

DATE: June 28, 2017

REPORT TITLE: **AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COORDINATED LAND USE PLANNING REVIEW OUTCOMES**

FROM: Lorraine Graham-Watson, Commissioner of Corporate Services

OBJECTIVE

To inform of the changes introduced to the Growth Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan from the Provincial Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review and to inform that the changes will be incorporated into the Peel 2041 Regional Official Plan Review and Growth Management Strategy.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- On May 18, 2017, the Province of Ontario announced changes to four plans regulating land use planning: the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (the Plans).
- Changes to the Plans continue to make significant strides towards accommodating forecast growth while delivering complete communities, protecting the environment, conserving resources, and addressing climate change.
- The changes to the four plans include:
 - Increasing the density and intensification targets.
 - Requiring communities to have an employment strategy to realize forecast growth.
 - Increasing the role of upper-tier municipalities in designating employment lands and major transit station areas.
 - Expanding requirements for municipal comprehensive reviews (MCR) including a greater upper-tier role, expanded applicability, and requiring Provincial Approvals.
 - Guidance to support municipal climate change planning.
 - Adding publicly owned lands in 21 major urban river valleys and associated coastal wetlands to the Greenbelt.
 - Ensuring land use planning and financial matters are considered within a Housing Strategy.
 - Requiring municipal watershed planning before planning settlement area expansions, infrastructure or major developments.
- Regional staff has identified some implications of the changes to the Plans, including:
 - New density and intensification targets may impact population and employment allocation work, however, the timing allows for input into the growth management strategy, further consultation, and the preparation of a draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) for Fall 2017.
 - Addressing the Plans' climate change requirements will require coordination

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- and the establishment of actions and goals that align with Provincial strategies and plans.
- Achieving 80 residents and jobs per hectare in new Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA) will require innovative planning to align the form of development with associated infrastructure including transit.
 - MCRs now require Provincial approval, potentially impacting planning already underway, including Ninth Line, and in-process employment land conversions.
 - Additional work is underway with stakeholders to understand the full scope of implications to current and future Peel land-use planning exercises.

DISCUSSION

This report provides a preliminary assessment of changes introduced to the Growth Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan from the Provincial Coordinated Land Use Planning Review.

1. Background

In the spring of 2015, the Province of Ontario initiated the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (the Plans).

In 2016, the Province proposed changes on which it sought comments. The Region communicated concerns to the Province regarding the proposed changes, including that:

- Achieving the density and intensification targets in the 2016 draft proposals within Peel is unrealistic;
- Infrastructure, such as transit, must be aligned to growth and funded to realize complete communities within a sound urban structure;
- Provincial climate change programming and funding must be aligned to areas of municipal responsibilities;
- Municipalities should retain the primary responsibility to identify and map the agricultural system and prime agricultural areas;
- Municipalities should retain the lead responsibility to identify and map natural heritage systems and features outside the Greenbelt, and;
- Co-ordination with municipalities, and in some cases Conservation Authorities, is needed in development of Provincial guidance documents to ensure effective and timely implementation of proposed policy changes.

These comments were considered and endorsed by Regional Council at the October 13, 2016 Regional Council meeting.

On May 18, 2017, the Province concluded the Co-Ordinated Land Use Planning Review by releasing final versions of the Plans (Appendix I), now available at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' website. The updated Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) came into effect on June 1, 2017, with the remaining three plans coming into effect on July 1, 2017.

Once in effect, all decisions on new planning matters must conform to the Plans. Municipalities are expected to review and update their official plans, with upper and single-tier municipalities required to complete their conformity work by 2022.

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The Region of Peel is currently tracking to conform to the density and intensification requirements of the Plans in 2018 through the growth management strategy.

2. Findings

The Plans are more integrated and coordinated with each other, addressing an often heard request during consultation events. Further, they address emerging areas of Provincial focus such as planning for a changing climate. In addition, there are more supportive policies in place to plan for complete and healthy communities, aligning with comments of Regional Council in October 2016.

(a) Preliminary Assessment of Implications of Changes to the Plans

Although work is continuing in collaboration with stakeholders and the Province to assess the full scope of changes to the Plans, some implications are apparent, including that:

- The direction of the changes to the Plans continue to further the aim of developing complete communities;
- Although the new density and intensification targets in the Plans are not significantly different from Peel's growth management work to date, an assessment of the impacts on the population and employment allocation work is underway and the timing should allow for input into the servicing and financing work as well as further consultation and preparation of a draft Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) for Fall 2017;
- The required minimum density of 80 residents and jobs per hectare in new Designated Greenfield Areas is achievable but requires rethinking the form of development and associated investments in transit and social services;
- Addressing climate change requirements and considerations in Regional and Local Area municipal plans will require coordination and the establishment of actions and goals that align with Provincial strategies and plans;
- Regional staff should analyze housing supply and associated policy and consider affordable housing incentives and tools;
- MCR requirements are now more stringent. The Province is to approve MCRs and they are to be initiated by upper-tier municipalities. MCRs will be required for a variety of planning matters including growth allocations, employment land designations and conversions and expansions to a settlement boundary. Collaboration with stakeholders including provincial staff and local municipal staff is underway to evaluate the impact of these changes on future planning processes and ones already underway such as the growth management program, the Ninth Line Lands and local municipal employment land conversions.

