



Staff Report PLAN-2023-95
Planning Committee
May 11, 2023

TO: Chair Bosomworth and Members of Planning Committee

AUTHOR: David Pink, Director of Development Services & Environmental Sustainability

SUBJECT: Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2023 and Bill 97, *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* and associated Regulations

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Staff Report PLAN-2023-95 be submitted to the Province as the Township's comments respecting the proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2023 and Bill 97, *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* and associated Regulations.

AND THAT a request be forwarded to the Province to include the Township of Muskoka Lakes as a Prescribed Municipality (if required) for the purpose of a proposed Regulation to permit the use of site plan control within 120 metres of a shoreline and 300 metres of a rail line.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

This report provides an overview and suggested response to the proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2023 and Bill 97, *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* and associated Regulations (Environmental Registry of Ontario posting Nos. 019-6821, 019-6822 and 019-6813).

BACKGROUND

Ontario Housing Supply Action Plan

On April 6, 2023, the Province of Ontario announced the most recent round of policy and legislative changes as part of its Housing Supply Action Plan. These were briefly discussed at the April 13, 2023 Planning Committee meeting and given their recent release, it was indicated a future staff report was forthcoming.

This latest action builds upon the Province's past related efforts, including the More Homes, More Choice Act (Bill 108, 2019), More Homes For Everyone Act (Bill 109, 2022) and the More Homes Built Faster Act (Bill 23, 2022).

Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants

Key elements of the most recent announcement are the introduction of Bill 97, the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023*, associated Regulations, and the release of a draft *Provincial Planning Statement*, which is to replace the current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“the Growth Plan”). Notably for the Township, one of the proposed Regulations to be made under the Planning Act would re-introduce the use of Site Plan Control for residential development of 10 or fewer units, where located within 120 metres of a shoreline.

Engagement

An Environmental Registry (ERO) posting on Bill 97, which was given first reading by the Ontario Legislature on April 6, 2023, and two associated Registry postings have been made seeking public feedback. Comments on Bill 97 itself are due May 6, 2023, on an associated Regulation seeking to reinstate Site Plan Control by May 21, 2023, and on the combined PPS and Growth Plan by June 5, 2023. It is important to note that there may be further changes to Bill 97 as it makes its way through the required readings in the legislature, as well as potential standing committee review.

ANALYSIS

Proposed Changes and Comments

Given the interconnected nature of the proposed legislative and policy changes, comments have been combined into a joint submission from District of Muskoka and Area Municipal staff, save for the Township of Georgian Bay. These comments, which also provide an outline of proposed changes, are included as Appendix “1”. Comments focus on those amendments which are anticipated to have direct impact on the District of Muskoka and the six Area Municipalities within it.

Natural Heritage Policies

Of critical interest and importance to land use planning across Muskoka are the Natural Heritage policies of the PPS. This section of the PPS, 2023 has not yet been released and despite there being no confirmed indication of the direction that the Province is intending to take in this regard, it stands to reason given the nature of recent amendments by the Province in the name of building more homes faster, that they may be made more permissive. When these important policies are released for consultation, it is hoped the Province provides ample time for open and meaningful dialogue.

Administration

As the public commenting periods on the proposed amendments close prior to the next scheduled regular Council meeting, staff would advise that comments recommended by Planning Committee should be submitted prior to ratification.

ALTERNATIVES

Committee could choose to make alternate comments or not to comment at this time. However, this is not recommended as the comments seek to protect Muskoka's unique character.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Through the 2022 budget process, Council substantially increased planning application fees in an effort to more closely recover costs associated with processing applications. While Bill 23 resulted in the removal of essentially all Site Plan Approval revenue, which typically fell in the range of \$150,000, should Site Plan Control be reinstated across a large portion of the Township, levels comparable to that previously realized is expected.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal: Preserve and Protect the Natural and Cultural Environment

Goal: Strengthen Key Relationships

COMMUNICATIONS

This staff report was distributed to Committee and all those registered to receive notification through the meeting agenda electronic notification system, and was published on the Township's website in accordance with the Township's Procedural By-law.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix "I" – Joint submission

PREPARED BY

Original signed by D. Pink

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CAO Acknowledged

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