

Overview:

In July 2019, the Province announced a review of the Provincial Policy Statement, also known as the PPS. The PPS was last updated in 2014. The deadline for comments to be submitted via the Environmental Registry of Ontario is October 21, 2019. The PPS is the foundation of planning policy in the Province with polices speaking to the efficient use of land and infrastructure, housing, transportation, economic development and servicing. All land use planning decisions need to be consistent with the PPS. It should be noted that as the Township is a lower tier municipality, there are other planning policies to comply with when making planning decisions such as **the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the County of Peterborough Official Plan**.

The review of the PPS has been broken down into five main themes. A review of the themes and a highlight of these changes are provided below:

a) Increasing Housing Supply and Mix

- Section 1.1.2 – Increase the planning horizon from 20 to 25 years
- Section 1.1.3.8 and 1.1.3.9 – Add flexibility to the process for settlement area boundary expansions (allow minor adjustments and rounding out – neither term is defined)
- Section 1.4.1., 1.4.3 and Vision and Definitions – Support the development of housing to meet current and future housing needs, and add reference to housing options and market-based needs (market-based needs is not defined)

b) Protecting the Environment and Public Safety

- Many sections speak to the need to enhance direction to prepare for impacts of a changing climate
- Sections 1.6.6.7(a), 1.6.6.7(c) and 1.6.6.7(d) – Enhance storm water management policies to protect water and support climate resiliency
- Section 3.2.3 – Promote the on-site local reuse of excess soil
- Section 3.1 – Speaks to the creation and work of a Special Advisor on Flooding
- Section 2.1.3 – Maintain current polices that require municipalities in southern Ontario to identify natural heritage systems, and provide flexibility as to how to achieve this outcome
- Section 2.1.10 – Provide a new, voluntary management approach for managing local or regionally-significant wetlands (managing of wetlands is not defined)

c) Reducing Barriers and Costs

- Section 4.7 – Require municipalities to take action to fast-track development application for certain proposal i.e. housing (Does not speak to how this fast tracking should take place or the mandatory timelines in the *Planning Act*)
- Speaks to minor changes to streamline development approvals and support burden reduction

- Section 2.5.2.2 – Will allow mineral aggregate operations to use rehabilitation plans to demonstrate that extraction will have not negative impacts
- Aligning polices and definitions of cultural heritage with recent changes to the Ontario Heritage Act

d) Supporting Rural, Northern and Indigenous Communities

- Section 1.6.6 – Allow flexibility for communities by clarifying perceived barriers to sewage and water servicing policies for lot creation and development in rural settlement areas
- Sections 1.2.2, 2.6.5 and Vision – Enhance municipal engagement with Indigenous communities on land use planning to help inform decision-making, build relationships and address issues upfront in the approval process (engagement process is not defined)
- Sections 1.7.1(i), 2.3.2, 2.3.6.2 and Definitions – Promote an agricultural systems approach to enhance agricultural protections to support critical food production and the agricultural section as a significant driver

e) Supporting Certainty and Economic Growth

- Section – 1.3.1(c) – Encourage municipalities to facilitate conditions for economic investments

Conclusion:

The Proposed changes to the PPS will have an impact on the Township in terms of planning. Staff will be closely watching what happens to the following Sections.

Section 1.2.2 and 2.6.5 state that planning authorities **“shall engage” with Indigenous communities** and coordinate on land use matters. There is no direction on what engagement should look like, at what level it should happen at and what requirements need to be met to satisfy the Policy.

Section 1.6.6.4 speaking to the planning authorities assessing the long term impact of individual on-site sewage and water services and their impact on the environmental health and the desired character of rural settlement areas (what we call hamlets in the Township Official Plan) and the feasibility for other forms of servicing at the time of an OP update. This would be an onerous and very expensive study requirement, especially considering the number of existing rural settlements that exist throughout the Township and that the Township does not have any municipal water or sewage systems.

Section 2.1.10 speaks to the option of municipalities managing wetlands that are not considered to be provincially significant. The Policy does not speak to what the word **“manage” means in** this context and does not provide guidelines at this time. As the Township has many wetland areas, this policy could have a large impact and may necessitate additional studies for the Township and applicants.

Section 3 of the Proposed Policy speaks to **an ongoing review by the Province's Special Advisor** on flooding and that further changes may be considered in the future. There is a lack of information regarding the Special Advisor, the review that they will be undertaking and the role of conversation authorities in this discussion. As the Township contains many lakes, rivers, wetlands and other water features the regulation of natural hazards such as flood hazards is vitally important in the face of climate change bringing more severe storms and potential flood risk.

Section 4.7 speaks to a new policy regarding the fast tracking of applications for local housing developments and employment related projects. The Township works very hard to ensure that applications can move swiftly through the planning process but various provincial policy and legislation sets out timeline and studies that must be completed before applications can be processed.

In Section 4 – Implementation and Interpretation, Section 4.9 has been removed. This section spoke to the PPS providing the minimum standards for planning decisions so long as they were consistent with the PPS. With the removal of this section staff are unsure if local policies can address local and County-wide priorities.

Recommendation:

That the Report to Council, dated September 27, 2019 regarding the proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement be received.

Financial Impact:

The Financial Impact of the proposed changes to the PPS are unknown at this time but they may require the need for additional studies for the completion of the County wide Official Plan, the Township Official Plan and subsequent *Planning Act* applications.

Strategic Plan Applicability:

To ensure and enable an efficient and effective municipal administration.

Sustainability Plan Applicability: N/A

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