



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT



PLANWELL

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Committee
From: Sarah Wilhelm, Manager of Policy Planning
Date: Thursday, June 10, 2021
Subject: County Official Plan Review – Information Overview for Special Meeting of Council

1.0 Purpose

The Planning and Development Department is seeking initial feedback from the public on the Official Plan Review at a Special Meeting of Council to be held virtually at 10:00 am on Tuesday, June 29, 2021. This report provides a preliminary information overview regarding areas of the County Official Plan that may require revisions through the municipal comprehensive review and 5-year review. The material attached to this report will be used as the basis for the presentation at the Special Meeting of Council.

2.0 Introduction

The Province guides municipal land use planning in Wellington through three key Provincial land use policy documents: the Provincial Policy Statement, A Place to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan. Municipalities implement Provincial policies through official plans. The Official Plan is a legal document which is the basis for County and local Councils and other government agencies to make decisions on land use planning matters.

Section 26 of the Planning Act sets out the requirements for updating an existing official plan every five years, including that the plan:

- conforms, or does not conflict with provincial plans (the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Greenbelt Plan in Wellington);
- has regard to the matters of provincial interest listed in section 2 of the Act; and
- is consistent with the provincial policy statement.

The Province has also defined a process for bringing an official plan into conformity with aspects of the Growth Plan termed a “municipal comprehensive review” (“MCR”).

While many of the changes under Section 26 will require updates to the policy text and mapping of the County Official Plan, some may impact internal processes, guidelines, standards and municipal by-laws. The County completed the last 5-year review in 2014.

County Council authorized staff to proceed with the County Official Plan Review in September 2019. The review includes an MCR and 5-year Review. Staff retained Watson & Associates Land Economists in December 2019 and initiated the MCR in March 2020.

3.0 Provincial Policy Changes

Planning Act

Official Plan policy changes may be needed to address the following Planning Act amendments related to:

- mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions
- adaptation to a changing climate
- informing and obtaining views of the public
- design of buildings and public spaces
- renewable energy
- community benefits charges

The Official Plan has already been updated to reflect Planning Act changes for additional residential units (previously known as second units).

Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. In addition to land use planning, the Province uses a wide range of other implementation tools to implement Provincial interests such as legislation, regulations, policies and programs. The more specific policies of Provincial plans generally take precedence over the PPS and this is reflected in the summary below.

Since the last Official Plan review, the Provincial Policy Statement has been amended in 2014 and 2020 to address a range of matters, such as:

- a full range of housing options
- affordable and market-based housing needs
- integration of planning for growth with other priorities
- active transportation
- healthy communities
- impacts of changing climate
- prime agricultural and rural areas
- enhanced Indigenous engagement
- employment areas, goods movement, and major industries
- asset management
- servicing options and impacts
- an ecoregion basis for protecting significant woodlands and valleylands
- comprehensive rehabilitation in concentrated areas of mineral aggregate operations

Although the Official Plan needs to be brought up to date with the PPS, the 2020 PPS policies are applied to the review of planning matters as decisions are required to be consistent with the current policy statement.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan builds on the policy foundation provided by the PPS, and provides more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. Our office will be focusing on the following types of changes resulting from 2017, 2019 and 2020 Growth Plan amendments which have been introduced since our last conformity exercise:

- new time horizon to 2051 to plan for 30 years of growth
- new minimum forecasts for County of 160,000 people and 70,000 jobs to 2051
- requirement for County to allocate growth to Member Municipalities
- enhanced Indigenous engagement
- impacts of a changing climate
- mix of housing options
- housing need and market demand
- environmental sustainability
- minimum intensification target and minimum greenfield density target for Wellington
- simplified requirements for MCR background work
- enhanced protection for employment areas and identification of provincially significant areas
- Natural Heritage System mapping and implementation for the Growth Plan
- Agricultural Land Base mapping and implementation for the Growth Plan
- harmonization with 2020 PPS and 2017 Greenbelt Plan

In 2017, the Province established a July 1, 2022 conformity deadline for a municipal comprehensive review. Despite new releases of the Growth Plan since that time, the conformity deadline remains unchanged. As a result, the growth management component of the Official Plan review is a priority for staff. Watson & Associates Land Economists have been completing necessary background work for the MCR growth management strategy and employment strategy, which was subsequently divided into two phases:

Phase 1 Urban Structure and Growth Allocations

Phase 2 Land Needs, Housing Analysis, Intensification, Employment Analysis and Conversions

County staff and consultants have been meeting with local CAOs (or staff designates/planning consultants) to review and seek feedback on draft technical findings.

