

June 8, 2023

Provincial Land Use Plans Branch  
13th Flr, 777 Bay St  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2J3



Submitted electronically – [growthplanning@ontario.ca](mailto:growthplanning@ontario.ca)

[RE: Review of proposed policies adapted from A Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement to form a new provincial planning policy instrument](#)

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input with respect to the provincial government’s “Review of proposed policies adapted from A Place to Grow and Provincial Policy Statement to form a new provincial planning policy instrument.”

In principle, RESCON is fully supportive of the formation of a new provincial planning policy instrument. The current planning policy structure which supports two concurrent policies, A Place to Grow and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), is unnecessarily complicated and provides for potential conflicts which in practice can only result in potential delays or impediments to the construction of residential housing in a timely manner. Moreover, consolidating the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, aligns with [RESCON’s 2019 submission](#) to MMAH on the then PPS.

We recognize that this undertaking is an extension of the provincial government’s intense efforts to facilitate policy and legislative directives which support the overall objective of the construction of 1.5 million homes within the next decade. Whether in the form of legislation or policy undertakings, the direction of the government in these efforts is commended by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario.

As the leading organization representing residential construction builders in Ontario we are encouraged by the overall principles being enunciated with respect to the new provincial planning policy instrument. We note the emphasis on growth management and the concurrency with housing and economic development and equal determinant factors.

Similarly, in absence of appropriate focus upon infrastructure planning, water and stormwater management and transportation planning, residential construction will face enduring and often prohibitive obstacles. The directives within the pending provincial planning policy instrument are crucial and welcome additions.

Likewise, the references to the protection and sustainable management of resources along with a dedicated reference to prime agricultural areas is important to denote in the new instrument along with natural heritage and water conservation and protection. We are supportive of these efforts but would call attention to the included notes concerning cultural heritage. In respect of the latter, we are of course supportive of the protection of valid and appropriate cultural heritage sites, but would include the caveat that these efforts actually reflect real and substantive assets and that tools to protect cultural heritage sites are not used as mechanisms to negatively impact legitimate development proposals.

We are supportive of the five pillars of the proposed provincial planning policy instrument.

June 8, 2023



In terms of the first pillar, the generation of appropriate housing supply, RESCON and its members have been for years advocating for the recognition of the economic reality that if Ontario is to meet the needs of those currently within the housing market, and the hundred of thousands of newcomers being admitted to Canada by the federal government (500,000 annually by 2025), housing supply needs to accelerate in an expeditious, responsive and manageable fashion. However, without additional levers put forward by all levels of government to boost housing supply by removing red tape and reducing costs, housing newcomers will be a growing concern.

In the context of this pillar, we applaud the directive that municipalities must plan for growth properly and responsively. We are encouraged to see that the new provincial planning policy instrument directs municipalities to “establish and meet minimum density targets for: major transit station areas, other strategic growth area.” This is a critical undertaking particularly within the context of on the ground realities that sees some municipalities seeking to restrict increased densities in areas where they are more than appropriate and most definitely required.

Similarly, the requirement for a mix of housing types is crucial as is the broader directive to support intensification.

In respect of the second pillar, we are supportive of the requirement that municipalities institute plans for a minimum 25-year horizon along with maintaining a 15-year residential land supply. It is also sound policy that land and servicing is in place for a three-year supply of housing as the proposed policy directs.

While we recognize the intent of the inclusion within this pillar of policy directives concerning employment lands, we would advocate for the creation of a mechanism whereby there are options available for residential developers to expeditiously appeal decisions that are either inconsistent with the intent of planning policies or that needlessly protect employment lands that would in reality be suitable for re-development for residential construction. This could easily be accommodated through existing tribunal routes with increased resources to manage such appeals.

Concerning the third pillar, “provide infrastructure to support development,” we are supportive of any planning policy initiatives or directives that require municipalities to properly plan for infrastructure needs to support residential development. It is axiomatic of course that residential construction cannot proceed without the appropriate infrastructure in place and any undertaking that ensures this is the case is an enlightened approach. We further support the requirement to protect major infrastructure, currently in place or envisioned, that facilitates transportation and energy requirements associated with development.

