

Memo

To: Mayor Burton and Members of Council
From: Planning and Development Department
CC: Ralph Kaminski, Commissioner (Acting), Community Development Commission
Jane Clohecy, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: October 23, 2024
Subject: Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

Comments - Overview

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS 2024) was issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* and came into effect October 20, 2024. All municipal council planning decisions after this date must be consistent with the PPS 2024.

The vision in the PPS 2024 emphasizes “the building of more homes for all Ontarians” and restates the province’s goal of building at least 1.5-million homes by 2031.

The PPS 2024 provides policy direction on provincial interests related to land use planning and development. It replaces the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019.

The PPS 2024 includes policies on a range of topics, including: growth management, housing, employment, infrastructure, facilities, resources and public health and safety.

Staff notes that the implementation of the PPS 2024 in Oakville will occur through the review of development applications and through the town’s ongoing official plan review.

Homes and Communities

These policies focus on building homes and sustaining communities, including:

- Future population and employment growth forecasts are to be based on projections published by the Ministry of Finance.
- Presently, municipalities may continue to plan for growth using forecasts previously issued by the province.
- New municipal official plans shall identify sufficient land to meet identified land needs for a time horizon of 20 to 30 years.
- The defined term “complete communities” is refined in PPS 2024 and presented as a concept that should be supported by planning authorities.

“*Complete communities*: means places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and *settlement areas* that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, *public service facilities*, local stores and services. *Complete communities* are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations”.

- The concept of “large and fast-growing municipalities” is introduced in PPS 2024. These municipalities, including the Town of Oakville, are listed in Schedule 1 and there are specific policies provided for these municipalities.

The “large and fast-growing municipalities” represent the municipalities with the greatest housing needs and that have pledged to achieve a provincial Municipal Housing Target. For the town, this pledge is 33,000 new homes built by 2031.

Housing

The PPS 2024 has new defined terms, including “affordable” and “low and moderate income households” which provide clarity to policies focused on affordable housing.

The new terms are defined separately based on owning or renting a home as well as annual household income and market conditions in the municipality.

Growth Management

These policies update many concepts from the provincial planning framework, including:

Municipal comprehensive reviews - Municipal comprehensive reviews of official plans is not a policy in the PPS 2024. The lack of comprehensive planning may be seen by the province as a way to accelerate development approvals. It may also allow for privately initiated applications to convert elements of the town’s urban structure. This raises concerns around ad-hoc planning, the long-term alignment of infrastructure and protection of natural heritage.

Strategic Growth Areas – The concept of strategic growth areas is a policy carried forward in the PPS 2024. These are areas shown in municipal official plans where significant population and employment growth is expected, as well as locations to prioritize infrastructure and public service facilities.

Policies also direct that planning authorities should consider a student housing strategy, and support redevelopment of commercial lands in strategic growth areas.

Staff notes that the term “urban growth centre” is not continued in the PPS 2024.

Major Transit Station Areas - Strategic growth areas include major transit station areas, and the PPS 2024 requires planning authorities to delineate these areas within an

approximate 500 to 800-metre radius of a higher order transit station.

Policies for these areas also encourage connections to high frequency public transit systems, multi-modal access, connections to major trip generators, accommodating a range of mobility needs and active transportation.

Minimum Density Targets - The minimum density targets for major transit station areas are carried forward in the PPS 2024 including, 160 residents and jobs combined per hectare for bus rapid transit, or 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare for rail.

Employment

The key employment policies in the PPS 2024 can be summarized as follows:

Protection of Employment Lands - Policies prioritize the preservation of designated employment lands to ensure a sufficient supply of areas for diverse types of economic activities, preventing encroachment by incompatible uses.

Compatibility with Sensitive Uses – Policies require that new employment developments consider the impacts on sensitive land uses, such as residential areas, using separation distances and mitigation measures to minimize conflicts.

Conversions and Redevelopment – Policies allow for the conversion of employment lands to other uses under specific conditions such as if they no longer meet the definition of “area of employment”, to ensure that such changes do not undermine the availability of employment and that other uses are compatible with surrounding areas.

Staff notes that comments submitted to the province regarding changes to areas of employment in the PPS 2024 and the *Planning Act* were circulated October 15, 2024.

Climate Change

The key policies for climate change in the PPS 2024 emphasize integrating climate considerations into land-use planning to promote sustainable development, enhance resilience to climate impacts, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

These policies require that *protected heritage property* as defined, be conserved. This means that listed and not designated properties would no longer have to be conserved.

These policies encourage municipalities to develop and implement “proactive strategies for conserving significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes”.

Indigenous Communities and Engagement

The Vision for the PPS 2024 states that:

“Ontario will continue to recognize the unique role Indigenous communities have in

land use planning and development, and the contribution of Indigenous communities' perspectives and traditional knowledge to land use planning decisions. Meaningful early engagement and constructive, cooperative relationship-building between planning authorities and Indigenous communities will facilitate knowledge-sharing and inform decision-making in land use planning”.

The policies require that “planning authorities shall undertake early engagement with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters to facilitate knowledge-sharing, support consideration of Indigenous interests in land use decision-making and support the identification of potential impacts of decisions on the exercise of Aboriginal or treaty rights”.

Planning authorities shall also engage to ensure Indigenous “interests are considered when identifying, protecting and managing not only archaeological resources but also built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes”.

Infrastructure, Facilities, Resources and Public Health and Safety

The PPS 2024 has additional policies to support land use planning and development:

Sustainable Resource Management – Policies emphasize the protection and sustainable use of natural resources while considering their role in economic development and environmental health.

Infrastructure Planning and Investment – Policies promote the development of efficient, resilient infrastructure to support growth, including transportation, utilities, and services.

Hazard Management – Policies direct planning to avoid and mitigate natural hazards and to protect development from unsafe and unsustainable conditions.

Water Resources – Policies emphasize the protection of drinking water sources by requiring municipalities to implement land-use planning and practices that safeguard the quality and quantity of water resources. Watershed planning is also encouraged for “large and fast-growing municipalities” to plan for water, wastewater and stormwater.

Natural Hazards – Policies direct municipalities to incorporate natural hazard assessments into land-use planning, promoting development practices that minimize risks associated with hazards including as flooding and erosion.

Conclusion and Interpretation

The provincial policy-led planning system recognizes the complex inter-relationships in land use planning. The PPS 2024 is to be read in its entirety and the relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. When more than one policy is relevant, the reader should consider the relevant policies and how they work together. The language of each policy will help in understanding how the policies may be interpreted and implemented.