The results of Watson's work will be used to develop draft changes to the text and mapping in the Official Plan. The Phase 1 work will form the basis for a Public Information Centre scheduled for Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 6:30 pm. Staff anticipates that draft Official Plan policies for Phase 1 will be presented to the public in the fall. Staff prepared a "Growth Management Overview" document in March 2021 to provide members of the public with context for this work.

Although the Official Plan needs to be brought up to date with the Growth Plan, the most recent Growth Plan policies are still applied to the review of planning matters as decisions are required to conform with the 2020 consolidation of the Growth Plan.

Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan provides permanent protection to the agricultural land base and ecological and hydrological features, areas and functions. Since the Official Plan was amended in 2014 to incorporate Greenbelt Plan policies and mapping for portions of Erin and Puslinch, the Greenbelt Plan was amended in 2017 to address matters such as:

- complete communities
- community hubs
- agricultural system
- a systems approach to water resources
- climate change integration
- reuse of excess soil
- prohibition of settlement area expansion into the greenbelt
- prohibition of minor rounding out of hamlets
- infrastructure criteria
- harmonization with 2014 PPS and 2017 Growth Plan

Although the Official Plan needs to be brought up to date with the Greenbelt Plan, the most recent Greenbelt policies are still applied to the review of planning matters as decisions are required to conform with the 2017 Greenbelt Plan.

Our office provided comments in April 2021 on the Provincial Government's proposal to expand the Greenbelt. Once the Government has made a decision on the matter, including anticipated consultation on the boundary, we will consider it within the context of the Official Plan review.

Definitions

In the case of each policy document above, the various updates impacted a significant number of definitions through revisions, additions and removals. Staff will conduct a thorough review of the definitions in the current Official Plan relative to these Provincial policy changes.

Mapping

At this time, we anticipate that mapping changes may be necessary to address:

- Structure of urban and rural settlements
- Results of land needs assessment
- Employment area identification
- Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan
- Agricultural Land Base
- Greenlands system updates
- Approved Source Protection Plan updates

4.0 Consultation and Engagement

We also prepared a “Communications and Engagement Guide” in April 2020 to lay the groundwork for our outreach. The County is using a project brand “Plan Well” to establish a unique visual identity for this multi-year project. Broad theme areas of “Live Well”, “Grow Well” and “Sustain Well” are being used to help organize key subject areas and subtopics identified to date in a more manageable way:

Live Well

- Complete and Healthy Communities
- Housing
- Consultation, Engagement and Coordination

Grow Well

- Growth Management
- Transportation

Sustain Well

- Climate Change
- Agriculture and Rural Areas
- Natural Heritage, Hazards and Water

After the June 2021 Special Meeting of Council planning staff will review and report on the results of the meeting together with results of Indigenous community, municipality and agency circulation of this report.

Recommendations

That the report “County Official Plan Review – Information Material for Special Meeting of Council” be received for information; and

That the report be circulated prior to the Special Meeting of Council and that the attached material be used as the basis for staff’s presentation at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Sarah Wilhelm, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Policy Planning

Attachment 1 Draft Staff Presentation Material



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**Wellington County
Official Plan Review**

Special Meeting of County Council
June 29, 2021

 LIVE WELL |  GROW WELL |  SUSTAIN WELL

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Agenda

Context

Emerging Themes

Consultation and Engagement

 LIVE WELL |  GROW WELL |  SUSTAIN WELL

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Context



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Purpose of Meeting

- Special Meeting of County Council
- Discuss revisions to the Official Plan that may be required
- Specific amendment proposals will be developed, circulated and presented at future meetings



MCR Component

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- Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) under Section 26 of Planning Act:
- Process for bringing Official Plan into conformity with aspects of the Growth Plan
- July 1, 2022 Provincial deadline



5-year Review Component

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- Required to keep Official Plan up to date under Section 26 of Planning Act:
 - Matters of Provincial interest
 - Provincial Policy Statement
 - Provincial Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe
 - Provincial Greenbelt Plan



Emerging Themes

Live Well

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Complete and Healthy
Communities

Housing

Consultation and Coordination

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Complete and Healthy Communities

- Human health and social well-being
- Built heritage and cultural heritage landscapes
- Asset management

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Housing

- Affordable housing
- Attainable housing
- Housing for an aging population
- Mix of housing options

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Consultation and Coordination

- Enhanced Indigenous consultation
- Process for obtaining public views
- Coordination with Member Municipalities, agencies and our municipal neighbours

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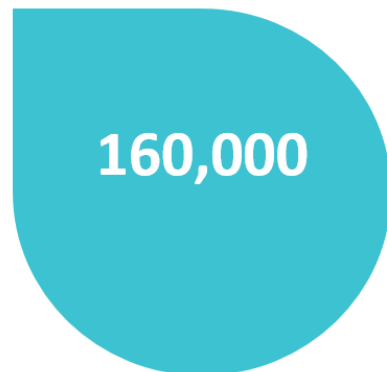
Emerging Themes Grow Well

