



Staff Report

Planning and Development Services

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: September 16, 2019
Report Number: PDS.19.114
Subject: Proposed Changes to Provincial Policy Statement
Prepared by: Trevor Houghton, MCIP, RPP, Manager of Community Planning

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.19.114, entitled “Proposed Changes to Provincial Policy Statement”;

AND THAT staff be directed to continue to monitor the proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement and report back to Council as required.

B. Overview

Earlier this year the province announced the “More Homes, More Choice: Ontario’s Housing Supply Action Plan”. The vision of the Action Plan includes the cutting of red-tape to make it easier to build the right types of housing in the right places, and to make housing more affordable.

The Action Plan will make changes across a wide array of provincial legislation. This includes revisions to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). The province has prepared a draft of a revised PPS for public review and input. The deadline for submitting comments regarding this revised PPS is October 21st, 2019.

C. Background

The purpose of the PPS is to give direction on matters of provincial interest as it relates to land use planning. The current PPS came into effect on April 2014. Prior versions included the 2005 PPS and the 1997 PPS.

Although it is a provincial document the PPS is often implemented directly by municipalities. Subsection 3(5a) of the *Planning Act* provides that a decision of the Council of a municipality in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter shall be consistent with the PPS that is in effect on the date of that decision. It is our standard practice that staff reports to Council (or the Town’s Committee of Adjustment) that seek a decision on a planning matter includes an opinion from staff regarding consistency to the PPS.

As a province-wide document the PPS must cover a wide range of land-use planning topics. In broad strokes the PPS touches on the following;

- The efficient use and management of land,
- The provision of sufficient housing including affordable housing,
- The protection of the environment, natural resources and farm land,
- The continued opportunity for economic development,
- The planning of transportation and other infrastructure to accommodate needs, and
- The protection of people and property from natural and human-made hazards.

A revision to the current PPS is being contemplated by the province as part of its overarching “Housing Supply Action Plan” initiative. The province has provided the themes below as the impetus for undertaking a revised PPS;

1. Encouraging the development of more and different types of housing,
2. To protect the environment and public safety,
3. To reduce barriers and costs for developers and provide greater predictability,
4. Support rural, northern and Indigenous communities, and
5. Recognize local decision-making in support of new housing and economic development.

Each theme is explored in more detail below in Section D.

D. Analysis

1. Increasing Housing Supply and Mix

The proposed draft PPS policies would:

- Increase land supply requirements municipalities must meet;
 - Increase planning horizon from 20 to 25 years for employment areas, and
 - Increase housing land supply from 10 to 12 years.
- Allow higher minimum requirement for serviced residential land (5 years) for upper- and single-tier municipalities;
- Update provincial guidance to support land budgeting (i.e. Projection Methodology);
- Increase flexibility for municipalities related to the phasing of development and compact form;
- Add flexibility to the process for settlement area boundary expansions (e.g. allow minor adjustments subject to specific tests, highlight that study requirements should be proportionate to the size/scale of development);
- Require transit-supportive development and prioritize intensification, including potential air rights development, in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations;
- Support the development of housing to meet current and future housing needs, and add reference to housing options;
- Support municipalities in achieving affordable housing targets by requiring alignment with Housing and Homelessness Plans; and

- Broaden PPS policies to enhance support for development of long-term care homes.

Comment: The primary urban employment area of the Town is located in the south-east corner of Thornbury-Clarksburg. As part of the recent Official Plan approval (2016) it was determined that this general area is sufficiently sized to accommodate the projected urban employment growth of the Town over the long-term horizon. The Official Plan housing supply policy is to maintain a minimum 10-year supply (Section D7.3). Subject to further analysis and growth forecasts it is probable that the Town has enough lands pre-designated for residential housing to reach a 12-year supply (should the PPS be so amended).

The Town's Official Plan policies are permissive with respect to the range and mix of potential housing forms and options. In those settlement areas of the Town designated as Residential/Recreational Area a mix of residential types are permitted "by right" (Sections B3.7 and B7). This includes single detached, semi-detached, townhouses and low-rise multiple dwellings. The potential for new accessory dwelling units whether in the main dwelling or in a detached accessory building has also been considered. Other policies in the Official Plan allow for potential intensification by creating new in-fill lots via a Consent application.

The Official Plan has considered the provision for special needs housing within the Town (Section B3.1.6). Special needs housing includes important community uses such as long-term care facilities, retirement homes, residential care facilities and emergency housing. Staff note that some of the policies within this section of the Official Plan may be overly restrictive and contrary to the goals of the new draft PPS. As a result, updates to the Town's policies may be required.

2. Protecting the Environment and Public Safety

The proposed draft PPS policies would:

- Enhance direction to prepare for impacts of a changing climate;
- Enhance stormwater management policies to protect water and support climate resiliency;
- Promote the on-site local reuse of excess soil;
- Maintain current policies related to natural and human made hazards which directs development away from hazardous areas including flood-prone areas in order to protect public health and safety, while work by the Special Advisor on Flooding is underway;
- Maintain current policies that require municipalities in southern Ontario to identify natural heritage systems, and provide flexibility as to how to achieve this outcome; and
- Maintain protections for the Greenbelt.

