



Planning Advisory Committee Staff Report

To: To the Chair and Members of the Planning Advisory Committee
From: Brandon Hassan, Senior Policy Planner
Date: July 4, 2017
Report: PA-17-31
Subject: NEW Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2017
Purpose: To provide Committee with an analysis of how the NEW Growth Plan may affect planning and development matters

Executive Summary

Created under the *Places to Grow Act (2005)*, the 2017 Growth Plan is one of four provincial plans that directs growth and protects key agricultural as well as environment systems. The goals of the Plan aim to address the following growing concerns throughout the Province:

- Impacts of urban sprawl on the environment
- Globalization transforming regional economies
- Dependency on automobiles
- Growing population resulting in a need for age-friendly design
- Finite supply of agricultural lands that must be protected
- Adaptive infrastructure

The new Growth Plan will be in force and effect as of **July 1, 2017** and this Report summarizes some of the Sections that may influence the decision making process for Planning Staff, Applicants/Agents, Committees, the Public and Council.

Highlights from Staff Report PA-16-48

Below are the Recommendations that were submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) on October 31, 2016 as endorsed by Council at the October 17, 2016 Special Council Meeting to collect input from the Public regarding the Proposed Growth Plan. The following items were either addressed in the new Plan, or not as outlined in this Report:

1. **YES** - That reduced intensification targets are requested from the Minister of MMAH
 - i.e. 15% as per Section 2.2.5.2 of the Official Plan
2. **YES** - That reduced density targets are requested from the Minister of MMAH
 - i.e. 40 res/jobs per hectare as per Section 2.2.2.3 of the Official Plan
3. **NO** - That Council request from the Ministry (MMAH) for the Transition Policies to be retained in the Plan to deal with pending development applications
4. **YES** - That Staff prepare a Staging of Development Strategy to be implemented which directs/restricts growth in appropriate areas
5. **YES** - That Staff prepare policies to be implemented which promote walkable streets to support complete communities
6. **YES** - That Staff prepare low impact development and green infrastructure policies

Report

Section 1 – Introduction

Policy 1.2.2

- *This Plan applies to the area designated by Ontario Regulation 416/05 as the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan area. All decisions made on or after July 1, 2017 in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter will conform with this Plan, subject to any legislative or regulatory provisions providing otherwise.*

Interpretation: The previous 2006 Growth Plan included Transition policies (S. 5.4.5) which enabled applications “commenced” on or before the effective date of the previous plan to be processed and not be subject to the current plan policies. The new Growth Plan requires that all decisions made on or after the effective date will conform to the plan, regardless of when the application was made. The result of this is that proposed development projects that have not been granted approval to date would need to be revised in order to comply with the new policies, targets and forecast in the proposed plan.

Section 2 – Where and How to Grow

Managing Growth

Policy 2.2.1.2 and 2.2.1.3

2. Forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan will be allocated based on the following:

- a) the vast majority of growth will be directed to settlement areas that:*
 - i. have a delineated built boundary;*
 - ii. have existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems; and*
 - iii. can support the achievement of complete communities;*
- b) growth will be limited in settlement areas that:*
 - i. are undelineated built-up areas;*
 - ii. are not serviced by existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems; or*
 - iii. are in the Greenbelt Area;*
- c) within settlement areas, growth will be focused in:*
 - i. delineated built-up areas;*
 - ii. strategic growth areas;*
 - iii. locations with existing or planned transit, with a priority on higher order transit where it exists or is planned; and*
 - iv. areas with existing or planned public service facilities;*

3. Upper- and single-tier municipalities will undertake integrated planning to manage forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan, which will:

a) establish a hierarchy of settlement areas, and of areas within settlement areas, in accordance with policy 2.2.1.2;

Interpretation: Areas of the County with private or partial services will be limited in term of development opportunity and incorporated into the Staging of Development Strategy in order to properly accommodate infrastructure, servicing capacities and Staff resources.

Policy 2.2.1.6

Based on a land needs assessment undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.1.5, some upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring will determine that they have excess lands. These municipalities will:

- a) determine which lands will be identified as excess lands based on the hierarchy of settlement areas established in accordance with policy 2.2.1.3; and*
- b) prohibit development on all excess lands to the horizon of this Plan.*

Interpretation: Upon receipt of lands needs methodology from the Province and a determination of which lands are excess, development on lands not required to accommodate projected growth into 2041 will be prohibited in order to direct growth to appropriate fully serviced areas.

