

Memorandum

Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2019

To: Members of Council

From: Sylvia Kirkwood, Manager of Policy & Sustainability, Community Services

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

The purpose of this memo is to provide Council with an initial overview of the new provincial Growth Plan that was released on May 2, 2019. This plan will come into effect on May 16, 2019. A link to the plan can be found here <https://www.ontario.ca/document/place-grow-growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe>

The release of this new plan comes after substantial consultation with stakeholders in the fall of 2018 and early 2019 on the proposed modifications to the previous Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017. As part of the consultation process the province asked for formal comments to be submitted on February 28, 2019. The Town provided the attached comments (see Schedule A). The province has addressed the majority of comments provided by staff with the release of the new plan.

Staff are currently reviewing the impacts and effects of this plan to the Town of Caledon and will provide Council with a comprehensive review of the impacts on the Official Plan 2041 process review project by Q3 2019. In the interim, the following are key highlights of the new Plan:

Growth Plan Changes

After consulting with municipalities and other stakeholders in fall 2018, a draft amendment to the growth plan was released for consultation on January 15, 2019. A memo at Planning Committee on February 12th detailed the proposed changes to the Growth Plan (2017). Staff provided more detailed comments to the province by the consultation deadline.

The majority of comments and policy suggestions that staff provided to the province were captured in the new A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019. A number of changes were made that have significant impacts on planning in Peel and Caledon. The new plan allows for some components to be implemented outside of a Municipal Comprehensive Review. The population and employment targets for the Region to 2041 remain the same, as does the planning horizon included in the plan, which is 2041.

Employment Planning

New policies allow upper-tier municipalities to designate employment areas at any time in advance the next municipal comprehensive review (MCR). This policy could allow for employment land to be made available if there is an opportunity to bring additional jobs to Caledon but land availability is an issue. The term “Provincially significant employment zones” is a new term introduced, that would grant a higher level of protection against conversion compared with other employment areas. A zone was identified in Bolton that designates the majority of existing employment lands. Staff provided a suggested refinement when providing comments on the draft amendment, which does not appear to have been fully included. The Minister has indicated that discussions will continue regarding these provincially significant employment zones, including opportunities to support current and emerging industries and economic development opportunities. The Province is also accepting Requests for Reconsideration based on local planning context, municipal support and provincial interest. Staff may consider requesting additional employment lands in Caledon to be reconsidered through this process.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Settlement expansions may occur outside of an MCR provided lands will achieve minimum density targets, not in a rural settlement, is serviced and has infrastructure capacity, and is accounted for in the land needs assessment for the next MCR. The expansion can be no larger than 40 hectares per settlement area. This policy could allow for the advancement of some residential lands, to help deal with issues of supply, advance certain strategic residential locations, provide for complete communities, or the rounding out of existing communities.

Small Rural Settlements

Rural Settlements are introduced, removing the previous definition of undelineated built-up area. Rural settlements are long established communities that contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development. Minor adjustments may be made to the boundaries of rural settlements outside of an MCR, provided they are not within the Greenbelt, that they are in keeping with the rural character of the area, have appropriate water and wastewater servicing, and other criteria. This policy would allow for minor expansions to rural settlements, ensuring logical boundaries or allowing for minor growth, if appropriate.

Agricultural and Natural Heritage Systems

Provincial mapping of the agricultural land base outside of the Greenbelt and the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan will not apply until they have been implemented in upper-tier Official Plans. Once provincial mapping is implemented in Official Plans, additional refinements are only able to occur through an MCR. The Agricultural System was in effect in Caledon immediately upon its release, which stalled certain development applications as the policies became more restrictive, especially for some lands that should not have been included in the system. This policy will allow for the Town and Region to refine the system before implementation, ensuring that only applicable lands are included.

Intensification and Density Targets

The 2017 plan included targets of 50 per cent intensification to 2031, and 60 per cent to 2041. The 2019 plan has a 50 per cent intensification target to 2041. The minimum density target for designated greenfield areas within the upper-tier municipality is a minimum of 50 residents and jobs per hectare, a reduction from the 2017 plan which saw a 80 residents and jobs per hectare target. The change in targets is likely to result in a larger amount of land needed to accommodate settlement boundary expansions in Caledon. Staff will be working with the Region of Peel to better understand the implications of this target on future land needs in Caledon.

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA)

MTSA policies allow for a more streamlined approach that allows MTSA boundaries and targets to be established ahead of an MCR.

Next Steps

Town Staff will be consulting with Regional staff to review implications of the new Plan and the impacts to the Official Plan 2041 process review. Any updates will be provided to Council in a form of a memo at a later date.

Attachments

Schedule A – Letter dated February 28, 2019