

Provincial Policy Updates and Potential Direction for York Region Official Plan Update

The Provincial planning policy framework has been updated including the following: Provincial Policy Statement (2020), A Place to Grow, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) (The Provincial Growth Plan), Greenbelt Plan (2017) and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017).

This Attachment, on a topic-specific basis, provides a summary of Provincial updates and considerations for updating the York Region Official Plan.

Types of Policies	Brief Description of Provincial Policy Change	Considerations/Potential Direction for York Region Official Plan
Regional Structure Policy Directions		
Regional Structure	<p>Updates to the Provincial Growth Plan identify the need to establish a hierarchy of settlement areas, and areas within settlement areas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delineation of Major Transit Station Areas in Official Plans, including identification of density targets • Delineation of Urban Growth Centres, Built Up Areas and Designated Greenfield Areas (DGA) in Official Plans • Designation of employment areas in upper-tier official plans • Incorporation of Provincial Agricultural and Natural Heritage System mapping • Achievement of a minimum 50% Intensification • Minimum 50 density in the DGA by 2051 	<p>Policy considerations include enhancing the Regional Structure by clearly articulating a hierarchy of settlement areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiating between a land use designation and an overlay • Introducing an employment area designation and considering its impact on the urban area designation • Assessing impacts of delineating and setting density targets for MTSAs on the intensification hierarchy and Centres and Corridors network • Connecting the Yonge Street Regional Corridor through Richmond Hill and Aurora having regard for the context being within the Oak Ridges Moraine • Assessing the Towns and Villages and Hamlet designations • Consideration of the level of policy direction/detail in the Regional OP vs Local OP
Complete Communities and	<p>Direction in the Growth Plan supports the achievement of complete communities through:</p>	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining and potentially enhancing existing policy direction.

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Sustainable Cities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diverse mix of land uses and compact form of development • Improving social equity including human health for all • A diverse mix of housing, including affordable housing • Convenient access to transportation options, public service facilities and recreational space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying Complete Communities principles more broadly across the Region beyond new community areas • Seeking opportunities to draw a stronger connection between complete communities and health in the Regional Official Plan • Exploring implementation tools beyond Official Plan Policy such as measuring community completeness <p>Future work to support implementation of these policies may include broadening the scope of the <i>New Community Guidelines</i> to make them applicable Region-wide.</p>
Employment Policy Directions		
Planning for Employment	<p>New and updated direction in the Growth Plan support economic development and competitiveness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designation of employment areas in upper-tier official plans, including identification of minimum density targets • Increased emphasis on protection of lands adjacent or near major goods movement facilities and corridors • Integration and alignment of land use planning and economic development goals and strategies to retain and attract investment and employment • Stronger consideration for land use compatibility related to sensitive uses • Ability to plan beyond 25 years for long-term protection of employment areas provided lands are not designated beyond the planning horizon 	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating an Employment Area designation into the Regional Official Plan • Strengthening policies around land use permissions in employment areas to protect core employment areas for traditional employment area uses while permitting mixed employment uses in suitable locations • Setting Employment Area minimum density targets for each employment area and policies for their implementation • Identifying and protecting future strategic employment areas outside of existing settlement areas for long term employment uses beyond the planning horizon • Updating policies around conversion of Employment Areas through a Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review subject to the Region's Employment Area Conversion Criteria

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying that the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses may be permitted only through a municipal comprehensive review subject to criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening policies around promoting high quality, transit supportive urban environments that support growth of knowledge-based industries and attract and develop a skilled work force
Agriculture Policy Direction		
Greenbelt lands extending into existing and future urban areas within Markham and Vaughan (Green Fingers)	N/A	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesignating river valleys extending from the Greenbelt into existing and future urban areas from agriculture to rural or similar designation in keeping with the Greenbelt Plan Acknowledging the natural heritage value of these areas when considering permitted uses <p>Staff will continue to work with local municipal staff to develop proposed policies for these areas and explore opportunities for their comprehensive assessment and planning by the local municipality.</p>
Environment Policy Directions		
Watershed Planning	New direction in the Provincial Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan requires that watershed planning inform the identification of water resource systems, decisions on implementation of growth and planning for water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.	<p>Policy considerations to align with provincial requirements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating watershed planning policies to assist in implementation of new watershed requirements in provincial plans. Updating water resource systems mapping and policies Updating stormwater management policies recognizing watershed planning requirements <p>Staff will work with conservation authority staff on the assessment of watershed planning equivalencies.</p>

