

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 (2020) (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 (ROP).

Types of Policies/Topic Area	Brief Description of Provincial Policy Change	Considerations/Potential Direction for York Region Official Plan
Aligning Growth and Infrastructure		
Aligning Growth and Infrastructure	<p>Updates to the Provincial Growth Plan reinforce and strengthen the need for an integrated approach to managing growth by requiring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure planning, land use planning, and infrastructure investment be coordinated • Direction be provided for an urban form that optimizes infrastructure • Infrastructure investment and other implementations tools be used to facilitate intensification and higher density development • Transit investments in high density areas be prioritized to optimize return on investment and the efficiency and viability of transit services 	<p>Policy considerations include strengthening messaging throughout the ROP to highlight the importance of integrated land use, infrastructure, and financial planning, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulating the need for a more agile and adaptive approach to growth management in response to the changing nature and pace of growth, market demand, and/or other factors • Enhancing the objective of optimizing growth in areas serviced with existing infrastructure capacity before making new investments • Strengthening phasing policies at the Regional scale such that the delivery and operation of infrastructure is phased in a fiscally sustainable manner • Strengthening connections between the timing and scale of growth in intensification areas and the existing and/or planned infrastructure and water wastewater capacity in infrastructure Master Plans • Identifying remaining Agricultural or Rural Whitebelt lands not required by the Provincial land needs assessment by 2051 as future urban

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Agriculture and Rural Area Policy Directions		
<p>New Non-Agriculture uses in Agricultural designated areas</p>	<p>Updates to the Provincial Policy Statement allow limited non-agricultural uses in the Agricultural Designation, subject to criteria</p> <p>Updates to the Provincial Growth Plan require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use compatibility to be achieved where agricultural and non-agricultural uses interface • New non-agricultural uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lands will not be removed from the Agricultural area ○ Achieve land use compatibility ○ Subject to an Agricultural Impact Assessment to minimize and mitigate any adverse impacts <p>The Greenbelt Plan is more limited than the Growth Plan in terms of agricultural uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-agricultural uses are permitted in the Agricultural areas, subject to criteria • Non-agricultural uses are subject to an Agricultural Impact Assessment 	<p>Policy considerations for new non-agriculture uses in agricultural designated areas include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with applicable Provincial plans and policies • Limiting new non-agricultural uses in the Agricultural Designation outside the Greenbelt Plan Area include that they be subject, but not limited to, the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrate a need within the planning horizon for additional land to accommodate the proposed use ○ Alternative locations be evaluated, with confirmation that no reasonable alternative locations are available ○ Preference that non-agricultural uses be located in the following areas: Urban Areas, Rural Areas, Towns and Villages and Hamlets ○ Lands remain in the Agricultural designation ○ Submission of an Agricultural Impact Assessment ○ Comply with the minimum distance separation formulae • Non-agricultural uses within the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan areas continue to be limited in accordance with the applicable Provincial plan policy • Requiring an Agricultural Impact Assessment

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Existing Non-Agriculture uses on Agriculture lands in the Greenbelt Plan area	Updates to the Greenbelt Plan allow for modest redevelopment of existing non-agricultural uses as long as they are in conformity with the Plan	<p>Policy consideration for redevelopment of existing non-agricultural uses in the Agricultural Designation within the Greenbelt Plan area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redevelopment of non-agricultural uses be subject to, but not limited to the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposed redevelopment is more in conformity with the applicable Provincial plan ○ Lands remain in the Agricultural designation ○ No new parcels created or urban boundary expansions would be permitted ○ Demonstration that the site has been legally in continual use since before the Provincial plan was approved ○ Redevelopment does not hinder surrounding agricultural operations, complies with the minimum distance separation formulae and is supported by an Agricultural Impact Assessment addressing the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed use would be of the appropriate size and scale to the area including to the existing and/or planned infrastructure ▪ Demonstration that there is a need for the proposed use in terms of demand for the product or service ○ The proposed use shall not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the Regional Greenlands System

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<p>Local Agricultural and Rural Lands within Regionally identified Towns and Villages where servicing capacity does not exist</p>	<p>In some Towns and Villages (e.g. Nobleton, and Sutton) there are locally designated Agricultural and Rural lands within these communities that, although currently identified as Town and Village in the Regional Official Plan, have limited growth potential given Provincial policy servicing constraints</p> <p>The Greenbelt Plan servicing policies, which are serviced either by groundwater or lakes, are not permitted to extend water or wastewater services from a Great Lakes source unless a set of criteria are met</p> <p>The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan impacts Pefferlaw and Sutton where there are strict sewage treatment policies that apply in this watershed and limit servicing capacity</p>	<p>Policy consideration for unserviced agricultural and rural lands within identified Towns and Villages include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining the appropriate designation and/or means of identifying these lands within the Official Plan which is consistent with the local municipal official plan designation in the event they are not forecasted to accommodate growth to 2051 given their limited opportunity to be serviced and/or developed <p>These lands are identified as DGA (designated greenfield area) Agriculture and Rural unserviced areas on Attachment 2</p>
<p>Implementation of the Provincial Agricultural Land Base Mapping</p>	<p>Updates to the Province’s Agricultural System land base mapping in 2017 is a part of the updates to the Provincial plans on Agricultural Systems</p> <p>York Region has the opportunity to refine the draft Provincial agricultural mapping utilizing Provincial refinement criteria (found in the Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System in Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe)</p>	<p>Mapping considerations to refine the Provincial Agricultural System mapping include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the technical assessment completed by Agricultural consultant • Consideration for maintaining a Rural designation for any lands in the Whitebelt where the Province is proposing an Agricultural designation, including lands ultimately required for urban uses • Considering the local municipal planning context • Supporting the continuity of the agricultural system across municipal boundaries • Supporting lands that meet the Provincial refinement criteria to be re-designated to Agriculture or remain Rural

