



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Arvin Prasad, Commissioner of Development Services

Prepared by: Marg Wouters, Senior Manager, Policy & Research, Development Services Commission

Date: May 27, 2019

Re: **Decision on Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan 2017 (A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019)**

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the memorandum entitled “Decision on Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan 2017 (A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019)” be received.

BACKGROUND:

In January 2019 the Province released Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan 2017 which proposed a number of key policy changes. Council provided comments on Proposed Amendment 1 in late February 2019. On May 2, 2019, the Province released its decision on Proposed Amendment 1 in the form of A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019. This Plan replaces the Growth Plan 2017, and takes effect May 16, 2019. This memo provides a summary of the key changes in this new Growth Plan.

DISCUSSION:

For the most part, the new policies in the Growth Plan 2019 reflect the policies as drafted in Proposed Amendment 1, with the exception of minimum intensification and designated greenfield area density targets for York Region and certain other inner municipalities which have been lowered from the targets initially proposed. The following provides a summary of the decisions made on key policies in Proposed Amendment 1, along with Council’s previous comments (in italics).

Intensification and Density Targets – targets lowered

- Minimum intensification target of 50% to the year 2041 for the Cities of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Hamilton, Orillia and Peterborough, and the Regions of York, Peel, Durham, Halton, Waterloo and Niagara; this represents a reduction from the 60% target for the City of Hamilton and Regions of York, Peel and Waterloo initially proposed in Proposed Amendment 1; *Council supported a 50% intensification target for York Region.*

- Minimum designated greenfield area target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare for the Cities of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Hamilton, Orillia and Peterborough and the Regions of York, Peel, Durham, Halton, Waterloo and Niagara; this represents a reduction from the 60 residents and jobs per hectare target for the City of Hamilton and Regions of York, Peel and Waterloo initially proposed in Proposed Amendment 1; *Council supported the higher 60 residents and jobs per hectare target for York Region, but also recommended consistent targets across all GGH municipalities, particularly for the inner municipalities.*

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) Policies – generally approved as proposed

- Maintains requirement that municipalities identify MTSA's and minimum density targets along priority transit corridors
- Allows MTSA boundaries to range from approximately 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station and allow municipalities to delineate and set density targets for MTSA's in advance of a MCR subject to certain conditions; *Council supported the MTSA policies.*

Employment Policies – generally approved as proposed

- Allows upper and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, a one-time window to undertake some employment land conversions in advance of the next Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) subject to criteria; *Council did not support these policies.*
- Introduces new Provincially Significant Employment Zone definition and mapping which identifies provincially significant employment lands that cannot be converted to non-employment uses outside of an MCR; *Council did not fully support the PSEZ mapping but recommended that the Province have further consultation with municipalities to refine the mapping. Although minor refinements appear to have been made to the PSEZ mapping, corrections to the mapping provided by Markham staff to the Province in April 2019 after discussion with Ministry staff (reflecting boundary refinements and previous Council decisions as outlined in Appendix 'A') have not been incorporated; however, the Province indicates in their decision that requests to review the zones or add new zones will still be considered.*

Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Policies – generally approved as proposed

- Allow municipalities to adjust settlement area boundaries outside of an MCR if there is no net increase in land within settlement areas, subject to criteria including lands being able to meet minimum density targets, and being serviced by municipal water and wastewater systems
- Allow municipalities to undertake expansions that are no larger than 40 hectares outside the MCR process, subject to specific criteria; *Council recommended allowing only minor expansions outside of a municipal comprehensive review under certain conditions.*

Rural Settlement Policies – generally approved as proposed

- Introduces new defined term 'rural settlement' as a subset of 'settlement areas' in place of 'undelineated built-up areas' and clarifying that rural settlements are not part of the designated greenfield area

- Introduces new policy that allows minor rounding out of rural settlements not in the Greenbelt Area, outside of an MCR subject to criteria; *Council did not support this policy.*

NEXT STEPS:

The changes to the Growth Plan are part of the Province's Housing Supply Action Plan initiative, which seeks to increase the supply of housing in Ontario. Proposed changes to other provincial legislation, including additional transitional provisions with respect to the Growth Plan, that form part of the Housing Supply Action Plan were also released on May 2, 2019 through the draft Bill 108, More Homes, More Choices Act,. Staff comments on draft Bill 108 will be provided in a separate report.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A': Additional Markham Staff comments on the Proposed Framework for the Provincially Significant Employment Zones Supporting Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, April 4, 2019