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Woodlands/ Canopy Targets	N/A	Policy considerations include identification of a region-wide canopy cover target, as established in the York Region Forest Management Plan, in addition to the already existing Woodland Cover target.
Healthy Communities Policy Directions		
Climate Change and Sustainable Buildings	<p>New and updated direction in the Growth Plan identifies the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for the impacts of climate change through land use and development patterns • Develop and identify actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions • Address climate change adaptation goals • Develop policies that support energy and water conservation 	<p>The ROP has a strong foundation of policies in these areas.</p> <p>Updates to these sections are anticipated to be limited, but include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping policy updates to ensure conformity with Provincial Plans • Determining the appropriate level of detail on energy efficiency and water conservation policies and targets • Determining the need for future policy updates to support the implementation of Regional initiatives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • York Region Climate Change Action Plan • Energy Conservation and Demand Management Plan • Community Energy and Emissions Plan • Sustainable Building Incentive Programs
Human Health and Well-Being and Human Services	N/A	<p>The ROP has strong foundation of policies to promote human health and well-being and human services.</p> <p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing options to promote human health and well-being and human services • Enhancing messaging for complete communities, including their support for human health
Cultural Heritage/ Archaeology	The Provincial Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and ORMCP incorporate wording around the importance of encouraging a sense of place in	Policy considerations include:

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	communities. This is accomplished by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, as well as conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. In addition, the PPS wording changed from “encouraged to” to “shall” engage with Indigenous communities in identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating conformity requirements on sense of place, conservation of built heritage resources and cultural heritage resources integrating policy direction relating to best practices, potentially including identifying the role of York Region in educating the public on preserving and protecting cultural heritage resources and the role of the public as stewards of these resources <p>Review of York Region’s <i>Archaeological Management Plan</i> will follow the ROP update if necessary.</p>
Servicing Policy Directions		
Source Water Protection	Updates PPS, Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan now include the requirement for source protection to align with the relevant source protection plans.	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating the Official Plan to reflect approved source protection plans and updated provincial plans to help protect municipal drinking water sources from water quality and quantity impacts <p>Updates will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of groundwater recharge management area policy and mapping Prohibition of some land use activities in vulnerable areas in wellhead protection areas and intake protection zones Update requirement for a Source Water Impact Assessment and Mitigation Plan for some planning applications Requirement for a Section 59 notice under the <i>Clean Water Act</i> for planning and building permit applications within wellhead protection areas from the Region’s Risk Management Official to ensure municipal well water quality is protected

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Private Communal Systems	<p>Updates to the PPS include a more permissive policy framework for private communal systems.</p> <p>The 2017 Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan did not introduce any changes to private communal system policies.</p>	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing consideration of new PPS direction with the risks identified for communal systems • Continued limitation of private communal systems for residential developments, given the risk to the Region and its residents • Permitting private communal systems for employment developments on an interim basis until full municipal serving is available
Solid Waste	<p>The Growth Plan requires the identification of new opportunities for energy from waste and the promotion of building conservation and adaptive reuse.</p> <p>The <i>Waste-Free Ontario Act</i> proclaimed in November 2016, includes the <i>Waste Diversion Transition Act</i>, which oversees current diversion programs, and the <i>Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act</i>, which shifts some waste materials to a full producer responsibility framework.</p>	<p>Policy considerations include implementing new direction related to alignment to York Region's SM4RT Living Plan.</p>