



Corporate Report

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DATE: May 5, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee
Meeting Date: May 25, 2015

FROM: Edward R. Sajecki
Commissioner of Planning and Building

SUBJECT: **Provincial Coordinated Land Use Planning Review**

RECOMMENDATION: That the report titled "Provincial Coordinated Land Use Planning Review", dated May 5, 2015, from the Commissioner of Planning and Building, be approved and forwarded, by the City Clerk, to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Region of Peel, the City of Brampton and Town of Caledon.

**REPORT
HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The Province initiated a review of the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- This report is in response to the first phase of the review and provides comments on how to improve the Plans, with a focus on the Growth Plan.
- Public comments are due on May 28, 2015. At which time all recommendations will be reviewed by an Advisory Panel, chaired by David Crombie. The Panel will recommend amendments to the Plans, which will then be circulated for a second round of comment.
- It is expected that a final amendment will be presented to the Government for approval in early 2016.

BACKGROUND:

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was adopted by the Province in 2006. The City of Mississauga must comply to the Plan which establishes a detailed policy framework for managing growth. The Plan is very important to the City. Not only does it establish growth allocations, but it ultimately directs all future land use planning matters related to: economic development, transportation, infrastructure, urban form, housing, and natural resources.

On February 27, 2015 the Province launched a coordinated review of the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. The latter two Plans do not apply to lands within Mississauga. The purpose of the review is to identify how to make the Plans work better. The Province would like to know what is working well and what should remain the same?

The coordinated review consists of two phases. The first is to seek input to inform the development of amendments to the Plans, and the second phase is to consult on proposed amendments.

A provincial Advisory Panel has been formed consisting of six advisors, chaired by David Crombie, to develop recommendations on how to amend and improve the Plans. The Panel will deliver a report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry by September 1, 2015.

Additionally, in order to facilitate feedback, the Province prepared and released a discussion document titled “*Our Region, Our Community, Our Home*”. It focused on six key themes.

To date, planning staff have conducted internal consultation with departments across the City to obtain feedback. Additionally, staff have participated in the following activities:

- A public meeting held by the Province on April 22, 2015.
- Interview conducted by the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI), who were retained by the Ontario Growth Secretariat to meet with municipalities to gather information on Growth Plan policies.

- Facilitated workshops hosted by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI).

This report is to provide input into the first phase of the review. The last day to submit comments to the Province is May 28, 2015.

COMMENTS:

From the City's perspective, growth is beneficial. As the city grows its revenues (taxation, user fees and potentially Provincial grants) will increase which enables the City to improve existing services and provide new services to support new residents and businesses. However, with growth come challenges, some of which are unique to Mississauga by comparison to abutting municipalities.

In consideration of the Growth Plan, it is important to understand the critical elements of a successful growth plan. Based on best practices, the following criteria are considered important for success:

- a clear vision, goals and targets;
- adequate tools for implementation;
- commitments to the plan by all parties;
- a high degree of collaboration among stakeholders; and
- financial commitments to support growth management.

The following section provides an overview of what is working well and what should be changed to improve the overall approach to growth management based on these criteria. Detailed comments are attached as Appendix 1.

What is Working Well?

When the Growth Plan was approved in 2006 its purpose was to guide planning in the fast growing Greater Golden Horseshoe by curtailing the urban sprawl that was undermining the region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. By directing a larger share of growth to built-up areas and developing criteria for greenfield expansions the Plan sought to create vibrant mixed use communities that are transit supportive, preserve employment areas for future economic growth, responsibly plan for infrastructure investments, and conserve natural systems and prime agricultural land.

The Province is to be commended for its initiative and the Growth Plan's many successes. The dialogue around creating complete communities and planning for major infrastructure investments such as higher order transit has helped shape planning documents such as Mississauga Official Plan. The Growth Plan and municipal plans that refine its policies to respond to local circumstances, have established a policy framework that will serve the region well as it continues to grow.

In the world of policy planning and land development, ten years is not a long time. Many of the benefits of the Growth Plan are still working their way through the system. That said, there are lessons that have been learned that can strengthen the Growth Plan and its implementation. The comments in this report recognize that the basic premise of the Growth Plan remains sound and serves as a strong foundation to be built upon.

What Needs to be Changed?

Matters of particular concern that should be addressed by the Province as part of this important review include the following:

- The Growth Plan should exempt lands within the built boundary from the 20 year planning time horizon identified in Policy 1.1.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement. Lands within the built boundary should be able to protect lands for long term intensification and to coordinate the land use vision with major infrastructure investments (e.g., higher order transit).
- Essential to achieving the intensification vision contained in the Growth Plan is the need to obtain and finance basic community infrastructure such as roads, parks and schools. The planning and financial regime that exists works well in obtaining community infrastructure in greenfield situations, but not for intensification within developed areas. The Province should undertake a comprehensive review of planning tools and funding mechanisms to ensure that greenfield development is not incentivized over intensification within the built boundary. This has been a point of concern for a number of City Councillors, as members of the Regional Growth Management Committee.

