



## MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

**FROM:** Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

**DATE:** September 16, 2024

**MEMO NO.:** PD-2024-010

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Provincial Planning Statement

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### **PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an update on the recently released final version of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Province first proposed the integration of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 into a single policy document in April 2023 alongside the release of draft Bill 97: *Helping Homebuyers and Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*.

Approximately one year later, on April 10, 2024, the long-awaited draft of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 was released via the Environmental Registry of Ontario for comment. The intent of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, is to have a singular, province-wide, housing focused planning document with the goal of speeding up the delivery of housing units across Ontario.

Staff commented on the proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 via Report PD-2024-035, attached as Appendix 1 to this Memorandum. The comments in Report PD-2024-035 focused on key themes and proposed changes including growth management, settlement area boundary expansions, employment areas, the agricultural system, natural heritage and affordable housing.

The Report and staff comments were submitted to the Province in advance of the May 12, 2024, comment deadline.

On August 20, 2024, the Ontario government released the final version of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS, 2024) as well as a new regulation which will revoke "A

Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019”. The PPS, 2024 will come into force and effect on October 20, 2024, the same day that the Growth Plan, 2019 will be revoked. All planning decisions made on or after October 20, 2024, must therefore be consistent with the new Provincial Planning Statement.

## **COMMENTS:**

Staff have reviewed the final version of the PPS, 2024 and note that it is largely reflective of the draft version discussed in Report PD-2024-035. As noted above, the final version of the PPS, 2024 reflects the Provincial direction to meet the previously established 1.5 million new homes across Ontario by 2031 target.

Key directions carried forward in the final PPS, 2024 include:

- Through their official plans, municipalities are required to have sufficient land available to accommodate a range and mix of land uses for at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years. Exceptions where planning may extend beyond this time frame includes planning for infrastructure, public service facilities, strategic growth areas and employment areas.
- New through the PPS, 2024, are the use of the Ontario Population Projections published by the Ministry of Finance, which municipalities “...shall base population and employment growth forecasts on”. Notwithstanding this policy, section 2.1.2 provides that “...municipalities may continue to forecast growth using population and employment forecasts previously issued by the Province for the purposes of land use planning”.<sup>1</sup>
- Municipal Comprehensive Reviews (also known within Halton as the Regional Official Plan process) previously required by the Growth Plan, have been eliminated with the sunseting of the Growth Plan and removal of Regional planning authority.
- Settlement Area Boundary Expansions may be proposed at any time, with proponents being required to demonstrate how the expansion meets identified tests within the PPS, 2024. The tests include consideration of the need for additional land, infrastructure and servicing capacity, avoidance of prime agricultural areas, phasing, and consideration of minimum distance separation formulae. Key to this new permission is the ability for applicants to also appeal any refusals or non-decisions by municipalities to the Ontario Land Tribunal.<sup>2</sup>
- In keeping with direction originally established in the Growth Plan, Strategic Growth Areas (which include Major Transit Station Areas {MTSAs}) are to be the focus of significant population and employment growth. The PPS, 2024, requires that MTSAs be delineated within a 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station and that the boundary “maximizes the number of potential transit users that are within walking distance of the station”.

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<sup>1</sup> See 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the PPS, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Appeals to Settlement Area Boundary Expansion decisions were introduced through Bill 185.

- In keeping with section 2.4.2.2, both the Acton and Georgetown MTSA are required to meet a minimum density target of 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare, given each MTSA is located along a commuter rail line.<sup>3</sup>
- The PPS, 2024 encourages general intensification and redevelopment to support complete communities, particularly within strategic growth areas<sup>4</sup>. Municipalities are directed to “establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built up areas, based on local conditions”.
- Planning authorities are directed to provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities by “permitting and facilitating...all types of residential *intensification*<sup>5</sup>, including the *development and redevelopment* of underutilized commercial and institutional sites (e.g., shopping malls and plazas) for residential use, development and introduction of new *housing options* within previously developed areas, and *redevelopment*, which results in a net increase in residential units...” (see Section 2.2.1b)2).
- Section 2.3.5 encourages municipalities to establish density targets for designated growth areas<sup>6</sup>, based on local conditions. Schedule 1 of the PPS, 2024 introduces a list of “large and fast growing municipalities”. These municipalities are specifically encouraged to plan for a target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare, within designated growth areas. The Town of Halton Hills is not included on the Schedule 1 list of large and fast growing municipalities.
- Employment land conversions can be considered by municipalities, either as proposed by a landowner or by the municipality, subject to each application meeting prescribed tests. These tests include demonstration of the need for the removal and that the land is not required for employment uses over the long term, that the uses proposed would not negatively impact the overall viability of the employment area, that infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses, and finally that the municipality has

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<sup>3</sup> Section 2.4.2.4 of the PPS, 2024 allows municipalities to request that the Minister approve an Official Plan or Official Plan Amendment with a target that is lower than the applicable target established in policy 2.4.2.2, where it has been demonstrated that this target cannot be achieved because: a) development is prohibited by provincial policy or severely restricted on a significant portion of the lands within the delineated area; or b) there are a limited number of residents and jobs associated with the built form, but a major trip generator or feeder service will sustain high ridership at the station or stop.

<sup>4</sup> Strategic growth areas are defined as: “means within settlement areas, nodes, corridors, and other areas that have been identified by municipalities to be the focus for accommodating intensification and higher density mixed uses in a more compact built form”.

<sup>5</sup> Intensification “means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through: a) redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites and underutilized shopping malls and plazas; b) the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas; c) infill development; and d) the expansion or conversion of existing buildings”.

<sup>6</sup> Designated growth areas “means lands within settlement areas designated for growth or lands added to settlement areas that have not yet been fully developed. Designated growth areas include lands which are designated and available for residential growth in accordance with policy 2.1.4.a), as well as lands required for employment and other uses”.

sufficient employment lands to accommodate the projected employment growth to the horizon of the approved official plan.

**CONCLUSION:**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing released the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 on August 20, 2024. This new, province-wide land use planning document is issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, and comes into effect on October 20, 2024, officially replacing the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019.

Approximately 18 months after it was first proposed, the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development, and sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land province-wide. All land use planning decisions made by a municipality as of the effective date (October 20), must be consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement.

Reviewed and approved by,

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer