

Memorandum

Date: July 7, 2020

To: Members of Council

From: Bailey Loverock, Community Planner, Policy, Heritage and Design Services, Community Services

Subject: Proposed Changes to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The purpose of this memo is to inform Council on the proposed amendment 1 to the Growth Plan and the supplementary materials released by the Province on June 16, 2020. The proposed materials are posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO 019-1679 and ERO 019-1680) for a 45-day commenting period. Comments are due July 31, 2020.

Background

On May 16, 2019, 'A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe' came into effect. A land needs assessment methodology was released for the 2017 Growth Plan but was not finalized when the new 'A Place to Grow' document came into effect. Amendment 1 to 'A Place to Grow' has been posted for comments, along with an updated land needs assessment methodology. The changes proposed include the new methodology, extension of the planning horizon, an update to the growth forecasts in Schedule 3 to 2051, and some policy changes in the text of 'A Place to Grow'.

Proposed Changes

New Planning Horizon

The horizon of the plan is to change from 2041 to 2051. Municipalities will be required to plan for the next 30 years when undertaking a municipal comprehensive review or official plan review.

Population and Employment Forecasts

The Schedule 3 forecasts include three growth scenarios to consider, the Minister is seeking feedback on which to include in the final amendment. The reference forecast, high growth scenario and low growth scenario are based on detailed modelling and contain different assumptions about future economic conditions and rate of immigration. The reference forecast represents the most likely future growth outlook and is shows an 11% increase in the Region of Peel from 2041 to 2051.

	2041 (Current)		2041 (New)		2051 (New)	
	Pop	Emp	Pop	Emp	Pop	Emp
Low	1,970,000	970,000	1,936,000	906,000	2,140,000	1,000,000
Reference			2,048,000	962,000	2,280,000	1,070,000
High			2,126,000	997,000	2,430,000	1,140,000

The Minister is proposing the current 2041 forecasts be maintained to support the ongoing conformity efforts taken by municipalities. The Province retained Hemson Consulting, who provided a technical analysis as the basis for these forecasts. The analysis identifies that the Region of Peel is likely to develop beyond the current 2041 population forecast and fall short of meeting the employment target.

The proposed amendment also identifies that the Schedule 3 forecasts are minimums for planning for growth, and that upper tiers are able to develop larger forecasts through their municipal comprehensive review.

Aggregate Resource Permissions

The amendment proposes policies that are more permissive for new aggregate pits, wayside pits and quarries within the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan. This change would not impact the Greenbelt. Changes to the text include removing the prohibition on new operations from habitats of endangered species and threatened species. The Province's goal is to ensure an adequate supply of aggregate within proximity to markets.

Employment

The policy amendment would allow conversions of employment areas identified as provincially significant employment zones (PSEZ) and located within a major transit station area (MTSA), as delineated in an official plan, to occur before the next municipal comprehensive review. This would not currently apply in Caledon as our potential MTSA's are not located within the PSEZ.

The materials identify that the next phase in the development of PSEZ policies and guidance will begin shortly, looking at post-COVID economic recovery, expansion and retention of existing employment, among other considerations. Future consultation between the Province and municipalities is expected.

Transition

Transition policies have not been identified, the policies would need to be applied immediately after the amendment comes into effect. Where the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal has already conducted a hearing, but not yet issued a decision, the decision must conform with the 2019 Growth Plan.

Land Needs Assessment Methodology

The land needs assessment methodology is used by upper and single-tier municipalities to assess the amount of land required to accommodate the growth forecast. This methodology will help to determine the amount and type of settlement area boundary expansion land that will be required in Caledon to accommodate the 2051 forecast.

The methodology aims to reduce complexity and allow greater flexibility to municipalities. The proposed methodology identifies key factors to be considered throughout the process, and aims to ensure an appropriate mix of land is available to accommodate all housing market segments, avoid housing shortages, consider market demand, accommodate all employment types, including those that are evolving, and plan for all infrastructure services that are needed to plan for complete communities.

Impacts

The change in planning horizon will have an impact on Future Caledon - Our Official Plan.

The new Official Plan will be required to plan to the 2051 horizon, and ongoing studies that contribute to the OP will need to incorporate this new horizon.

The land needs methodology and 2051 horizon will have impacts on the Settlement Area Boundary Expansion work being completed by the Region of Peel. This work will determine how much land will be required for an expansion in Caledon, which will likely require additional land than was being contemplated for the 2041 horizon.

Municipalities are to have enough land with servicing capacity to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned in lower-tier municipalities. Staff will need to assess how the Town can meet this requirement.

The development of PSEZ policies should help with the expansion and retention of employment uses within Caledon. As the mapping was released in December 2019 without detailed policies, more guidance from the Province will help provide clarity for these zones and may have impacts on the local economy. Staff will continue to consult with the Province on these matters.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to review the proposed changes, assess impacts, and consult with Regional staff ahead of the July 31, 2020 deadline. A formal response will be provided to the Province by the deadline with a proviso that additional comments from Council may be forthcoming. A copy of the response will be provided to Council at the next available Council meeting.