



## Committee Report

**To:** Warden Mitch Twolan  
Members of the Planning and Development Committee

**From:** Kara Van Myall  
Director of Planning and Development

**Date:** September 19, 2019

**Re:** Proposed Changes to the Provincial Policy Statement

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### Recommendation:

That the Committee Report on the proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statement be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs as the County of Bruce's Comments on the Environmental Registry of Ontario posting #019-0279.

### Background:

The Provincial government released the "More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan" on May 2, 2019. The Action Plan includes a series of initiatives to address housing supply, including a review of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).

The PPS is a consolidated statement of the government's policies on land use planning. All decisions affecting planning matters shall be consistent with the PPS. The PPS was last updated in 2014.

The government released the proposed PPS and is seeking comments on the proposed changes until October 21. The proposed changes focus on:

- Encouraging the development of an increased mix and supply of housing
- Protecting the environment and public safety
- Reducing barriers and costs for development and provide greater predictability
- Supporting rural, northern and Indigenous communities
- Supporting the economy and job creation

Other policy sections of the PPS remain largely unchanged, notably Agricultural, Water, and Natural Heritage policies. The summary below provides an overview of the proposed changes. The following section is intended to serve as the County's review comments on the proposed PPS.

## Summary

### 1. Encourage the development of an increased mix and supply of housing

The following changes described in the proposed PPS posting:

- Increase land supply requirements municipalities must meet:
  - Increase planning horizon from 20 to 25 years
  - Increase housing land supply from 10 to 12 years
  - Allow higher minimum requirement for serviced residential land (5 years) for upper- and single-tier municipalities
- Update provincial guidance to support land budgeting (i.e. Projection Methodology)
- Increase flexibility for municipalities related to the phasing of development and compact form
- Add flexibility to the process for settlement area boundary expansions (e.g. allow minor adjustments subject to specific tests, highlight that study requirements should be proportionate to the size/scale of development)
- Require transit-supportive development and prioritize intensification, including potential air rights development, in proximity to transit, including corridors and stations
- Support the development of housing to meet current and future housing needs, and add reference to housing options
- Support municipalities in achieving affordable housing targets by requiring alignment with Housing and Homelessness Plans
- Broaden PPS policies to enhance support for development of long-term care homes

### 2. Protect the environment and public safety

- Enhance direction to prepare for impacts of a changing climate
- Enhance stormwater management policies to protect water and support climate resiliency
- Promote the on-site local reuse of excess soil
- Maintain current policies related to natural and human made hazards which directs development away from hazardous areas including flood-prone areas in order to protect public health and safety, while work by the Special Advisor on Flooding is underway
- Maintain current policies that require municipalities in southern Ontario to identify natural heritage systems
- Maintain protections for the Greenbelt

### 3. Reducing Barriers and Costs

- Require municipalities to take action to fast-track development applications for certain proposals (e.g. housing)
- Allow mineral aggregate operations to use rehabilitation plans to demonstrate that extraction will have no negative impacts
- Align policies and definition of cultural heritage with recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*
- Refocus PPS energy policies to support a broad range of energy types and opportunities for increased energy supply
- Direct large ground-mounted solar facilities away from prime agricultural and specialty crop areas

- Make minor changes to streamline development approvals and support burden reduction

#### **4. Supporting Rural, Northern and Indigenous Communities**

- Allow flexibility for communities by clarifying perceived barriers to sewage and water servicing policies for lot creation and development in rural settlement areas
- Enhance municipal engagement with Indigenous communities on land use planning to help inform decision-making, build relationships and address issues upfront in the approvals process
- Enhance agricultural protections to support critical food production and the agricultural sector as a significant economic driver

#### **5. Supporting Certainty and Economic Growth**

- Encourage municipalities to facilitate conditions for economic investment, and at the time of official plan review or update, assess locally identified employment areas to ensure designations are appropriate
- Provide municipalities with greater control over employment area conversions to support the forms of development and job creation that suit the local context (current and future)
- Provide stronger protection for major facilities such as manufacturing and industrial uses where non-employment uses are planned nearby (i.e. buffering uses from new sensitive uses).

#### **PPS Review Comments**

Bruce County offers the following comments to the Province as it considers changes to the Provincial Policy Statement.

1. Increasing the timeframe associated with a municipality's land supply will likely lead to increases in the amount of residentially designated lands, thereby alleviating some housing supply pressures. While this is generally perceived as positive, more details are needed on the proposed Projection Methodology that underpins the proposed land supply requirements in the PPS. It is noted that some lower-tier municipalities within Bruce County are currently reviewing their Official Plans and it is anticipated that Bruce County will be undertaking a review of its Official Plan soon, which will involve a growth forecast. It would be helpful to understand the timeframe associated with Projection Methodology as well as the impacts of proceeding with Official Plan review in the absence of the Projection Methodology.
2. The ability to expand settlement area boundaries without of municipal comprehensive review will allow municipalities to adjust a settlement area boundary if there is no net increase in land within the settlement area, among other criteria. It may be beneficial to establish additional parameters around circumstances when this policy should be used so as not to undermine policies that are intended intensify development and promote the efficient use of land.
3. The proposed changes state that planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters. Bruce County already endeavors to engage with its Indigenous partners on planning matters, however,

Indigenous communities often require resources to provide meaningful and sustained engagement with municipal planning processes. It is noted that it is the Province's duty to consult. The Province should consider making funding available to Indigenous stakeholders who are interested in providing meaningful engagement with municipal planning practices.

4. The proposed PPS would permit the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses without the need of a comprehensive review in certain circumstances. This will likely create flexibility for municipalities to address non-employment lands needs, however, it is noted that new employment lands are particularly challenging to integrate into a municipality's land composition. It may be worth considering making the proposed employment lands conversions policies more restrictive than what is proposed.
5. The proposed PPS notes that planning authorities shall prepare for the impacts of climate change throughout the document, however, this policy direction is vague and may not be achieved without implementing guidelines that outline specific areas of concern. Given this is a relatively new and emerging policy area, the Province may want to consider implementing a tool kit or guidelines for municipalities to use to develop local policies.
6. The proposed changes within Section 2.5 - Mineral Aggregate Resources facilitates the long-term rehabilitation into the consideration of no negative impacts on the natural features or their ecological function. This should provide clarity to the planning process as it relates to the Aggregate Resources Act.
7. Proposed policy 4.7 states that Planning authorities shall facilitate a timely and streamlined processes for local development by identifying and fast-tracking applications which support housing and job-related growth; and reduce the time needed to process residential and priority applications to the extent possible. Further details are needed to implement this policy.

#### **Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

#### **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

None

#### **Link to Strategic Goals and Elements:**

Goal 5: Eliminate our own red tape:

- e. focus on the internal and external customer / client needs first

Goal 7: Stimulate and reward innovation and economic development:

- a. Streamline and simplify our Planning Processes (Official Plan, Zoning By-law)

Goal 9: Coordinated, Concerted effort to advance our agenda:

- b. Politicians and staff lobby associations and government in support of local policy needs;

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