local municipality to present the results of the consultants' review, receive feedback and answer any questions.

In late August and September, during the Draft Forecast and Land Requirement Stage of the Strategy, the consultants will prepare the draft forecasts and land requirements. This stage is planned to have significant consultation with local municipalities, PAC and the public.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

The report set out above has been reviewed and the information verified by the individuals listed below.

CHERIE MILLS
MANAGER, PLANNING SERVICES

JUNE 12, 2025

BILL GUY
INTERIM DIRECTOR, PUBLIC WORKS

JUNE 13, 2025

AL HORSMAN
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

JUNE 19, 2025