



INFORMATION REPORT
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REPORT – INFORMATION REPORT # 2017-26

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
SLT/OLT

SUBJECT: New Provincial Plans, 2017

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Services

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request through the Clerk's office that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

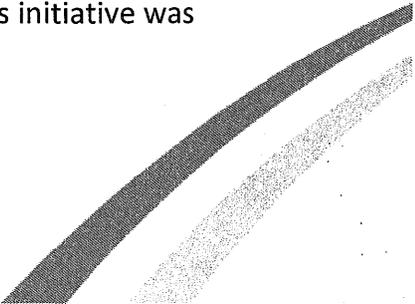
This Report will provide information regarding the final versions of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and the Greenbelt Plan. These Plans were released by the province on May 18, 2017 and have an implementation date of July 1, 2017.

BACKGROUND

On February 27, 2015, the province initiated the process regarding the Coordinated Provincial Plans Review. The following Plans were included in this review:

- Niagara Escarpment Plan (1985) - revised in 1994 and 2005
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002)
- Greenbelt Plan (2005)
- Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)

Staff have prepared a series of reports on the Provincial Plans Review since this initiative was announced. Most recently, in the fall of 2016, three Reports were prepared:



1. Report 2016-28 provided comments on the then-released draft versions of Provincial Plans that most effect Newmarket (the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and the Greenbelt Plan);
2. Staff Report 2016-38 - Provincial Plans Review - Oak Ridges Moraine Background; and
3. Staff Report 2016-41 - Provincial Plans Review - Additional Growth Plan Density Comments.

The province held a consultation period from 2015 to 2017. As per Council's direction, the Town has provided comments to the province during this consultation period, including the submission of the above-noted Reports.

On May 18, 2017 the province released the new versions of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, each having an implementation date of July 1, 2017. A new Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) was also released with an implementation date of June 1, 2017, but is not the focus of this report as there are no NEP areas located within the Town.

COMMENTS

The following section summarizes the major policy changes of each new Provincial Plan, focusing particularly on the new Growth Plan.

In sum, Newmarket remains well positioned to respond to these policy directions. Newmarket is largely built out, and the vast majority of the Town is within the *delineated built-up area* as per the new Growth Plan. The Urban Centres Secondary Plan provides the framework to accommodate the vast majority of future growth within the Urban Centres, which is consistent with the policies of the new Provincial Plans.

Growth Plan, 2017

Gradual intensification in Delineated Built-up Areas

The proposed draft of the Plan (May 2016) required a minimum of 60% of all new residential development within upper and single tier municipalities to occur within its *delineated built-up areas*, required at the time of the next municipal comprehensive review (often in the form of a Regional Official Plan Amendment). This was a considerable increase from the 40% target set by the existing Growth Plan, and was to be required fairly quickly. There was a considerable amount of feedback from municipalities and the development industry on this change.

To address this feedback, the final Plan still includes the 60% target within Delineated Built-up Areas, but includes three gradual steps to reach the target: (i) first requiring no change to current density targets until the next municipal comprehensive review / Regional Official Plan Amendment; (ii) then once a municipal comprehensive review is undertaken or the Regional OPA is passed, the target of 50% is required; and finally (iii) by 2031 the target becomes 60%. Once the Regional OPA is passed, the Newmarket Official Plan will have to be brought into conformity with the Region's Official Plan during the Town's next Official Plan review.

In Newmarket's case, most of the town is within the *delineated built-up area* as defined by the new Plan, so the vast majority (far exceeding the 60% target) of growth will happen in these areas. Therefore the Town is well positioned to satisfy density requirements of *delineated built-up areas*.

Intensification in Designated Greenfield Areas

The proposed draft of the Plan (May 2016) also proposed to increase the density target in Designated Greenfield Areas from a minimum of 50 (in the current Growth Plan) to 80 residents and jobs per hectare. Similar to above, there was a considerable amount of feedback from municipalities and the development industry on this increase in density. To address this feedback, the final Plan includes the option for upper and single tier municipalities to establish alternative density targets for Designated Greenfield Areas, to be determined at the time of the next municipal comprehensive review, where certain criteria are met.

Relative to Newmarket, this is not a significant issue because no *designated greenfield areas* exist in the Town. As defined by the Plan, *designated greenfield areas* are lands within *settlement areas* but outside of *delineated built-up areas* that have been designated in an official plan for development and are required to accommodate growth. As previously noted, the town is largely comprised of *built-up areas*, which are subject to separate intensification targets as discussed earlier.

Staff note that the new Growth Plan does not define Persons Per Unit (PPU) numbers as previously requested by the Town, so there will still be some subjectivity in demonstrating targets at a municipal level across the province.

