
To: Mayor and Council

From: Brent Spagnol, Director of Planning Services

Date: December 21, 2022

Subject: ERO # 019-6177-Consolidation of the Provincial Policy Statement & Growth Plan Review

Report Highlights

- The purpose of this report is:
 - to provide information with respect to the proposed integration of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which has been released for comment as part of Provincial Bill 23;
 - to present cursory staff comments regarding focused themes provided by the Province to assist in the formation of policy to expedite house construction and streamline processing.
- The PPS and Growth Plan currently represent two key policy documents that direct how development is to occur in the Province of Ontario.
- The Province is proposing the integration of the two documents to provide for a more streamlined approach to remove duplication of policy with the goal to accelerate the construction of housing and increase housing supply.
- In order to focus comments, the Province has provided various themes for consideration and six (6) fundamental questions for comment as part of this consultation which are due on December 30, 2022.
- Staff are recommending that comments contained within this report be submitted to the Province for consideration.

Recommendation

That the report from the Director of Planning Services, regarding ERO # 019-6177-Consolidation of the Provincial Policy Statement & Growth Plan Review, dated December 21, 2022, be received; and,

That staff be authorized to submit Township comments as generally outlined in the report to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO).

Background

The Provincial Government released Bill 23 known as the More Homes Built Faster Act 2022 on October 25, 2022. The Province is proposing extensive changes to various Acts and Policy documents with an overall objective to increase the supply of housing by 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

The purpose of this report is to provide information with respect to the proposed integration of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which has been released for comment as part of Provincial Bill 23.

Staff have completed a review of focused themes provided by the Province to assist in the formation of policy intended to expedite house construction and streamline processing.

The PPS and Growth Plan currently represent two key policy documents that direct how development is to occur in the Province of Ontario. The Province is proposing the integration of the two documents to provide for a more streamlined approach to remove duplication of policy with the goal to accelerate the construction of housing and increase housing supply.

Proposed Legislative Consultation and Deadline for Comment

ERO #	Legislation	Commenting Deadline
019-6177	Review of A Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement	December 30, 2022 (66 days)

The Province has identified the following directives for discussion and comment as per the Environmental Registry of Ontario [ERO: 019-6177](#).

Residential Land Supply

- 1) **Settlement Area Boundary Expansions** – streamline and simplify policy direction that enables municipalities to expand settlement area boundaries in a coordinated manner with infrastructure to provide additional land supply for future growth
- 2) **Rural Housing**-policy direction that provides increased flexibility to enable more residential development in rural areas, including rural settlement areas.
- 3) **Employment Area Conversions**- simplified policy direction that enables municipalities to convert employment areas for new residential and mixed-use development where appropriate.

Staff Comment:

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions-The Growth Plan currently establishes criteria to be considered with respect to settlement area boundary expansions with the intention to only expand boundaries when the need for additional land can be demonstrated. This approach has generally been taken to avoid unnecessary sprawl and preserve farmland.

Therefore, staff suggests that current policies within the Growth Plan provide the necessary considerations to determine land need prior to settlement area expansions.

Rural Housing-A fundamental premise behind directing growth to settlement areas is to reduce the potential for incompatible land uses within rural areas, primarily in close proximity to agricultural uses.

While the prospect of providing flexibility to develop in rural areas may free up additional land and provide additional opportunity for housing, land use compatibility needs to be a paramount consideration to ensure that the agricultural land base and industry is not negatively impacted.

Employment Area Conversions-It is recommended that conversion of employment land to residential lands be discouraged as the preservation of an employment land base is needed to provide opportunity to work and live in communities, which is a fundamental objective to create complete communities.

Attainable Housing Supply Mix

- 1) **Housing Mix** – policy that provides greater certainty that an appropriate range and mix of housing options/densities to meet affordable housing needs.
- 2) **Major Transit Station Areas**-policy direction that aims to ensure that minimum density targets are implemented to maximize government investments in infrastructure to promote transit support densities across Ontario
- 3) **Urban Growth Centres**-policy direction to enable municipalities to identify urban growth centres (eg. existing or emerging downtown areas) as focal points for intensification.

Staff Comments:

Housing Mix-Providing greater certainty to provide for appropriate range in housing mix/options is supported. The determination of what is considered to be affordable should be reviewed through further consultation involving affordable housing experts.

Major Transit Station Areas- (Not applicable)

Urban Growth Centres-Policy direction to define existing or downtown cores is currently found within the Growth Plan. Springwater has utilized this policy to identify

downtown areas and direct intensification to those areas. The lack of infrastructure (municipal water, sanitary and roads) is an impediment to developing downtown areas in Springwater.

Growth Management

- 1) **Population and Employment Forecasts**-policy direction that enables municipalities to use the most current, reliable information regarding future population and employment to determine the type of housing and land for employment
- 2) **Intensification**-policy direction to increase housing supply through intensification in strategic areas (transit corridors, major transit areas, urban and suburban areas)
- 3) **Large and Fast-growing Municipalities**-growth management policies that extend to large and fast-growing municipalities both inside and outside of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including the coordination with major provincial investments in roads, highways and transit.

Staff Comments:

Population and Employment Forecasts-Springwater is currently utilizing information from a Growth Management Strategy completed as part of its' Official Plan Update/Review. Staff suggest that sufficient direction currently exists to allow for the review of local information relevant to population and growth forecasts.