Growth Management
Transportation

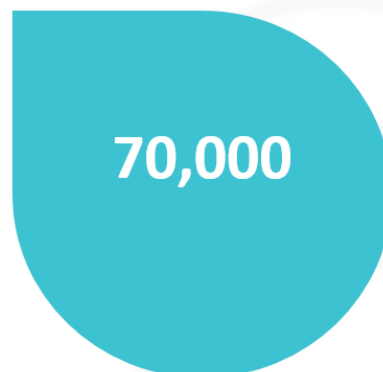
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Growth Management

Population



Employment



Wellington County is required to allocate new minimum Provincial forecasts to 2051

Growth Management

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- Planning for intensification, employment and housing
- Update growth forecast and land needs
- Protect agricultural and natural heritage resources
- Address climate change

Transportation

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- Complete streets
- Active transportation
- Major goods movement corridors

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Emerging Themes Sustain Well

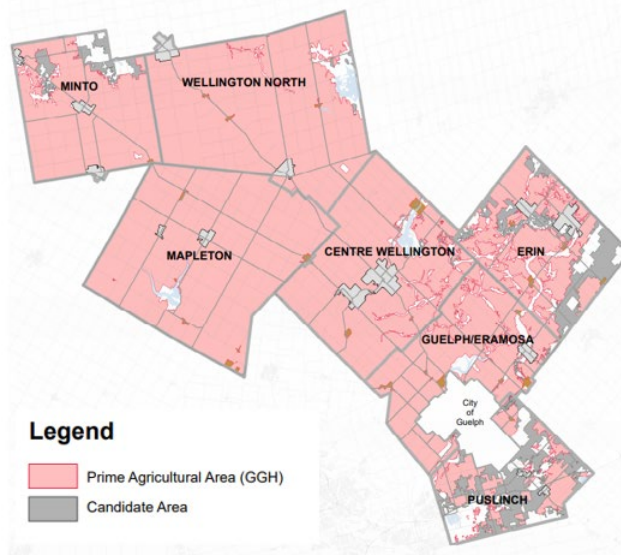
Agricultural and Rural Areas

Climate Change

Natural Heritage, Flooding and Water

Agriculture and Rural Areas

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- Provincial Agricultural Land Base Mapping is one of the key elements to be reviewed

Climate Change

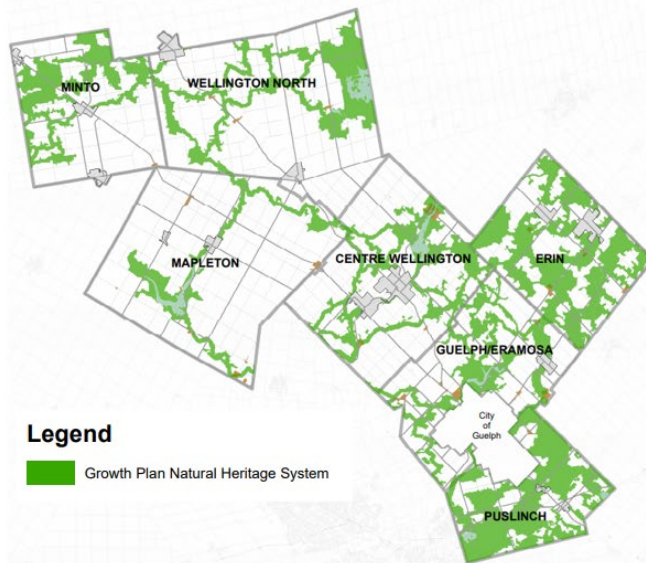
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- Integrate climate change policies into Official Plan
- Mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions
- Adaptation to respond to the impacts of climate change

Natural Heritage, Flooding and Water

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- Provincial Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan is one of the key elements to be reviewed

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Consultation and Engagement



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Consultation and Coordination

- County Council, Member Municipal Councils, Committee and Staff
- Indigenous Communities
- Public and Stakeholders
- Boards and Agencies
- Landowners



General Process and Statutory Engagement

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- Background technical reviews and reporting
- Preparation of Draft Amendment(s) for circulation and comment
- Statutory Open House
- Statutory Public Meeting
- County Planning Committee/Council Decision Meeting



Engagement Beyond the Minimum Requirements

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- Public information centres
- Project website postings
- Social media
- Interactive mapping
- Virtual meetings with individuals and small groups
- Other areas depending on need





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For more information

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