Building complete communities, on serviced land, within Delineated Built-up Areas

The new Plan provides a stronger policy focus on directing growth to *settlement areas*. *Settlement areas* are comprised of both: (i) built-up areas; and (ii) undeveloped lands that have been designated for future development (e.g. *designated greenfield areas*). The Plan directs development to the former over the latter, in a way that satisfies the *delineated built-up area's* intensification targets.

Relative to Newmarket, the entire Town outside of the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) area is a *settlement area* as defined by the Plan, so any development located within the Town but outside of the ORM area satisfies this basic policy. However, within *settlement areas*, the Plan specifies that growth will be focused to *delineated built-up areas* (which are defined as areas being located within the *delineated built boundary*, which was further defined through a 2008 mapping project completed by the province), strategic growth areas, areas with existing or planned transit, and areas with existing or planned water/wastewater servicing. The Town's planning documents, including the Urban Centres Secondary Plan, effectively implement this policy direction.

For clarity, development in the Town's ORM lands would only be permitted through a *settlement area* expansion, which may only occur through an upper tier *municipal comprehensive review* (MCR). This MCR must demonstrate numerous criteria including the justification for such development through a land needs assessment.

Minimum Density Target in the Urban Centres is unchanged

The new Plan requires a minimum density of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare by 2031 in the Newmarket Centre. This target is unchanged from the 2006 Plan and is effectively implemented by the Urban Centres Secondary Plan.

Intensification in Major Transit Station Areas along Priority Transit Corridors

The new Plan requires increased intensification along *Major Transit Station Areas* along *Priority Transit Corridors*.

Priority Transit Corridors are mapped by the new Plan and include Newmarket's bus rapid transit routes along Yonge Street and Davis Drive (e.g. the Viva Rapidways). *Major Transit Station Areas* are defined as an area of approximately 500m from a station on a *Priority Transit Corridors*.

Therefore, additional intensification must be focused in an area of approximately 500m from each Rapidway station in Newmarket. The minimum density target for these areas is 160 residents and jobs combined per hectare. Staff will be working with the Region on more precisely delineating these areas in consideration of the Urban Centres Secondary Plan area and policies.

Regarding GO Rail transit, it is worth noting that the *Priority Transit Corridor* ends at Aurora, in contrast to previous Town comments. Therefore neither the Newmarket GO Station nor future Mulock GO Station are technically within this corridor. This negates the need for intensification to be focused around these stations at the required minimum density target for these areas, being 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare. However, regarding the Newmarket GO Station, the Davis Drive Viva Rapidway includes a "Main Street" Rapidway station and because the definition for a *major*

transit station area references a, approximate 500m radius, the Newmarket GO Station (which is within 500m of the “Main Street” Rapidway station) is effectively a *major transit station area* on a *priority transit corridor* as it relates to the Rapidway, and is therefore subject to the minimum density target of 160 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

Regarding the future Mulock GO Station, although it is technically not within a *Priority Transit Corridor*, the Secondary Plan for this area should consider utilizing the 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare density target. The new Growth Plan includes a policy that allows the province to identify additional *Priority Transit Corridors* in the future; if the province extends the *Priority Transit Corridor* from Aurora to Newmarket (either to the Mulock Station or to the Newmarket GO Station) after the planning work has been completed for the Mulock Station, it would be more efficient to already have the planning regime for this area reflect the 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare density target.

Employment Lands and Prime Employment Lands

The new Plan continues to define *employment area* as “areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities”.

The new Plan also introduces a new *prime employment area* designation. These areas are defined as “areas of employment within *settlement areas* that are designated in an official plan and protected over the long-term for uses that are land extensive or have low employment densities and require locations that are adjacent to or near *major goods movement facilities and corridors*. These uses include manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, and appropriate associated uses and ancillary facilities.” In short, they are transportation-reliant employment areas.

The Plan prohibits residential and *major retail uses* from *employment areas*, and prohibits residential, institutional, retail and office uses from *prime employment areas*. With the objective of creating a municipality that encourages a mix of uses that encourages walking and other non-vehicular forms of transportation, staff previously expressed concerns with these parts of the Plan. With the Plan now finalized, staff will work closely with Regional staff through the Regional MCR to assess the impacts of delineating such areas within the Town.

Enhanced focus on Housing and Affordability

The new Plan provides a stronger focus on housing and housing affordability. The Plan contains policies that require upper-tier municipalities to develop housing strategies that support the intensification targets of the Plan, identifies a range and mix of housing types including secondary suite and *affordable* housing policies, establishes targets for *affordable* ownership and rental housing,

and identifies implementation mechanisms. These policies must then be brought into local Official Plans during subsequent Official Plan reviews.

In the fall, the province will be issuing a guidance document on how municipalities can implement these policy requirements. Staff have been participating in a Municipal Working Group with the Region on housing affordability, and this guidance document will be examined and assessed as part of this Group's ongoing work.