Intensification-Staff is of the opinion that sufficient policy direction exists within the Growth Plan as it relates to intensification and the need to intensify in strategic areas.

Large and Fast-growing Municipalities- (Not applicable)

Environment and Natural Resources

- 1) **Agriculture**-policy direction that continues the protection of prime agricultural areas and promotes the Ontario's Agricultural System, while creating increased flexibility to enable more residential development in rural areas that minimizes negative impacts to farmland and farm operations
- 2) **Natural Heritage**-streamlined policy direction that applies across the province for Ontario natural heritage, empowering local decision making, and providing more options to reduce development impacts
- 3) **Natural and Human-made hazards**-streamlined and clarified policy direction for development in hazard areas, while continuing to protect people and property in areas of highest risk
- 4) **Aggregates**-streamlined and simplified policy direction that ensures access aggregate resource close to where they are needed

- 5) **Cultural heritage**-policy direction that provides for the identification and continued conservation of cultural heritage resources while creating flexibility to increase housing supply

Staff Comments:

Agriculture-Staff recommend that substantive residential development in agricultural areas be discouraged to avoid the reduction of the agricultural land base and the introduction of incompatible land uses that could have a negative impact on farming operations.

Natural Heritage- The protection of Natural Heritage features should be the primary focus of land use policy direction.

Natural and Human-made hazards - A streamlined approach is supported by staff. However, a better understanding of what a streamlined approach entails along with the methodology used to determine risk are required to provide a fulsome response.

Aggregates - Staff suggest that existing Provincial policies ensure that aggregate resources can be provided close to market.

Cultural heritage – Staff cannot comment regarding this initiative as draft policy is not available to review.

Community Infrastructure

- 1) **Infrastructure Supply and Capacity**-policy direction to increase flexibility for servicing new development (eg. Water and Wastewater) and encourage municipalities to undertake long-range integrated infrastructure planning
- 2) **School Capacity**-coordinated policy direction that ensures publicly funded school facilities are part of integrated municipal planning and meet the needs of high growth communities, including the Ministry of Educations proposal to support the development of an urban schools' framework for rapidly growing areas

Staff Comments:

Infrastructure Supply and Capacity- Staff are of the opinion that existing PPS and Growth Plan policies encourage long-range integrated infrastructure planning.

School Capacity - Staff are of the opinion that existing PPS and Growth Plan policies require the provision of schools through on-going collaboration with school boards.

Streamlined Planning Framework

- 1) **Outcomes-Focused**-streamlined, less prescriptive policy direction requiring fewer studies, including a straightforward approach to assessment land needs, that is focused on outcomes
- 2) **Relevance**-streamlined policy direction that focuses on the above-noted land use planning matters and other topics not listed that are also key to land use planning and reflect provincial interests
- 3) **Speed and Flexibility**-policy direction that reduces the complexity and increases the flexibility of comprehensive reviews, enabling municipalities to implement provincial policy direction faster and easier

Staff Comments:

While a streamlined planning approach may be helpful in providing for an increase in housing supply, the details and impact of a streamlined process can only be assessed once draft policies are available. Planning staff are of the opinion that commenting on a streamlined approach is premature until such time as draft policies are available for review.

Focus Questions: Potential Integration of the Provincial Policy Statement & A Place to Grow

ERO 019-6177 – Review of A Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement		
BILL 23-Consideration		Staff Responses
1	What are your thoughts on the proposed core elements to be included in a streamlined province-wide land use planning policy instrument?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The preparation of one Provincial Policy document is preferable, however recognizing geographic differences may be a challenge.
2	What land use planning policies should the government use to increase the supply of housing and support a diversity of housing types?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-consider the use of Provincial population allocations/limits and provide municipalities with the tools to plan for local growth considerations based on local Growth Management Strategies. - Strengthen policies requiring a greater mix of housing within urban areas. Potentially minimum thresholds per housing type.
3	How should the government further streamline land use planning policy to increase the supply of housing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review additional approval frameworks where overlap of

		<p>approvals can be removed (Servicing).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential for various forms (partial, private, full municipal water & wastewater) of servicing to support housing.
4	<p>What policy concepts from the Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow are helpful for ensuring there is a sufficient supply and mix of housing and should be included in the new policy document?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Additional Residential Unit and intensification policies are helpful for ensuring a sufficient supply and mix of housing. This is subject to the availability of municipal services and infrastructure (water and wastewater) needed for support.
5	<p>What policy concepts in the Provincial Policy Statement and A Place to Grow should be streamlined or not included in the new policy document?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Natural Heritage mapping/policies should be prepared at the local level based on local knowledge.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the materials provided through Environmental Registry of Ontario, staff recommend the following:

That the report from the Director of Planning Services, regarding ERO # 019-6177-Consolidation of the Provincial Policy Statement & Growth Plan Review, dated December 21, 2022, be received; and,

That staff be authorized to submit Township comments as generally outlined in the report to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO).

Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

Pillars of Commitment

The above initiative supports the following Strategic Pillars of Commitment:

- Community Development
- Smart Growth Management
- Infrastructure, Financial Management & Service Delivery

Approvals

Submitted by: Brent Spagnol, Director of Planning Services

Financial Implications Reviewed by: Jas Rattigan, CPA, CGA, Director of Finance

Approved by: Jeff Schmidt, CPA, CGA, Chief Administrative Officer

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