



Title: Proposed Changes to the Provincial Policy Statement
Report Number: PDS2019-30
Meeting Date: Monday, September 09, 2019
Report Prepared: Wednesday, September 04, 2019

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That Report PDS2019-30 be submitted to the Province of Ontario through the Environmental Registry of Ontario as Council's submission on the proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014.

REPORT:

On May 2, 2019 the provincial government released "More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan". The intent of the Action Plan is threefold:

- 1) Cut red tape to make it easier to build the right types of housing in the right places;
- 2) Make housing more affordable; and
- 3) Help taxpayers keep more of their personal funds.

One of the Action Plan initiatives to address housing supply is to review and propose changes to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014 (PPS). The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land across the province. It sets the provincial policy direction for:

- The efficient use and management of land and infrastructure;
- Ensuring the provision of sufficient housing to meet changing needs, including affordable housing;
- Protecting the environment and resources including farmland, natural resources (for example, wet lands and woodlands) and water;
- Ensuring opportunities for economic development and job creation;
- Ensuring the appropriate transportation, water, sewer and other infrastructure is available to accommodate current and future needs;
- Protecting people, property and community resources by directing development away from natural or human-made hazards.

The PPS is the primary provincial land use policy document guiding municipal decision-making. The *Planning Act* requires that decisions on land use planning matters be 'consistent with' the PPS.

Municipalities are the primary implementers of the PPS through policies in their local official plans, zoning bylaws and other planning related decisions.

The proposed amendments to the PPS are posted for comment on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (<https://ero.ontario.ca/>) ERO #019-0279 until October 21, 2019.

The changes are intended to:

- Encourage the development of an increased mix and supply of housing;
- Protect the environment and public safety;
- Reduce barriers and costs for development and provide greater predictability;
- Support rural, northern and Indigenous communities; and
- Support the economy and rural job creation.

Planning staff have reviewed the proposed amendments and the potential impact they may have on housing supply, employment land conversions, and development applications in the City. Below are the three main amendments and recommendations identified by staff.

1) Increasing the supply of housing

Proposed Amendments

- Policy 1.1.1 – ‘Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by:
 - b) accommodating an appropriate market-based range and mix of residential types (including single-detached, additional residential units, multi-unit housing, affordable housing and housing for older persons)...’
- Policy 1.4.3 – ‘ Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based needs of current future residents of the regional market area by...’
- Policy 1.7.1 – Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by:
 - b) encouraging residential uses to respond to dynamic market-based needs and provide necessary housing supply and range of housing options for a diverse workforce
- Housing options definition: means a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi-residential buildings and uses such as, but not limited to life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, affordable housing, housing for people with special needs, and housing related to employment, institutional or educational uses.

Staff Comments

- The intention of the policies is to increase the supply of various forms of housing such as multi-unit housing and affordable housing. Given the generally higher return on investment associated with low-density development in greenfield areas, there is a strong demand for ground-oriented residential development (single detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, townhouse dwellings) as identified in the '2019 Development Charges Background Study Amending By-law: Review of Development Charge Exemptions' prepared by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. Using a market approach may favour the wealthier segment of the population rather than those with low to mid-range salaries.

Staff Recommendations

The following is recommended to improve the proposed amendment:

- Remove the term 'market-based' from policy 1.1.1 b) and policy 1.4.3;
- Rewrite policy 1.7.1 b) to the following:
 - 'encouraging a range of housing options to address all incomes of the population'
- Revise the definition for 'housing options' to the following:
 - means a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi-residential buildings and uses such as, but not limited to life lease housing, co-ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, affordable housing, housing for people with special needs, and housing related to employment, institutional or educational uses to address all incomes of the population.

2) Employment land conversions

Proposed Amendment

- Policy 1.3.2.5: Notwithstanding policy 1.3.2.4, and until the official plan review or update in policy 1.3.2.4 is undertaken and completed, lands within existing employment areas may be converted to a designation that permits non-employment uses provided the area has not been identified as provincially significant through a provincial plan exercise or as regionally-significant by a regional economic development corporation working together with affected upper- and single-tier municipalities and subject to the following:
 - a) there is an identified need for the conversion and the land is not required for employment purposes over the long term;
 - b) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area; and

- c) existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses.

Staff Comment

- Conversion of employment areas should only take place during a comprehensive review of the official plan and not occur ad hoc.

Staff Recommendation

- It is recommended that this policy be removed as conversions should only be considered during a comprehensive review of land availability and needs.

3) Expediting residential and priority applications

Proposed Amendment

- Policy 4.7 Planning authorities shall take action to support increased housing supply and facilitate a timely and streamlined process for local development by:
 - a) identifying and fast-tracking priority applications which support housing and job-related growth and development; and
 - b) reducing the time needed to process residential and priority applications to the extent practical.

Staff Comment

- The majority of applications received are for residential developments. In order to be fair and equitable applications should be processed as they are submitted. Processing times for applications has been reduced through Bill 108.

Staff Recommendation

- It is recommended that this policy be removed as *Planning Act* changes through Bill 108 have reduced the processing time of applications.

Conclusion

The recommendations as stated above would provide direction for improving the housing stock, continuing to protect employment land and address fair and equitable review of applications.

This report should be provided to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the City of Thorold submission.

BUDGETARY STATUS:

None.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Well-planned and sustainable development.

CANADIAN CONTENT:

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

PREPARED BY: “original signed” Denise Landry, Manager of Planning

SUBMITTED BY: “original signed” Tamara Tannis, Director of Planning and Development

APPROVED BY: “original signed” Manoj Dilwaria, Chief Administrative Officer