Comment: The Town's Official Plan includes policy dedicated to stormwater management (Section C5). These policies are usually implemented during the Town's review of development applications (Site Plan, Plan of Subdivision) and require submission of supporting SWM reports and drawings. Staff also monitor our stormwater management practices and augment these with other resiliency planning techniques (low-impact design (LID's), municipal asset

management, updated engineering standards, development charges studies, etc.). Staff also support the concept of reusing excess soil on-site or within the boundaries of our community where appropriate, thus minimizing the need to long-haul soil on regional transportation routes.

3. Reducing Barriers and Costs

The proposed draft PPS policies would:

- Require municipalities to take action to fast-track development applications for certain proposals (e.g. housing);
- Allow mineral aggregate operations to use rehabilitation plans to demonstrate that extraction will have no negative impacts;
- Align policies and definition of cultural heritage with recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*;
- Refocus PPS energy policies to support a broad range of energy types and opportunities for increased energy supply;
- Direct large ground-mounted solar facilities away from prime agricultural and specialty crop areas; and
- Make minor changes to streamline development approvals and support burden reduction.

Comment: Staff support the continued improvement and streamlining of municipal development review procedures that eliminate unnecessary costs and lost time.

4. Supporting Rural, Northern and Indigenous Communities

The proposed draft PPS policies would:

- Allow flexibility for communities by clarifying perceived barriers to sewage and water servicing policies for lot creation and development in rural settlement areas;
- Enhance municipal engagement with Indigenous communities on land use planning to help inform decision-making, build relationships and address issues upfront in the approvals process; and
- Enhance agricultural protections to support critical food production and the agricultural sector as a significant economic driver.

Comment: As a matter of standard practice the Town includes the Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM) Lands, Resources and Consultation Department on circulations regarding submitted land-use planning applications. In turn HSM are diligent with providing timely responses and input back to the Town's Planning & Development Services.

The Town's Official Plan has robust policies that protect and enhance the value of the Town's agricultural, special agricultural and rural (Section B4). These policies are implemented in the Town's Zoning By-law 2018-65.

5. Supporting Certainty and Economic Growth

The proposed draft PPS policies would:

- Encourage municipalities to facilitate conditions for economic investment, and at the time of official plan review or update, assess locally-identified employment areas to ensure designations are appropriate;
- Provide municipalities with greater control over employment area conversions to support the forms of development and job creation that suit the local context (current and future); and
- Provide stronger protection for major facilities such as manufacturing and industrial uses where non-employment uses are planned nearby (i.e. buffering uses from new sensitive uses).

Comment: The Town's Official Plan has in place policies that minimize the possibility of conflicts between employment and non-employment uses (Section C13).

Conclusion

The proposed revisions to the PPS remain in flux. As such it is challenging to completely assess what the true impacts to the Town (if any) may be should an amended PPS materialize. Based on this high-level review it is suggested that the immediate impacts would be minimal/manageable.

This conclusion is based in part in a Town Official Plan and Zoning By-law that are relatively new documents, and as such, many of the changes proposed for PPS have been accounted (ex. adequate housing supply, protecting agricultural and environmental areas, etc.). Potential changes to the Town's Official Plan may be required should the PPS be revised include more defined resiliency planning policy (stormwater management) and the easing of restrictions for special housing (allow by right, not require a zoning by-law amendment). Also the continued improvement of the Town's development review process ought to be explored.

It is recommended that staff be directed to continue to monitor the proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement and report back to Council as required.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Create Opportunities for Sustainability
Objective #3 Promote a Diversified Economy
Objective #4 Support Value-Added Agriculture and Culinary Tourism

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners
Objective #3 Strengthen Partnerships

- Goal #3: Support Healthy Lifestyles
Objective #2 Increase the Range of Housing Choices and Promote Housing Affordability
- Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
Objective #5 Constantly Identify Opportunities to Improve Efficiencies and Effectiveness
- Goal #5: Ensure Our Infrastructure is Sustainable
Objective #3 Implement Best Practices in Sustainable Infrastructure
Objective #4 Ensure that Infrastructure is Available to Support Development

F. Environmental Impacts

There are not direct environmental impacts associated with the recommendation of this report. However, if the PPS is revised as currently proposed, changes to provincial policy regarding stormwater management and environmental protection is possible.

G. Financial Impact

There are no direct financial impacts associated with the recommendations of this report.

H. In consultation with

Senior Management Team, Development Engineering, Communications and Economic Development

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required.

Comments regarding this report should be submitted to Trevor Houghton,
managerplanning@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

There are no attachments to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Trevor Houghton

Trevor Houghton, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Community Planning

Nathan Westendorp

Nathan Westendorp, RPP, MCIP
Director of Planning and Development Services

For more information, please contact:

Trevor Houghton, MCIP, RPP
managerplanning@thebluemountains.ca

519-599-3131 extension 308