



Staff Report

To: Mayor and Members of Council, Meeting of May 23, 2023

From: Curtis Marshall, Manager of Development Planning
Brooke Lambert, Chief Administrative Officer
Darren Jones, Chief Building Official

Subject: DC 2023-022 Bill 97, Helping Home Buyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 and Draft Provincial Planning Statement

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Wellington North receive Report DC 2023-022 Bill 97, Helping Home Buyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 and Draft Provincial Planning Statement.

AND FURTHER THAT this report be forwarded with any additional comments that Council may have on the proposed Provincial Planning Statement (and/or other provincial policy changes) to the Province as soon as possible prior to the June 5th, 2023 deadline for comment.

PREVIOUS PERTINENT REPORTS/BY-LAWS/RESOLUTIONS

1. None

BACKGROUND

On April 6, 2023 the Provincial government tabled Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023 and its latest 2023 Housing Supply Action Plan. A new draft Provincial Planning Statement was also released for consultation which combines and replaces the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019. This new document was posted for a 60 day consultation period which closes on June 5, 2023 (ERO# 019-6813).

County of Wellington Staff Report

County of Wellington Planning Staff prepared and presented a staff report (PD2023-17) to the County of Wellington Planning Committee on May 11, 2023, which reviews the proposed Provincial Planning Statement. A copy of the report is provided in Council's agenda package for information. County Council will be considering the report at its meeting on May 25th, 2023. County Planning Staff's report concluded that while there are proposed changes to the provincial planning framework that are welcomed and supported, there are some specific proposed directions which are of concern. They include:

- A reversal on the protection of agricultural land and farming in Ontario.
- The lack of policy direction related to the creation of affordable and attainable housing.

- The uncertainty related to the protection of our natural resources and natural heritage systems.
- The softening of policies related to climate change in the 2023 Provincial Planning Statement.

Subject to County Council confirmation, County Planning Staff's report will be filed with the Province.

Township of Wellington North Comments

Building on County Planning Staff's comments Township Staff have identified and highlighted three areas of concern with the proposed Provincial Planning Statement which will impact the Township. They are as follows:

Impacts to Agriculture: The proposed policies which would allow residential severances in the prime agricultural area could significantly impact agricultural operations in the community. Depending on how the policy is finalized by the Province, hundreds if not thousands of additional residential lots could be created within the agricultural area of the Township. The introduction of non-farm residential uses creates opportunity for conflict with farming activities and operations and would limit the expansion of livestock operations through Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements. Township Staff support County Planning's suggestion that new rural residential growth be directed to hamlet areas instead of new lots being created and scattered throughout the agricultural area.

Definitions and Clear Language: The proposed policies have removed some specific definitions and have introduced new wording and terminology which is not always clearly defined. Examples include new references to "low-priority agricultural lands", "non-agricultural land use", "leverage the capacity of development proponents", "locally appropriate". Without more clear language or definitions it is difficult to fully determine how to implement the new policy direction. For example, if severances are to be permitted on "low-priority agricultural lands", how are these areas to be lands identified? Without this detail it is difficult to understand and determine where and how many severances could be permitted within the agricultural area of the Township. Township Staff recommends that the province provide additional definitions and/or revise the language of the policies to provide clarity for implementation. If the intent is that a municipality can define or interpret the policies on an individual local basis, this should be stated.

Orderly Development: Collectively, the proposed changes to the provincial planning framework may reduce the ability of a municipality to achieve orderly development. For example, new policies which provide for more flexible urban expansions, industrial conversions, lot creation, new non-agricultural uses, and Minister's Zoning Orders reduce the ability and incentive to stick with a plan and vision for the community. In some cases flexibility is welcomed, however this flexibility could also result in pressure for a municipality to make short term and impulsive decisions. Municipalities may be forced to defend long term and orderly planning at the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Next Steps

Township Staff recommend that this report be forwarded with any additional comments that Council may have on the proposed Provincial Planning Statement (and/or other provincial policy changes) to the Province as soon as possible prior to the June 5th, 2023 deadline for comment.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. County Official Plan Review – Provincial Decision on OPA 119 (PD2023-16)
2. Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2023 (PD2023-17)

Prepared By:	Curtis Marshall, Manager of Development Planning Brooke Lambert, Chief Administrative Officer Darren Jones, Chief Building Official
Recommended By:	Brooke Lambert, Chief Administrative Officer