Required Climate Change Policies

Echoing the legislative direction provided by the recently released Bill 139 regarding OMB reform, the new Plan contains policies that require upper-tier municipalities to identify actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals, aligned with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and the Climate Change Action Plan, 2016. This includes the requirement for upper-tier municipalities to establish municipal interim and long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that support provincial targets. These policies must then be brought into local Official Plans during the subsequent Official Plan reviews.

Again, in the fall the province will be issuing a guidance document on how municipalities can implement these policy requirements, and staff will be participating in a new Local Municipal Working Group that will be formed by the Region to determine implementation strategies.

Mapping Error

Newmarket's Provincial Urban Growth Centre is mapped slightly east of its accurate location. It is mapped over the area of the GO Train Station, whereas it should be mapped over the Yonge and Davis intersection. While the implications of this error are minimal (the province's 2008 Urban Growth Centre mapping will still be referred to), it has been confirmed by the province that it will be corrected in any future update.

Oak Ridges Moraine Plan

A portion of the southwest area of the Town is located within the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM), and therefore subject to the policies of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP). As noted in Report 2016-38, these lands have been protected by various Town and Regional Planning / growth management documents, as well as an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) decision, for approximately 20 years.

The portion of the ORM lands within the Town is largely designated "Settlement Area" in the ORMCP, but has been studied from an ecological perspective and designated as Environmental Protection

lands in Newmarket's Planning documents. This area is located outside of the urban boundary and to-date has not been determined by the Town or Region to be needed to support growth.

During the consultation period, the Town requested that the Town's ORM lands be re-designated from "Settlement Area" to a more restrictive designation in order to be consistent with the Town's Planning documents and Region's growth management documents. In essence, this was to be an administrative update, intended to better align the two Plans. However, this was not satisfied as the identified ORM lands within the Town of Newmarket remain "Settlement Area" in the new ORMCP.

Although the lands were not re-designated, it is noted that the new Growth Plan contains policies which limit growth in un-delineated built-up areas, areas that are not serviced by existing or planned water/wastewater servicing, or are in the Greenbelt area. While not in the ORMCP, this Growth Plan policy provides significantly more authority and provincial planning direction relative to protecting this area of the Town.

Greenbelt Plan

The lands on the east side of Highway 404 adjacent to Newmarket are designated "Protected Countryside" in the Greenbelt Plan. This designation limits the opportunity for these lands to support growth for employment purposes in an appropriate location requiring minimal infrastructure expansion.

During the consultation period, the Town requested, with the concurrence of East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville, that these lands be reviewed and considered for removal from the Greenbelt. This comment has not been addressed; the boundary for the new Greenbelt Plan remains in its current location along the eastern portion of Highway 404 adjacent to the Town of Newmarket.

However, staff note that there may be merit in maintaining the Greenbelt in this location at this time, as the Greenbelt Plan has the effect of restricting other forms of development (i.e. residential) in this area that would preclude future employment uses.

NEXT STEPS

In 2014, the Region commenced a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to establish a preferred Growth Scenario. In 2016 this MCR was put on hold to await the release of the final Provincial Plans. With these Plans now released, the Region is re-commencing the MCR. Through various Local Municipal Working Groups that will be created, staff will work with the Region in this MCR to:

- inform Regional polices regarding intensification around *Major Transit Station Areas* along *Priority Transit Corridors*,
- delineate any *Employment Areas* and *Prime Employment Areas*,
- prepare an affordable housing strategy; and
- prepare climate change policies.

By September, the province has also committed to releasing certain guidance documents that will be worked into the MCR. The guidance documents will explain how specific policy objectives (such as climate change, Low Impact Development strategies, and methodology for creating land needs assessments / land budgets) are to be addressed by upper tier municipal planning documents.

The MCR will result in a Regional Official Plan Amendment, ensuring the Regional Official Plan conforms to the new Provincial Plans. The province has stated that this upper tier conformity work must be complete by 2022. The Newmarket Official Plan will have to be brought into conformity with the Region's Official Plan during the Town's subsequent Official Plan review.

CONSULTATION

Public consultation is not applicable to this Information Report, however staff will continue to liaise with the Region as part of the various Local Municipal Working Groups, as noted above in 'Next Steps'.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Providing input on Provincial Plans and legislation supports the *Well-respected* branch of the Community Strategic Plan by being an influential contributor to regional and provincial affairs.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

There are no Human Resource impacts associated with this Information Report.

BUDGET IMPACT

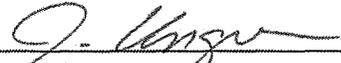
There are no Capital or Operating Budget impacts associated with this Information Report.

CONTACT

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