



Committee of the Whole Report

Report Number: PLAN2024-056
Meeting Date: October 8, 2024
Title: Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 – Information Report
Description: Information on changes to Provincial land use policy
Author and Title: Mark Jull, Supervisor, Policy Planning

Recommendation(s):

That Report PLAN2024-056, **Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 – Information Report**, be received; and

That this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Department Head: _____

Financial/Legal/HR/Other: _____

Chief Administrative Officer: _____

Background:

On August 20, 2024, the Province of Ontario released the final version of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 ('PPS'), which is set to take effect on October 20, 2024. The new PPS is attached as **Appendix A**.

The PPS adjusts a number of policy areas to encourage residential development and build complete communities. As of October 20, 2024, all planning decisions made by planning authorities, including decisions by Council and its Committees, must be consistent with the PPS.

This report provides a summary of the new policy directions found in the PPS and provides an overview of the changes that will affect the City of Kawartha Lakes. A table summarizing the changes is attached as **Appendix B**.

Rationale:

The issuance of the final version of the new PPS comes after two prior drafts (released April 14, 2023 and April 12, 2024) and is substantially different than the draft released in 2023. The new PPS emphasizes building homes to support the provincial goal of building 1.5 million homes by 2031.

The new PPS replaces the in-effect Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 as well as A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 by integrating them into a single policy document. However, not all policy concepts and directions have been carried over.

Growth Targets and Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs)

Rather than needing to plan for a specific population and employment forecast as prescribed in the Growth Plan, municipalities are now to follow the population projections provided by the Ministry of Finance. This is a significant shift as land use planning in Ontario has been driven by the previous forecast since the first Growth Plan was released in June of 2006. Staff at MMAH have indicated that documents will be released to provide guidance on how to convert the Ministry of Finance population projections into a number of residential units and a number of jobs.

Whereas the Growth Plan used to require Official Plans to plan for projected land and infrastructure needs for the next 30 years, the new PPS only requires Official Plans to

meet projected needs for the next 20 years but cannot exceed 30 years. Infrastructure planning may go beyond the 30-year timeframe.

The new PPS also states that any MZOs are to be considered in addition to projected needs. This means the development permitted through any MZOs would need to be accommodated over and above the lands identified for development in the Official Plan. Further, at the time of the next Official Plan update, the additional growth prescribed by any MZOs must be incorporated into the Official Plan. For Kawartha Lakes, this means the lands subject to MZOs currently outside of urban settlement boundaries must be brought inside those boundaries through the next Official Plan Review and Update.

Settlement Area Expansions

Significantly, the concept of a “municipal comprehensive review (MCR)” has not been carried over from the Growth Plan. Until now, new settlement areas and expansions to settlement boundaries could only occur through an MCR, which requires a series of studies (i.e. growth management study, land needs analysis, water and waste water capacity, transportation, etc.) followed by an Official Plan Update. With the new PPS, the establishment of new settlement areas and the expansion of existing settlement boundaries may be permitted without the technical analysis an MCR provides.

Proponents will now be able to apply to amend the Official Plan in order to expand existing settlement boundaries or to establish new settlement areas. Bill 185 recently amended the Planning Act to allow appeals for decisions related to settlement boundary expansions, but not the establishment of new settlement areas. The PPS provides a list of six criteria that must be “considered” when evaluating a proposal for a new settlement area or an expansion. The criteria range from infrastructure capacity, impacts on agricultural lands, to the need for the land and phasing of development.

Intensification

Not carried over from the Growth Plan are the concepts and policies for “delineated built boundaries” and “designated greenfield areas”. These concepts were used to distinguish areas within settlement boundaries that were undeveloped (greenfield) or areas that were identified to receive a prescribed amount of intensification and density. The new PPS requires the City to establish its own intensification targets, but only encourages municipalities to identify their own “designated growth areas” being lands not yet developed, and “strategic growth areas,” being developed lands to see infill and intensification.