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporating landowner, stakeholder and public input <p>Preliminary staff recommendations are shown on Attachment 2</p> <p>The Province assessed two areas when they created the agricultural land base map, proposed and Candidate Lands and a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR). This includes proposed areas that met the tests of a LEAR as prime agriculture, where these proposed areas are to be assessed by municipalities using the Provincial Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System. The Region assessed these areas for consideration to potentially change from Rural to Agriculture designations. Provincially recommended 'Candidate lands' are optional lands to be assessed if they should be added to the Agriculture designation. It was determined by staff not to assess these candidate lands for consideration due to York Region's significantly limited rural lands, unless an assessment was requested by the local municipality. These lands are defined as areas of larger than 250 hectares, with medium LEAR scores and in active agriculture production.</p> <p>Where required, further refinement will occur with the final draft mapping presented in subsequent reporting to Council later in 2021</p>

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Highest and best use of Non-Food Related Agricultural Crops in the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area	<p>Non-Food related agricultural crops are identified as agricultural, employment or commercial retail uses under the Provincial Policy Statement and may include such crops as cannabis and flowers</p> <p>Agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are permitted in the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area and do not specify if the crops grown are to be food-related</p>	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discouraging the use of the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area for uses that do not require its muck soils for food production, such as cannabis and floriculture <p>The policy change would promote the protection of the Holland Marsh for food-related crops</p>
Excess Soil	<p>Updates to the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan identify that municipalities should develop excess soil reuse strategies</p> <p>Updates to the Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan identify that municipalities shall incorporate best practices for the management of excess soils into their planning policies and development applications</p>	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating new excess soil policies in the Official Plan that align with Provincial plans by identifying that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Municipalities should develop excess soil reuse strategies ○ Municipalities shall incorporate best practices for the management of excess soils into their planning policies and development applications
Mineral Aggregate Resources	<p>Updates to Provincial plans and the Provincial Policy Statement regarding mineral aggregate resources have been made to align wording across Provincial plans for site development and rehabilitation, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New direction on progressive and final rehabilitation of aggregate sites 	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to meet new Provincial direction outlined through updated Plans, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrating additional rehabilitation policies for future reuse of lands ○ Identifying mineral aggregate resource conservation efforts, including recovering and recycling materials for continued use

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide aggregates as close to market as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requiring an agricultural impact assessment if mineral aggregate extraction is to occur in Agricultural areas ○ Supporting aggregates as close to market as possible
Environment Policy Directions		
Species at Risk	Updates to Provincial plans include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated definitions for habitat of endangered and threatened species • The protection of endangered and threatened species is deferred to established Federal and Provincial procedures • Exempt new development or site alteration from some environmental studies where the only identified key natural heritage feature is the habitat of endangered or threatened species 	Policy considerations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing updates to reflect new Provincial direction including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updating definitions for the habitat of endangered and threatened species ○ Referencing Provincial and Federal species at risk procedures for development and site alteration ○ Updating requirements for natural heritage evaluations and hydrological evaluations where the only feature is the habitat of endangered or threatened species, in accordance with Provincial plans
Diversity and Inclusion		
Diversity and Inclusion	N/A	Policy considerations to focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating inclusionary language throughout the Plan and identifying inclusion as a core principle of planning in York Region • Enhancing partnership and engagement policies to support inclusive engagement throughout the planning process

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Mapping		
Mapping (General Direction) 1-14, Figures 1-3	<p>Many of the maps will be updated to reflect current information. There are also several new Provincial requirements for Official Plan maps, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Growth Plan requires delineation of built up areas, designated greenfield areas, settlement areas, major transit station areas (MTSA) and employment areas • The Greenbelt Plan requires the update of natural heritage systems (NHS) and agricultural areas. It also requires delineation of key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features plus their minimum vegetation protection zones 	<p>Policy considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplifying Map 1 and displaying land use designations and land use categories on separate sub-schedules • Grouping the water resource components on one or a series of maps • Incorporating Provincial layers on ROP maps (Natural Heritage System and Agriculture Areas) • Updating mapping containing Regional infrastructure to align with Transportation, Water and Wastewater Master Plans