

## MEMORANDUM

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner

Date: March 25, 2020

Re: Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020

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This memorandum provides Council with a summary of the recently released PPS (Attachment 1) and provides a review of the new PPS against recommended changes and comments the Region previously provided to the Province (Attachment 2).

### **Province released a final revised Provincial Policy Statement on February 28, 2020**

The current PPS came into effect in [2014](#). The PPS provides the foundation for the Province's policy-led planning system. The PPS provides direction on matters of Provincial interest and is applied across all of Ontario. Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review, the Regional Official Plan must be updated to be consistent with the PPS. On July 22, 2019, the Province released proposed changes to the 2014 PPS. York Region provided comments to the Province through a report endorsed by Council on [October 17, 2019](#). On February 28, 2020, the final revised [PPS](#) was released by the Province. The PPS 2020 comes into effect May 1, 2020.

### **Provincial Policy Statement 2020 is largely consistent with the 2019 draft policies and generally supported by York Region staff**

The Province made very few changes between the 2019 draft and final PPS 2020. Subject to comments provided in Attachment 2, York Region staff were generally supportive of the proposed changes to the PPS. Staff supported changes that clarified the relationship between the PPS and other Provincial plans. This included:

- Increasing the planning horizon from 20 to 25 years
- Strengthened policy direction on aligning growth management with infrastructure planning

- Increasing housing supply
- Encouraging transit-supportive development and intensification to promote economic prosperity

Of the Region's 50 comments on the draft PPS, three were fully addressed by the Province, four were partially addressed, and a number of proposed changes that were supported by staff were maintained. A fair number of York Region comments were not addressed. Key policies that were addressed in line with York Region staff comments pertain to the following:

- The PPS 2020 excludes a proposed policy requiring municipalities to identify and fast-track priority development applications. York Region had identified concerns with this proposed policy, stating that it was redundant with recent changes to the Planning Act.
- Clarification that residential uses are prohibited in employment areas. Regional staff had expressed concerns that proposed wording in the 2019 draft was unclear as to which sensitive uses were prohibited and which were to be limited to ancillary.

### **Changes to Provincial Policy Statement 2020 from Provincial Policy Statement 2014 are consistent with other provincial legislation, including the Growth Plan**

The PPS 2020 is part of the Province of Ontario's More Homes, More choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan and works with other changes to the land use planning system such as changes to the *Planning Act* and *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. Many of the changes in the PPS 2020 (outlined in Attachment 1) are consistent with previously released provincial legislation.

Generally, changes to provincial documents support the Province's goals to increase housing supply, support jobs, and reduce red tape. Themes throughout the PPS 2020 include references to providing affordable and a market-based range and mix of housing options. It also supports better integration of land use planning and infrastructure through encouraging intensification and transit supportive development. Attachment 1 outlines the significant changes to the PPS 2020 compared to the current PPS 2014.

### **Wording changes in the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 encourage rather than require implementation in many policy areas**

Despite Regional recommendations requesting strong language in the PPS 2014 be maintained, revised wording in the PPS 2020 has increased flexibility in many policy areas by removing wording such as "shall" in favour of more suggestive terms such as "should". While York Region staff recognize that the PPS applies Province-wide and the proposed changes introduce flexibility in implementation, there are many instances where staff feel the proposed wording changes weaken the intent of the policy.

For example, the PPS 2014 required phasing policies for designated growth areas to ensure intensification targets are achieved prior to, or concurrently with, new development in designated growth areas and ensure the timing of infrastructure and public service facilities. The PPS 2020 “encourages” the use of phasing policies. Phasing policies are essential to orderly development in designated growth areas to ensure development does not outpace critical infrastructure delivery.

### **Policies related to market-based housing options were modified to incorporate affordability**

The draft PPS introduced key terminology that shifted the focus of the PPS from accommodating an “appropriate” range and mix of housing to accommodating an appropriate “market-based” range and mix of housing. Regional comments had indicated that clarity on what was meant by a “market-based” approach was required. Clarification was also requested on the relationship between intensification, density, and affordability targets in the Growth Plan and the market-based approach in the PPS.

While the PPS 2020 does not provide a definition for market-based, the policy was revised to incorporate the addition of “affordable” to market-based range and mix of housing options. This change, while stressing the importance of affordability when providing housing options, recognizes only one of many variables that should be considered as part of the market. Others include existing supply, demographic shifts, market demand, and future demographic or policy driven trends.

### **Requirement for municipalities to maintain a long term housing supply increased from 10 years to 15 years**

Related to the housing market, the PPS 2020 extends the policy requiring municipalities to maintain, at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through residential intensification and redevelopment as well as lands designated and available for residential development. This horizon was extended from both the PPS 2014 and the draft 2019 PPS from 10 and 12 years, respectively.

Increasing this housing supply requirement is anticipated to have minimal impact on York Region’s planning for growth. When last reported in 2017, the Region had an estimated 23-year supply of lands designated for residential development, including intensification opportunities. Staff will continue to regularly monitor residential supply to ensure PPS requirements are met.

### **Changes to water and wastewater servicing policies were made in the Provincial Policy Statement 2020**

A number of comments highlighted in [October 2019](#) were not addressed in the PPS 2020. Of particular interest to the Region are changes to servicing policies. Where the PPS 2014 had a policy that read municipalities may allow the use of communal sewage and water services, the PPS 2020 revised this policy to indicate that communal systems are the preferred form of

servicing for multi-lot development where municipal services are not planned or feasible. This is likely to result in more proposals for private communal water and wastewater servicing.

## **Revised Provincial Policy Statement will have minimal impact on the Municipal Comprehensive Review**

The PPS has been revised to encourage an increase in the mix and supply of housing, protect the environment and public safety, reduce barriers and costs for development, and support the economy and job creation.

The following outlines some of the key policy changes that may require further consideration:

- The introduction of Regionally Significant Employment Zones. While greater clarity is required to understand the relationship of Regionally Significant Employment Zones to Provincially Significant Employment Zones, staff are supportive of this new tool that has the potential to increase protection of employment lands.
- Additional policies that allow lot creation in rural areas, subject to local context and other provincial plans will need to be further explored.
- Staff will be further assessing communal servicing and reporting back to Council.

Through the Municipal Comprehensive Review, the Region will be required to be consistent with these policies. The revised PPS will not have significant implications on the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review or associated timeline.

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Chief Planner

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Bruce Macgregor  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments (2)  
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