



October 18, 2019

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Provincial Policy Statement Review – Proposed Policies

Submitted via the Environmental Registry of Ontario

RE: 2019 Provincial Policy Statement Review

Please be advised that Township of Puslinch Council, at its meeting held on October 16, 2019, considered the aforementioned topic and subsequent to discussion, the following was resolved:

That the County of Wellington report regarding the 2019 Provincial Policy Statement be received; and

That Council supports the County of Wellington's position with respect to the 2019 Provincial Policy Statement; and

That Council directs staff to submit the County of Wellington comments to the EBR and to endorse the County of Wellington's comments by way of forwarding the comments to all municipalities.

On behalf of the Mayor and Members of Council, please accept the Township of Puslinch comments with respect to the Provincial Policy Statement Review of Proposed Policies.



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COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Committee
From: Sarah Wilhelm, Manager of Policy Planning
Date: Thursday, September 12, 2019
Subject: **2019 Provincial Policy Statement Review**

1.0 Background

To further support its Housing Supply Action Plan and other priorities, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is consulting on proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). Comments are requested prior to October 20, 2019 (EBR Registry Number #019-0279).

The current PPS, which came into effect April 30, 2014, provides overall policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development across Ontario. Where provincial plans are in effect (such as the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan in Wellington), such plans:

- provide additional, and in some cases, more specific land use planning policies
- take precedence over the policies of the PPS in the event of a conflict

Where policies in the PPS do not overlap with policies in provincial plans, the policies of the PPS must be independently satisfied.

This report provides an overview of the key policy changes and responds briefly to questions posed by the province in the consultation documents.

2.0 Key Changes to the Provincial Policy Statement

Many of the proposed changes appear to have little impact on the County as they:

1. harmonize the PPS with the 2019 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe ("Growth Plan") which already applies to Wellington; or
2. the Growth Plan policies are more specific/restrictive than the draft PPS.

In other respects, staff have identified the following key areas with the greatest impact on land use planning in Wellington County.

Agriculture

Current PPS policies allow for planning authorities to permit non-agricultural uses in prime agricultural areas subject to meeting specific criteria. Some examples of non-agricultural uses include manufacturing, automobile sales, golf courses, and campgrounds. The draft policies remove the criterion that the proposed use "complies with the minimum distance separation formulae" (MDS). Instead, impacts on surrounding agricultural operations and lands are to be "informed by provincial guidelines". This is more permissive when compared to language used elsewhere in the PPS, such as "in accordance with provincial guidelines". While the wording would allow for consideration of guidelines in addition to MDS, such as the "Guidelines on Permitted Uses in

Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas" we have questions about what these changes mean for MDS implementation.

Mineral Aggregates

Changes to subsection 2.5.2.4 include additional policy direction that depth of extraction be addressed through processes under the Aggregate Resources Act. The intent of the new wording is unclear and we are concerned that it may be meant to remove the ability of municipalities to continue to use vertical zoning to regulate extraction below the water table.

For gravel pits outside of the Greenbelt area and subject to satisfactory long-term rehabilitation, draft policies allow consideration of extraction in provincially significant wetlands (applies to areas outside of the County), woodlands, valleylands, wildlife habitat, areas of natural and scientific interest; fish habitat; and habitat of endangered species and threatened species. The Growth Plan is more restrictive for some features, but overall, the more permissive draft policies would appear to allow interim negative impacts to features and areas in favour of potential long-term environmental benefits through rehabilitation.

Indigenous Consultation

New requirement for planning authorities to:

- engage with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters; and
- engage with Indigenous communities and consider their interests when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

Extension of Planning Horizon

The planning horizon is extended from 20 to 25 years. We do not know whether the province intends to address this change in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which provides a growth forecast to 2041.

Housing

The province has changed housing policies and related terms in an effort to encourage a greater mix and supply of housing. For example, a new term "housing options" provides more specific policy direction about housing types. The draft policies increase the required supply of land for residential growth from ten years to twelve years. Municipalities are also given the option to maintain land with servicing capacity to provide a five-year supply of residential units (up from three). Overall, these changes appear to be positive, but we will continue to assess as more information becomes available.

Servicing Hierarchy and Private Communal Services

The draft PPS clarifies that the servicing hierarchy supports protecting the environment, human health and safety. With that in mind, upper-tier municipalities are required to work with lower-tier municipalities to assess long-term impacts of individual services on environmental health and character of rural settlement areas and the feasibility of full municipal services or private communal services. Policies specify that communal services are preferred for development of multiple residential units/lots where municipal services are not available, planned or feasible.

Land Use Compatibility

Stronger protection is provided for existing or planned major facilities (including industries, manufacturing uses, other facilities and infrastructure) from proposed sensitive lands uses (such as residences, day care centres, etc.).

3.0 Comments

Questions from Ministry	Response
1. Do the proposed policies effectively support goals related to increasing housing supply, creating and maintaining jobs, and red tape reduction while continuing to protect the environment, farmland, and public health and safety?	<p>The PPS has become much less relevant to Wellington because of the more specific, more restrictive, same or similar policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.</p> <p>The Province should consider fully implementing the PPS in the Greater Golden Horseshoe through one policy document - the provincial Growth Plan. This would reduce red tape by eliminating policy duplication and streamline the review of development applications.</p>
2. Do the proposed policies strike the right balance? Why or why not?	<p>The policy changes for mineral aggregate resources do not effectively balance the need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for local Council input regarding depth of extraction as below water table extraction is a permanent change to the landscape • to protect the environment by allowing extraction to be considered within natural heritage features and areas <p>We do not support these permissive aggregate policies in the draft PPS, particularly in areas of the County where there is a high concentration of gravel pits.</p>
3. How do these policies take into consideration the views of Ontario communities?	See response to question 1.
4. Are there any other policy changes that are needed to support key priorities for housing, job creation, and streamlining of development approvals?	See response to question 1.
5. Are there other tools that are needed to help implement the proposed policies?	The province should support municipalities and housing developers by researching and sharing best practices to facilitate a greater mix of housing options and increase the supply of affordable rental accommodations.

We have reported on the PPS review at this time to ensure that County Council may consider these comments prior to the October 20, 2019 deadline. We will be attending an information session with the province September 9 and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is working on a response. Planning staff may augment this report if we become aware of new information of relevance to Wellington.

Recommendation

That the report “2019 Provincial Policy Statement Review” be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and be circulated to member municipalities in Wellington County.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Wilhelm', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sarah Wilhelm, BES, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Policy Planning