Delineated Built Up Areas

Policy 2.2.2.3

Until the next municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect, the annual minimum intensification target contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply.

Interpretation: As per Recommendation #1 - since the County is part of the “outer ring” and does not have an Urban Growth Centre, Section 2.2.5.2 of the County Official Plan currently identifies the minimum target to be 15% and will remain as such until the next MCR in 2022.

Employment

Policy 2.2.5.9

The conversion of lands within prime employment areas to employment areas, or lands within employment areas to non-employment uses may be permitted only through a municipal comprehensive review...

Interpretation: Through the Employment Land Needs Analysis and the aforementioned land needs methodology, the County will assess if the current employment lands are in excess of what is required to meet forecasted growth.

Designated Greenfield Areas

Policy 2.2.7.5

For upper- and single-tier municipalities in the outer ring, the minimum density target for designated greenfield areas contained in the applicable official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply until the next municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect.

Interpretation: As per Recommendation #2 - since the County is part of the “outer ring” and does not have an Urban Growth Centre, Section 2.2.2.3 of the County Official Plan currently

identifies the projected density targets to be 40 residents and jobs per hectare and will remain as such until the next MCR in 2022.

Section 3 – Infrastructure to Support Growth

Integrated Planning

Policy 3.2.1.2

Planning for new or expanded infrastructure will occur in an integrated manner, including evaluations of long-range scenario-based land use planning and financial planning, and will be supported by infrastructure master plans, asset management plans, community energy plans, watershed planning, environmental assessments, and other relevant studies where appropriate...

Interpretation: Recognize infrastructure investment as an implementation tool that will be used to facilitate high-density development in strategic growth areas. Likewise, it will limit infrastructure investment in inappropriate areas. This will be further implemented through the Staging of Development Strategy.

Transportation – General

Policy 3.2.2.3

In the design, refurbishment, or reconstruction of the existing and planned street network, a complete streets approach will be adopted that ensures the needs and safety of all road users are considered and appropriately accommodated.

Interpretation: The public realm within road allowances will need to incorporate the needs and safety of all road users and (ideally) decrease the reliance of personal vehicles for travel.

Water and Wastewater Systems

Policy 3.2.6.1

Municipalities should generate sufficient revenue to recover the full cost of providing and maintaining municipal water and wastewater systems.

Interpretation: In addition to being linked with the Policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), in order to identify the full life cycle costs of municipal systems and possible long-term payment allocation costs, as noted in Policy 2.2.1, growth will be concentrated in areas with full municipal services which will recuperate Development Charge investments.

Stormwater Management

Policy 3.2.7.1

Municipalities will develop stormwater master plans or equivalent for serviced settlement areas...

Interpretation: This form of infrastructure planning will be supplemented by watershed planning in order to examine the cumulative environmental impacts of stormwater caused by development, incorporate low impact development and identify possible long-term revenue strategies to deal with the implementation or maintenance of new and existing systems.

Public Service Facilities

Policy 3.2.8

- *Public service facilities and public services should be co-located in community hubs and integrated to promote cost-effectiveness.*

Interpretation: Any lands, buildings or structures that deliver programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body (i.e. police, fire, health etc.) should be located near or developed via community hubs in order to capitalize on accessibility and long-term viability which will be coordinated through land use planning exercises.

Section 4 – Protecting What is Valuable

Water Resource Systems

Policy 4.2.1.3

Decisions on allocation of growth and planning for water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure will be informed by applicable watershed planning. Planning for designated greenfield areas will be informed by a subwatershed plan or equivalent.

Interpretation: Through consultation with the Conservation Authorities, projects such as Source Water Protection and decisions made (including land use applications) that could affect natural heritage areas, new or expanded infrastructure or any form of development should be informed by plans and policies that protect water resource systems. This will result in future subwatershed plans being prepared for various areas within the County.

Agricultural System

Policy 4.2.6.5

The retention of existing lots of record for agricultural uses is encouraged, and the use of these lots for non-agricultural uses is discouraged.

Interpretation: Farming operations have changed significantly over the last several years and agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses are leading to the development of agri-tourism which is supported under the PPS and the County Official Plan. In conjunction with the Agricultural Permitted Uses Guidelines supplied by OMAFRA, the County should support a range of operations that contribute to the economic prosperity of the industry and carefully consider proposals with residential components in these areas (i.e. surplus farm dwellings).