One of the recent amendments to the Planning Act was to exempt from the Act any development by publically-assisted post-secondary institutions, including their student housing developments. The new PPS states that municipalities should “consider” a student housing strategy in strategic growth areas in collaboration with publically-assisted post-secondary institutions. For Kawartha Lakes, this would mean working with Fleming College to meet current and future student housing needs.

Affordable Housing

The new PPS carries over affordable housing policies from the Growth Plan, with some revisions. Municipalities are still required to provide a mix of housing options, but the new PPS requires municipalities to establish and implement minimum targets for the provision of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households. “Affordable” is still defined as housing that costs 30% or less of household income or 10% below average prices. The province has yet to release a definition or policies for “attainable housing” which was introduced in 2022, though the Minister has stated “attainable housing” will include modular homes. More recently, MMAH staff have indicated that modular homes will be provided on surplus provincial lands, but no details have been released.

Employment Areas

The new PPS provides revisions to Employment Area policies by narrowing the scope of what uses are permitted in Employment Areas to protect them for manufacturing and warehousing. Previously, a broader mix of uses (except residential and other sensitive land uses) were permitted in Employment Areas. Now, any other uses such as research and development or retail and office, must be related to the primary use of manufacturing or warehousing. Commercial uses are no longer permitted in Employment Areas.

The new PPS introduces a new 300 metre buffer around Employment Areas to minimize and mitigate impacts on the long term viability of the employment uses. It would appear commercial, retail, and office uses that are not directly related to a specific manufacturing or warehousing use would be situated in this employment buffer.

Municipalities are encouraged to locate some industrial, manufacturing, and small-scale warehousing that would not have adverse impacts on sensitive land uses within strategic growth areas and other mixed use areas.

Policies for removing or converting lands from Employment Areas is largely unchanged for Kawartha Lakes. An “employment conversion” may only be done where it has been demonstrated that the land is not required for employment uses, the proposed use would not negatively impact the employment area, there is sufficient infrastructure and servicing to facilitate the proposed use, and newly introduced is that the municipality has sufficient employment lands for the growth horizon of its current Official Plan.

Agriculture

There are essentially no changes to policies for Rural Lands. However, the definition of ‘on-farm diversified uses’ has been modified to remove specific reference to ground mounted solar and instead include electricity generation facilities and transmission systems, and energy storage systems (which includes the storage of hydrogen, fuel, compressed air and battery storage).

When planning Prime Agricultural Areas, municipalities are now “required” to use an “agricultural system” approach. Previously, municipalities were only “encouraged” to use a system approach. This system approach is meant to maintain and enhance a geographically continuous agricultural land base and an “agri-food network” comprised of agricultural operations, infrastructure, services and assets vital to the agri-food sector.

Where an agricultural property has a residential dwelling, the new PPS permits two additional residential units (ARUs) so long as they meet specified criteria. Where two ARUs are proposed, one of the ARUs must be within or attached to the principle dwelling. Detached ARUs must be in close proximity to the principle dwelling or farm building cluster. These ARUs are in addition to any farm worker housing.

Lot creation in prime agricultural areas (which includes rural lands) continues to be discouraged and only permitted for agricultural uses, agricultural-related uses, and for farm surplus dwellings that result from the consolidation of farm operations. ARUs cannot be severed.

Other Alternatives Considered:

None.

Alignment to Strategic Priorities

Ensuring planning decisions are consistent with the new PPS is Good Governance. Various policies within the PPS foster a Healthy Environment, an Exceptional Quality of Life, and a Vibrant and Growing Economy.

Financial/Operation Impacts:

While the new PPS will have some operational impacts, particularly on planning approvals, there are no immediate financial or operational impacts caused by this information report.

Consultations:

All Departments

Attachments:

Appendix A – Provincial Planning Statement, 2024



Provincial Planning
Statement 2024.pdf

Appendix B – Summary Table



PLAN2024-056 -
Appendix B.docx

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