- The employment and population density targets should be separated, for both greenfields and urban growth centres.
- The Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan should be harmonized to ensure consistent definitions, designations and technical guidelines. Further, The Parkway Belt West Plan should be incorporated into the Growth Plan, in order to update its policies and ensure a consistent policy direction.
- Official plan policies that conform to Growth Plan policies, particularly intensification requirements, should not be appealable. Appeals should also be prohibited where there has been large infrastructure investment and for policies that protect employment lands.

Next Steps for the Review

Provincial staff has advised that by the end of the summer the Advisory Panel will provide advice/recommendations to the Government for consideration. In the fall of 2015 phase two of the consultation will commence which will include draft amendments. In early 2016 (winter/spring) an amendment will be presented to the Government for approval.

Staff will report back to Council on the proposed amendments and implications for Mississauga after they are released.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Not applicable.

CONCLUSION:

This report provides input into the first phase of the Provincial review of the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. A second round of comments will be sought once the Provincial Advisory Panel has reviewed comments received and proposes draft amendments to the Plans. It is expected that a final amendment will be presented for Government approval in early 2016.

It is recommended that this report be approved and forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing so that the City's position can be considered by the Province.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1: City of Mississauga Response to the
Provincial Coordinated Land Use Planning Review

Edward R. Sajecki
Commissioner of Planning and Building

Prepared By: Shahada Khan, Planner, Policy Planning

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City of Mississauga Response to the Provincial Coordinated Land Use Planning Review

The following comments are to be considered as input into the Provincial Coordinated Land Use Planning Review from the City of Mississauga. The comments are organized by theme area and apply to all Plans under review, with emphasis on changes to the Growth Plan.

What is Working Well?

When the Growth Plan was approved in 2006 its purpose was to guide planning in the fast growing Greater Golden Horseshoe by curtailing the urban sprawl that was undermining the region's economic competitiveness and quality of life. By directing a larger share of growth to built-up areas and developing criteria for greenfield expansions the Plan sought to create vibrant mixed use communities that are transit supportive, preserve employment areas for future economic growth, responsibly plan for infrastructure investments, and conserve natural systems and prime agricultural land.

The Province is to be commended for its initiative and the Growth Plan's many successes. The dialogue around creating complete communities and planning for major infrastructure investments such as higher order transit has helped shape planning documents such as Mississauga Official Plan. The Growth Plan and municipal plans that refine its policies to respond to local circumstances, have established a policy framework that will serve the region well as it continues to grow.

What Needs to be Changed?

In the world of policy planning and land development, ten years is not a long time. Many of the benefits of the Growth Plan are still working their way through the system. That said, there are lessons that have been learned that can strengthen the Growth Plan and its implementation.

Planning Horizon

- The Growth Plan should exempt lands within the built boundary from the 20 year planning time horizon identified in Policy 1.1.2 of the Provincial Policy Statement. Lands within the built boundary should be able to protect lands for long term intensification and to coordinate the land use vision with major infrastructure investments (e.g., higher order transit).
- A fixed time horizon is appropriate for greenfield lands. To address issues of oversupply of greenfields, a time horizon of less than 20 years with well-established review periods may be appropriate.

Growth Allocations

- Criteria for the allocation of growth to lower tier municipalities should be specified. For example, in Peel Region the following criteria were developed to guide the allocation of the Amendment 2 forecasts:
 - Protection of agricultural lands
 - Support “growth pays for growth” concept; minimize the impact on existing taxpayers
 - Efficient utilization of the Region’s existing and planned infrastructure
 - Densities that support transit and complete communities
 - Planning for a range of employment over the long term to adjust to market cycles
- The employment forecast methodology should be reviewed to better reflect what is being achieved.

Greenfield Expansions

- Greenfield expansions have a direct impact on urban areas, specifically on infrastructure servicing and expansions. This can result in large costs to municipalities. As well, greenfield expansions can result in the loss of prime agricultural lands, that are needed to support the food production in local communities. The Province should clarify the purpose of the “white belt” and its intended long term role. Should this boundary be fixed in certain areas to protect critical resources (e.g., prime agricultural land)?
- As part of the land budget exercise to determine where growth will occur and by how much, this includes urban areas and greenfields. Take-outs are identified within greenfield areas, that are sometimes necessary in order to identify areas where growth cannot happen. These could include natural features for example. It is important that the Province articulate what are appropriate greenfield take-outs and also provide guidance on preparing land budgets. This will make it easier for upper and lower tier governments when trying to allocate the Provincially assigned population and employment forecasts.

Targets

- The Province should re-evaluate the intensification targets and customize them to fit with community context. Once established, exemptions which undermine the Growth Plan and create an unlevel planning field, should not be permitted.
- The employment and population density targets should be separated, for both greenfields and urban growth centres.
 - In greenfield situations, the employment densities being achieved are far lower than the target and drive up residential densities to levels that might not be acceptable to the

community or reflect good planning. Are the residential densities required appropriate in areas without supportive community infrastructure and transit services? Will municipalities restrict lands designated for employment uses out of concern for the implications on residential development?