b) Overview of Specific Changes to the Plans

The following discussion provides an overview of the key changes that have been made to the Provincial Plans. A number of these changes impact Peel land use policy areas such as "Designated Greenfield Areas" and "Built-up Areas" which are shown in Appendix I for context.

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i. Designated Greenfield Areas

The minimum density within Designated Greenfield Areas (Appendix II) has been revised from the current minimum of 50 people and jobs per hectare measured across the entire area, to a phased requirement as follows, with a different method of calculation:

- From now until the next MCR (to be completed by 2022) – the current density target remains in effect;
- Following the next MCR for designated greenfield lands approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 – minimum 60 people and jobs per hectare excluding employment areas must be achieved;
- For lands designated after July 1, 2017 - minimum 80 people and jobs per hectare excluding employment areas must be achieved, however;
- A municipality may request or the Minister may grant an alternative target subject to specific policy requirements.

It is important to highlight that designated employment areas, alongside other specified land-forms and land-uses, are no longer to be included in the calculation of designated greenfield area (DGA) densities. In DGAs where employment is often land-intensive and of low worker-density, this can provide a more consistent approach to measuring density in residential communities.

ii. Residential Intensification Rate Targets

The minimum annual residential intensification target has been revised from the current minimum 40 per cent of new residential units annually to be developed within the built-up area (Appendix III), to a phased requirement as follows:

- From now until the next MCR (to be completed by 2022) – the current intensification target, of 40 per cent of new units annually to be within the built-up area, remains in effect;
- From the next MCR until 2030 – minimum 50 per cent of new units annually to be within the built-up area (the existing Regional OP requires 50 per cent from 2026 to 2031);
- From 2031 to 2041 - a minimum of 60 per cent is to be achieved, however;
- A municipality may request or the Minister may grant an alternative target subject to specific policy requirements.

These changes to designated greenfield area density and built-up area residential intensification rate targets are illustrated in Appendix IV.

iii. Municipal Comprehensive Reviews

Upper-tier municipalities will have a stronger role by initiating MCRs, which now require approval by the Province, including those required for Settlement Area Expansions.

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The Plans now require that:

- An MCR, including those for a new Official Plan or Official Plan Amendment, is to be initiated by the Upper-tier municipality and the Province is the approval authority, and;
- MCRs are to be required to be utilized more broadly for planning purposes, including:
 - Growth Allocation;
 - Settlement Boundary Expansion;
 - Employment Conversion;
 - Requesting an alternative minimum density target for Major Transit Station Areas on Priority Transit Corridors;
 - Implementing an Employment Strategy;
 - Refining provincial mapping for Natural Heritage System ;
 - Refine or augment provincial mapping for agricultural system;
- The definition of an MCR in the Growth Plan now stipulates that they are to be processed under Section 26 of the Planning Act, thereby requiring Provincial approval, and are to comprehensively apply Provincial policy.

iv. Major Transit Station Areas

Major Transit Station Areas are specifically defined as stations or stops with BRT, LRT, or subway in a dedicated right-of-way. This can include GO rail.

The Plans now require that:

- Upper-tier municipalities delineate the boundaries of major transit station areas in a transit-supportive manner;
- These areas are to generally have a 500 metre radius around the transit station which is about a 10-minute walking radius;
- Minimum planned density targets are established at:
 - 200 residents and jobs per hectare for areas served by subway;
 - 160 residents and jobs per hectare for areas served by light rail transit or bus rapid transit, and;
 - 150 residents and jobs per hectare for areas served by GO Transit rail.

v. Employment Strategy

Upper-tier municipalities in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, are to develop an employment strategy for their communities.

These employment strategies are to:

- Establish minimum densities for employment areas and identify opportunities for intensification that support active transportation;
- Designate employment areas, including prime employment areas, in Official Plans for long-term protection, where the Prime employment area designation

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is intended to protect areas for land extensive or low employment density employment uses including manufacturing, warehousing and logistics;

- Ensure that major retail is directed away from employment areas and towards mixed use areas with transit support, and;

Regional staff is currently coordinating the development of both an employment and transportation strategy to inform Peel's growth management work and associated Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) which includes an MCR.

vi. Infrastructure Planning

The Plans include policies intended to ensure that infrastructure planning is undertaken in a coordinated way. These policies are in response to the challenges of managing aging infrastructure, mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change, and the continued costs of growth.

