



INFORMATION REPORT
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REPORT – INFORMATION REPORT # 2016-23

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
SLT/OLT

SUBJECT: 2015 Coordinated Provincial Plan Review

ORIGIN: Planning and Building Services

COMMENTS

As part of the coordinated Provincial Plan Review being undertaken by the Province, proposed 2016 drafts of the various Provincial Planning documents have recently been released. The purpose of this Information Report is to address whether or not these new draft Provincial Plans adequately address the Town's comments as previously submitted to the Province. This Report will also provide an overview of some of the more significant revisions to the Plans regarding Building Complete Communities.

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request this Information Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion through the Clerk's office.

Background

On February 27, 2015, the Province initiated the process regarding the Coordinated Provincial Plan Review. The following Plans were included in this review:

- Niagara Escarpment Plan (1985) - revised in 1994 and 2005
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002)
- Greenbelt Plan (2005)
- Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)

To lead the coordinated review, the Government of Ontario appointed an Advisory Panel to develop recommendations on how to amend and improve the plans. The Advisory Panel carried out a public consultation process wherein approximately 19,300 submissions were received, including 60 from municipalities. In addition, 17 regional town hall meetings were held throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Town of Newmarket submitted comments as part of this public consultation process. Report 2015-13, prepared in May, 2015, contained the Town's comments which were subsequently forwarded to the Province.

The Province then developed a list of proposed recommended revisions to each of the Plans. The Town of Newmarket reviewed these proposed revisions and prepared Information Report 2016-09 in February of 2016 which advised on these recommendations and whether or not they reflected the previously provided comments. Staff were satisfied that the recommendations adequately reflected the Town's comments previously submitted to the Province.

More recently (May, 2016), the Province issued the draft versions of these Provincial Plans. The Province is now seeking comments and feedback on these draft Plans; the deadline to provide such feedback is September 30, 2016.

Analysis

1. Previously Provided Comments

Staff have reviewed the proposed draft Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Greenbelt Plan, and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to determine if the Town's previously provided comments were addressed. Each of the Town's original comments are provided in italics, and they are followed by a determination on whether or not proposed changes to the draft Reports adequately address each comment.

- *The Town supports a consolidated/coordinated review of these plans as they need to work together to appropriately direct growth in the Region and Greater Golden Horseshoe, and to promote consistency between definitions and overall land use planning, environmental, and economic development goals.*

Staff can confirm that this comment has been satisfied. There is a far greater level of consistency and alignment amongst the draft Plans regarding land use planning, environmental, and economic development policies which will have the effect of streamlining the planning policies. In addition, many of the definitions have been revised to increase consistency. This is a very important step in the evolution of these Plans as the current Plans do not align in many aspects, which had historically resulted in ambiguity and interpretation differences.

- *A portion of the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) lands within Newmarket is shown as "Settlement Area" in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), but have been designated as Environmental Protection lands in Newmarket's Planning documents. As part of the ORMCP review, portions of the land within the ORM that are outside of the urban boundary as has been defined through our Planning documents, and that are not needed to support growth, could potentially be re-designated in the ORMCP from "Settlement Area" to be consistent with our Planning documents. A detailed analysis would need to be undertaken to determine which, if any, lands might apply.*

The Town's comments to potentially re-designate the portion of "Settlement Area" to be consistent with our Planning documents has not been satisfied as the identified ORM lands within the Town of Newmarket currently remain as "Settlement Area" in the proposed ORMCP.

- *It may be appropriate, with the concurrence of East Gwillimbury and Whitchurch-Stouffville, to review land on the east side of Highway 404 adjacent to Newmarket with the purpose of removing it from the Greenbelt. The Growth Plan indicates that the use of existing infrastructure is to be optimized and encourages the use of existing infrastructure by promoting development where infrastructure expansions would be minimal and that employment lands be strategically located within urban areas near major transportation corridors. This was not intended to reflect a desire by Newmarket for municipal boundary adjustments; rather, it reflects an opportunity to support growth for employment lands in appropriate locations with minimal infrastructure expansion.*

Staff can confirm that this comment has not been addressed; the boundary for the Greenbelt Plan remains in its current location along the eastern portion of Highway 404 adjacent to the Town of Newmarket. This is consistent with the Region of York Official Plan (Figure 2 – Strategic Employment Lands) which does not identify these lands as Conceptual Strategic Employment Lands. However, there may be merit in maintaining the Greenbelt in this location at this time, as the Greenbelt Plan has the effect of restricting other forms of development (i.e. residential) in this area that would preclude future employment uses.

- *There may be an opportunity to consider portions of the ORM lands within Newmarket as additional Greenbelt land.*

Upon reviewing the proposed schedules and appendices for the Proposed Greenbelt Plan, it is noted that additional lands have been added to grow the Greenbelt beyond its current boundary in other parts of the GTA, but the Town's comment to consider the inclusion of portions of the ORM lands within Newmarket has not been adopted. However, the section of the Plan dealing with amendments to the Plan in between the 10-year review periods has been revised to explicitly reference that such amendments would be considered where such amendments seek to grow the Greenbelt with the Protected Countryside and/or Urban River Valley designations. Therefore staff are satisfied that this concern has been addressed.

2. Significant Revisions regarding Building Complete Communities

The new draft Plans include other high level, significant revisions regarding building complete communities. These include:

1. Increasing the intensification target from 40% to 60% of all new residential growth to existing built up areas (Growth Plan revision);
2. Increasing the Designated Greenfield Area density target from a minimum of 50 to 80 residents and jobs per hectare (Growth Plan revision); and
3. Setting minimum density targets around major transit station areas.

Newmarket remains well positioned to respond to these policy directions. Newmarket is largely built out, and the vast majority of the Town is within the "existing built up area". The Urban Centres Secondary Plan provides the framework to accommodate the vast majority of future

growth within the Urban Centres, which is consistent with the above policies. In addition, the Mobility Hub Study that is currently being undertaken in partnership with Metrolinx will set minimum density targets around the Newmarket GO Station that meet the new requirements of the Growth Plan.

Staff believe that the draft Plans represent a positive step in the evolution of the Plans and will achieve a beneficial planning policy context for the Town. Staff will continue to work with the Region on the Greenbelt Plan and ORMCP boundary adjustments. In addition, Newmarket remains well positioned to respond to new Provincial policies regarding Building Complete Communities.

CONSULTATION

Not applicable to this Information Report.

BUSINESS PLAN AND STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGES

Providing input on Provincial plans and legislation supports the *Well-respected* branch of the Community Strategic Plan by being an influential contributor to regional and provincial affairs.

HUMAN RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS

There are no Human Resource impacts associated with this Information Report.

BUDGET IMPACT

There are no Capital or Operating Budget impacts associated with this Information Report.

CONTACT

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