- In urban growth centres the challenge is about getting employment to create mixed use live-work environments. Lands for employment uses, specifically office, need to be protected as they are not competitive with other uses such as high density residential.
- Consideration should be given to including additional density targets, such as for Major Transit Station Areas.
- The Province should clarify if the density targets are to be “planned for” or achieved by the horizon year.

Protecting Stable Neighbourhoods

- Develop a policy framework for non-intensification areas. Once municipalities have appropriately developed growth management plans that provide for intensification, they should be able to identify the type and scale of development in non-intensification areas to protect the character of stable residential communities.

Greenbelt Plan

- The Greenbelt policies should be strengthened ensure that certain uses are not permitted that would cause disturbances to the natural environment.
- Develop a policy framework encourages municipalities to brings food production uses back into the urban area.
- Clarify the purpose of the urban river valley (URV) designation. If the designation is to be retained, extend it to privately owned lands to provide connections and apply it to all major rivers draining into Lake Ontario.

Environment Policies in the Growth Plan

- The Growth Plan should include policies that make linkages between public health and public open spaces.
- Climate change will have a direct impact on how municipalities plan now and into the future, in order to mitigate flooding and the damage caused to homes, trees, the natural environment, etc. In urban areas, climate change can have a significant impact with regard to infrastructure that will be affected by extreme weather and what can be done to adapt to climate change. The Growth Plan needs to examine the impact that climate change will have on communities with attention to its

connection to land use planning and impacts to communities. The Plan should also define the term “resilient communities”.

- Direction or guidance on use of green infrastructure and other types of infrastructure that are resilient in light of climate change
- The Growth Plan should include a specific section for energy with policies that link energy to development and land use. Infrastructure to support growth should include energy infrastructure. These policies should encourage the integration of energy types (e.g. district energy, smart grid, etc.) and promote renewable energy sources.
- Policies should be added with regard to the modal split supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Require and provide municipalities with tools to implement stormwater quality control via innovative technologies. This will protect and enhance natural area systems and provide pollution protection and green infrastructure to treat stormwater run-off before it flows into the Region's natural water bodies.

Healthy Development

- The Growth Plan should support the achievement of healthy communities by requiring that health impacts be taken into consideration in the development of plans and review of development proposals.
- Partnerships are needed between the Province, municipalities and school boards to develop policies/plans that focus on the location of schools and prepare school travel plans to get more students to walk and bike to/from school.

Harmonization of Plans and Policy Alignment

- The Growth Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan should be harmonized to ensure consistent definitions, designations, and technical guidelines between the plans.
- Harmonize the Parkway Belt West Plan with the Growth Plan.
- The Province needs to ensure that the Plans coordinate with and are in alignment with work of other agencies, such as Metrolinx (The Big Move) and conservation authorities.

Implementation

- The Provincial Policy Statement, when released in April 2014, came into effect on the same day with no transition period. The Province should review the transition policies of the Growth Plan as well as municipal official plans. Specifically, the premise of the “clergy principle” should be reviewed.
- Official Plan policies that conform to Growth Plan policies, particularly intensification requirements, should not be appealable. Appeals should also be limited for policies that support large infrastructure investments and for policies that protect employment lands.
- The Province should undertake the sub-area assessments identified in the implementation section of the Growth Plan.
- The Province needs to review the issue of pre-existing planning approvals (e.g. plans of subdivision in rural areas that are unbuilt but approved prior to Growth Plan) and the impact they may have on implementing the Growth Plan policies.

Definitions

- The Growth Plan should define mixed use and major retail uses.

Realizing the Vision

- Essential to achieving the intensification vision contained in the Growth Plan is the need to obtain and finance basic community infrastructure such as roads, parks and schools. The planning and financial regime that exists works well in obtaining community infrastructure in greenfield situations but not for intensification within developed areas. The Province should undertake a comprehensive review of planning tools and funding mechanisms to ensure that greenfield development is not incentivized over intensification within the built boundary.
- The Province should link infrastructure funding to intensification. Municipalities that comply with or exceed the intensification targets should be a priority for infrastructure investments.
- The next iteration of the Growth Plan needs to tackle the complex set of issues related to employment. This includes issues related to locating employment to support mixed use communities and transit investments, achieving the employment growth forecasts, addressing employment densities and attracting businesses that provide secure jobs with liveable wages.
- Funding/incentives should be provided to land owners as a tool to protect agricultural lands, water and natural areas.
- The Province should develop minimum design guidelines that are intensification supportive, address the public realm and speak to how to create active, healthy communities including work places in employment areas.

- The Province should coordinate the development of sustainable design guidelines and minimum standards to address energy, noise, urban design, etc., and recommend changes to the *Building Code Act*. The *Act* should require new developments be built with higher energy efficiency.

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