The Plans now require:

- That municipal infrastructure planning processes and land-use planning processes are to be integrated and will include an assessment of infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities, and further,
- Municipalities are to develop stormwater master plans, or equivalent, for serviced settlement and identify adaptation strategies from environmental impacts. These plans are to be informed by watershed planning.

Through the environmental planning work underway, Peel Region, local municipalities and the conservation authorities are already working toward these requirements.

vii. Housing

The Province of Ontario released the Fair Housing Plan on April 20, 2017 as part of its effort to address the ongoing housing affordability crisis throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe. One of the actions in the Fair Housing Plan was to ensure housing affordability is addressed through provisions in the new Growth Plan.

Accordingly, the new Growth Plan provides greater emphasis on housing issues by establishing clear links with building complete communities. It aims to achieve complete communities which support a "diverse range and mix of housing options, including second units and affordable housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes." The Growth Plan now includes a separate housing policy section. Within this section, changes specifically addressing housing affordability include that:

- While a Housing Strategy was required in the previous Growth Plan, it now must include:
 - The use of land use planning and financial tools to support the implementation, and;

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- Alignment with applicable housing and homelessness plans;
- Municipalities must consider the appropriate range of unit sizes including larger apartments, condominiums and townhouses to accommodate a diverse range of household sizes and incomes to ensure a mix of housing options for all incomes and household sizes.

Regional staff is proposing to undertake a strategic analysis of affordable housing incentives and tools, aligned with the Plans' requirement of establishing planning and financial tools. As part of the analysis, staff will advocate for funding opportunities from the Province.

viii. **Agriculture**

Through the Plans, the Province is requiring identification and protection of a Provincial Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. This includes new policies and study requirements for protecting and mitigating impacts to prime agricultural areas as well as the protection and enhancement of the agricultural economic support network and its infrastructure.

To accomplish this, the Plans require:

- The Province to map an Agricultural System for the Greater Golden Horseshoe with the draft mapping and its implementation guidelines anticipated for public consultation during summer 2017, to be finalized in late 2017;
- Municipalities are to identify and protect prime agricultural areas in their Official Plans, in conformity with the Provincial Agricultural System mapping, and;
- Municipalities are to identify, protect, and mitigate impacts to the Agricultural System at the time of a municipal comprehensive review for a settlement boundary expansion or the introduction of a non-farm use outside of the settlement boundary. This is to be undertaken through Agricultural Impact Assessments using guidance provided by the Province. Draft Provincial Agricultural Impact Assessments guidelines are anticipated to be released for public consultation in summer 2017.

It is recommended that the Region's conformity process to map prime agricultural areas be informed by the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) technical study undertaken jointly by the Town of Caledon and Region. The use of the LEAR and Official Plan identified Prime Agricultural Areas to inform Provincial mapping and should help address concerns expressed in response to the draft changes to the Plans in 2016, specifically that the identification of agricultural resources should be a municipal exercise.

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ix. **Natural Heritage System (NHS)**

Through the Growth Plan, the Province will identify a Natural Heritage System (NHS) for the GGH outside the Greenbelt Area and settlement areas which would have similar protection to those in the Greenbelt Plan Area. As such:

- The Province will map a Natural Heritage System for the GGH to support a comprehensive, integrated and long term approach to planning for the protection of the region's natural heritage and biodiversity. This mapping will exclude lands within settlement area boundaries that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017. The mapping is expected to be finalized in 2018 in which municipalities are to incorporate the Province's NHS as an overlay in official plans, and;
- Municipalities are now required to apply appropriate policies to maintain, restore, or enhance the diversity and connectivity of the system and the long-term ecological or hydrologic functions of features and areas.

x. **Water Resources System**

The Growth Plan, 2017 requires municipalities, in conjunction with the conservation authorities, to ensure that watershed and subwatershed planning is undertaken in order to support an integrated approach to protecting, enhancing, and restoring water resources within a watershed.

Further, it provides some indication of the required content when developing a watershed and subwatershed plan, including best management practices for development, minimizing impacts related to severe weather events, and to support ecological needs. These updated Growth Plan policies support Peel's current practice.

Additionally, it requires municipalities to identify water resource systems, protect key hydrologic features, and key hydrologic areas, similar to the level of protection provided in the Greenbelt. This approach will provide a consistent framework for water protection across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

As such, municipalities are expected to:

- Recognize watershed and subwatershed plans as foundational documents which must be used to inform growth management and the planning for water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and;
- Develop appropriate designations and policies to provide for the long-term protection of key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas and their functions.