Mineral Aggregate Resources

Policy 4.2.8.3

In prime agricultural areas, applications for NEW mineral aggregate operations will be supported by an agricultural impact assessment and, where possible, will seek to maintain or improve connectivity of the Agricultural System.

Interpretation: An assessment of the impact a new wayside pit or quarry may have within an agricultural area will enable the County to determine how the disturbed area of the site can be rehabilitated to a state of equal or greater agricultural value in accordance with the agricultural conditions outlined in Section 2.5.4 of the PPS.

A Culture of Conservation

Policy 4.2.9.1

Municipalities will develop and implement official plan policies and other strategies in support of conservation objectives.

Interpretation: With raising levels of greenhouse gas emissions, it is vital the County implement policies and guidelines that support the conservation of water and energy, renewable/alternative resources, improve air quality, integrated waste management (i.e. LEED) and excess soil reuse strategies via conservation and demand management plans.

Climate Change

Policy 4.2.10

Upper- and single-tier municipalities will develop policies in their official plans to identify actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals, aligned with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and the Climate Change Action Plan, 2016...

Interpretation: The County is encouraged to develop greenhouse gas inventories and concurrent reduction targets that are aligned with Provincial baselines in order to strive for net-zero communities in addition to reporting on progress made in achieving set goals. Adapting to climate change also involves increasing infrastructure resilience and assessing the vulnerability of municipal servicing (i.e. stormwater systems during large rainfalls).

Section 5 – Implementation and Interpretation

Performance Indicators and Monitoring

Policy 5.2.6.2

- *Municipalities will monitor and report on the implementation of this Plan's policies within their municipality, in accordance with any reporting requirements, data standards and any other guidelines that may be issued by the Minister.*

Interpretation: Providing data to the Minister (i.e. of Municipal Affairs and Housing or delegate Staff) will illustrate compliance and the County's ability to demonstrate progress made towards the implementation success of the Growth Plan. In accordance with Policy 5.2.3.5, the County should consult with the City of Brantford whenever possible to strive for a coordinated approach to implementing the policies of the Plan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

With the expectation that the projected population of the County in will increase from 36,000 people and 22,000 jobs by 2031 to 57,000 people and 26,000 jobs by 2041, it is essential that proper steps are taken in order to conform to this new legislation wherever possible rather than in the future. As the County is a "right to farm" based community, Staff feels that the new Growth Plan will not hinder but rather strengthen agricultural operations. Within settlement areas, the County is encouraged to establish more open space areas which may include urban agriculture, rooftop gardens and communal courtyards.

As a whole, is it Staffs interpretation that the new Plan promotes denser development within urban areas, improving transit corridors and public transit systems to reduce the dependency on personal vehicles, limiting (in some cases prohibiting) growth in inappropriate areas (i.e. private services) and addressing the pressing issue of global climate change. With more compact development within built boundaries, there is less of a need for vehicular travel and more opportunity to improve the public realm and increase walkability. With less vehicular

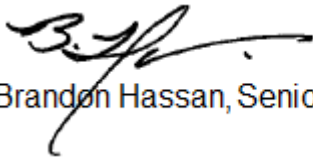
traffic, community hubs can be designed in a way that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote complete communities. In many cases, walkable streets will promote vibrant neighborhoods, improves the County's identity and increase community involvement.

As per the comments submitted to the Province on October 31, 2016, the following items were either addressed in the new Plan, or not:

- **YES** - reduced intensification targets (i.e. 60% to 15% as per the Official Plan)
- **YES** - reduced density targets (i.e. 80 res/jobs per hectare to 40 res/jobs per hectare)
- **NO** - transition policies to deal with pending development applications (i.e. complete submission on or before implementation date)
- **YES** - implement a Staging of Development Strategy to direct growth in appropriate areas
- **YES** - implement policies that promote walkable streets to support complete communities
- **YES** - implement low impact development and green infrastructure policies

As the new Plan comes into force and effect on July 1, 2017, where Council must decide on a planning matter before the Official Plan has been amended to conform with the new Plan through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) in 2022, consideration for the impact of decisions that are made as it relates to the policies in the new Plan must be dealt with using forethought of the future County of Brant.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Hassan', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Brandon Hassan, Senior Policy Planner