With respect to the fourth pillar, the need to balance housing with resources is of course a sound and critical policy component of any renewed provincial planning policy instrument. It is however critical that such policy foundations are managed by provincial legislation and policy in such a manner that municipalities be required to institute and comply with reasonable standards as well as realistic and fully implementable timelines that will not negatively impact the ability of builders to construct much-needed housing across Ontario. Municipal building construction requirements for the purpose of energy efficiency and/or greenhouse gas reduction, that exceed relevant provisions in the Building Code, are ultra vires (beyond the authority of municipal by-laws). The Building Code Act, under 35.(1) states that

June 8, 2023



“This Act and the building code supersede all municipal by-laws respecting the construction or demolition of buildings”.

The final pillar, “implementation,” is of course critical. In the absence of manageable, well-planned and truly implementable policy undertakings any advance towards meeting provincial housing targets could very easily be undercut before real change is realized. All municipal decisions (zoning, permitting) must immediately after the new PPS takes effect, be consistent with the PPS. Also, to further minimize uncertainty, municipal official and secondary plans must be aligned with the new PPS within 6 months. Municipalities should be encouraged to engage private planning consulting resources to help prepare updated official and secondary plans subject to normal consultation and municipal approval processes. Needless to say, any municipal consultations or deliberations must focus not on whether to align with the PPS but rather how the new Official and Secondary Plans will align with the new PPS.

We support the policy statement that affirms “that efficient land-use patterns contribute to increased equitable access to housing, employment, parks and transportation, and encourage municipalities to apply an equity lens on planning matters and engage stakeholders early in the process.” However, as has been reiterated repeatedly, all undertakings must align with the principal objective of any new provincial planning policy statement which is the realization of a minimum of 1.5 million homes within the next decade.

In more general terms, we would take this opportunity to encourage the provincial government to consider regulatory changes within the context of the province-wide provincial planning policy instrument to delineate action with respect to several other areas of concern.

Notably, we would assert that changes be made beyond what is proposed to enshrine provisions that facilitate as of right reasonable densification along major arterial corridors in larger municipalities. It is simply uninspired to view many of these corridors in major GTHA municipalities with massively under-densified structures built upon them. An example of this would be Danforth Avenue in the City of Toronto on the eastern part of the throughfare. With a major rapid transit subway line operating underneath it since 1966, the vast majority of this arterial road is blanketed with 2 to 3 storey structures. Significantly increased densities for throughfares of this kind would be a welcome addition to the new provincial planning policy instrument.

In the interest of housing supply and capitalizing on expensive transit infrastructure, the new PPS should require, as of right, higher density development (e.g. 6-15 storeys) along transit-served arterials across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, not just Toronto. The height could be based on simple rules – for example, building height is proportional to road right of way (a 36 meter right of way allows for an 11-story building, about 36 meters). The Policy Statement could require that this be implemented via more streamlined municipal planning tools such as the community planning permit system (CPPS) that combines zoning, site plan control, and minor variances. In this way, municipal planning complexity and delays can be minimized. On building sites immediately adjacent to transit stations, buildings could be much higher to meet provincial density targets. The CPPS planning regime could be mandated for other parts of the GGH as more experience is gained from their use along transit-served arterials.

Similarly, restrictions on above-grade parking on residential sites should be removed as part of the new provincial planning policy instrument. Once again, out-of-date municipal policies and design guidelines do not reflect current realities with respect to construction costs and complexities negatively impacting the ability to build more housing. Municipalities should reconsider parking requirements in new

June 8, 2023



developments (similar to what Toronto did) and ensure that parking standards are consistent with market demand and considerate of availability of transit options. The inclusion of changes within a provincial planning policy instrument could be activated to address cost impacts on residential housing as well as reduce environmental impacts which are significantly increased with large-scale underground parking structures.

The PPS document includes the following comment: “encourage coordination, particularly on intermunicipal topics”. We would agree. Municipal planning and building departments should allow for more coordination of certain kinds of building and planning approvals. Also, municipalities should standardize where possible, (and for similar urban areas/contexts, such as certain arterials), official plans, secondary plans and site plan control standards, and other municipal planning standards, as municipalities align local planning with the Provincial Planning Statement. Increased approval coordination and planning standardization will help developers and builders address the housing supply deficit, while reducing costs of high-quality designs and construction through economies of scale.

In summation, RESCON and its members are generally in alignment with the proposed changes being considered as part of a process to remove two concurrent planning policy documents with one comprehensive one but with consideration to the recommendations and considerations included within this correspondence.

We appreciate once again the opportunity to share our views and to encourage the provincial government to move forward expeditiously and comprehensively as we work collaboratively to realize challenging but attainable housing projections.

Yours truly,

Richard Lyall, President  
Residential Construction Council of Ontario