These additional requirements are being incorporated into the growth management strategy. These include:

- That municipal planning for growth allocation be informed by watershed planning, and;

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- That municipal planning for the DGA must be informed by a subwatershed plan, or equivalent study.

xi. **Climate Change**

Climate change is a key driver that underpinned many aspects of the review of the Plans. Although efforts are underway by various municipalities, including Peel to better understand local community sources of greenhouse gas emissions and community vulnerability to impacts, current capacity to address climate change at the local level remains limited.

The Province recognizes and supports the role of municipal policy making to identify actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals. These initiatives are to be aligned with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy (2015) and Climate Change Action Plan (2016) towards the long-term goal of low-carbon communities.

The Plans now require that municipalities develop policies and identify actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals including:

- Creating complete communities;
- Reducing car dependency by prioritizing public transit/active transportation;
- Assessing risk and vulnerabilities from climate change to infrastructure and identify actions to address risks;
- Undertaking stormwater management planning in a manner that assesses the impacts of extreme weather events and incorporates appropriate green infrastructure and low impact development;
- Protecting natural heritage and water resource systems;
- Protecting agriculture and promote local food, and;
- Providing direction to manage waste and conserve energy and water.

Further, the Plans now also encourage municipalities to:

- Develop greenhouse gas inventories, emission reduction strategies, and related targets and performance measures, and;
- Enhance community resilience through the identification of vulnerabilities to climate change and development of plans to address risks through changes in land use planning, planning for infrastructure, including transit and energy, green infrastructure, and low impact development.

xii. **Mineral Aggregate Resources**

The Province has continued to support comprehensive rehabilitation planning through the Growth Plan, 2017, by continuing to cross-reference with the rehabilitation requirement policies of the Provincial Policy Statements, 2014.

Through the Greenbelt Plan, 2017, the Province continues to acknowledge that where municipalities have undertaken a comprehensive aggregate resources

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management study, and implemented the results in an official plan, such policies are deemed to conform to the Greenbelt Plan.

xiii. Growing the Greenbelt

The Province continues to explore opportunities to grow the Greenbelt and shall lead a process to identify potential areas to be added to the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt, working with municipalities, conservation authorities and other key stakeholders.

While no changes to the Greenbelt boundary in Peel Region were proposed, new policies in the Plans include:

- Adding publicly owned lands in 21 major urban river valleys and associated coastal wetlands to the Greenbelt, and;
- That the Province will undertake a process, including public consultation, to expand the Greenbelt on the outer edge in the near future.

xiv. Settlement Area Expansion within Greenbelt Protected Countryside

Changes to the Growth Plan will now limit settlement area expansion to villages and limit expansion to be modest in size, which can be no more than 5% of the existing settlement area, to a maximum of 10 hectares.

In addition, both the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan have not included policy for minor rounding out of hamlets.

Two minor site specific amendments to expand the Terra Cotta and Inglewood settlement areas in the Town of Caledon have been included as amendments to the Niagara Escarpment Plan. These expansions reflect historical developments.

xv. Monitoring Growth

The Plans previously directed that the Province would measure the performance of the implementation of the Plans, supported by municipal reporting of their own implementation.

This requirement for measuring and monitoring has been updated to state that:

- The Province may require that municipalities provide data to the Province that demonstrates progress is being made towards the implementation of the Plans.

Peel's growth management strategy is expected to result in an ongoing process for measuring, monitoring, and managing growth. In addition, Regional planning staff is preparing a separate report for Fall 2017, which will provide an updated framework to continue measuring, monitoring, and reporting on the status of various goals and objectives in the Regional Official Plan.

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CONCLUSION

As a result of the coordinated plan review the Province's land use plans are more integrated and coordinated, and continue to further the aim of developing complete communities.

Although changes to the Plans address many concerns raised by the Region in response to the 2016 proposals, it is important to note that these changes to the Plans are occurring at the same time as proposed reforms to the Ontario Municipal Board, and the introduction of measures to address housing affordability through the Fair Housing Plan. As such, it is critical to understand changes to the Plans within a larger changing land use planning and development context.

Staff will continue to work with stakeholders, including the local municipalities, to review the full scope of changes to Ontario's land use planning and development system.



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Approved for Submission:



D. Szwarc, Chief Administrative Officer

APPENDICES

Appendix I – News Release from the Province of Ontario

Appendix II – Map with Growth Plan Policy Areas

Appendix III – Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets, Growth Plan 2017

Appendix IV – Built-up Area Residential Intensification Rate Targets, Growth Plan 2017

Appendix V – Summary Graphic of Changes to Density and Intensification Targets

For further information regarding this report, please contact Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP, Director, Integrated Planning, (905) 791-7800 x4251 or arvin.prasad@peelregion.ca.

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