

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (1) – OCTOBER 8, 2024

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Distributed October 7, 2024

SC1. Memorandum from the Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management, dated
September 30, 2024.

Subject

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024.

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**STAFF COMMUNICATION
FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

SC 1

Staff Communication

CW(1) - October 8, 2024

DATE: September 30, 2024

TO: Mayor and Members of Council

FROM: Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning & Growth Management

RE: **STAFF COMMUNICATION – Committee of the Whole (1) October 8, 2024**
Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Staff Communication is to update the Mayor and members of Council on the policies contained in the new Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (“PPS 2024”).

2. Background

On August 20, 2024, the Province of Ontario released the final version of the PPS 2024, which provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. All planning matter decisions made on or after October 20, 2024, must be consistent with the policies contained in the PPS 2024, subject to proposed transition regulations. The Lieutenant Governor approved the PPS 2024 by Order in Council (No. 1099/2024). Two previous drafts of the new PPS were released for public review and comment (April 2023 and April 2024) prior to the final approval of the PPS 2024.

The PPS 2024 replaces A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS 2020) by integrating them into a single planning document, which applies province wide. Provincial Plans such as the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan remain in effect and are to be read in conjunction with the PPS 2024 and take precedence over the policies of the PPS 2024 in the case of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

3. Analysis

Vision

The PPS 2024 identifies Ontario as a ‘vast, fast-growing province’ and includes direction to ‘build more homes for all Ontarians’. Oriented towards achieving the Provincial goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031, the PPS 2024 contains policies that will support:

- Increasing the supply and mix of housing options within new and existing compact, transit-supportive communities,
- Creating strong and competitive economies,

- Investing in infrastructure and public service facilities,
- Protecting the viability of rural areas, local goods production, and the agri-food network, and
- Mitigating risks related to public health, safety, or property damage from natural and human-made hazards, including impacts of climate change.

In contrast to the previous PPS 2020 there are differences in policy intent contained in the PPS 2024. The intent of the PPS 2020, was to provide for ‘*appropriate development*’ with policies that support:

- Protecting resources of Provincial interest, public health and safety, as well as the quality of the natural and built environment,
- A systems approach to efficient land use planning, and
- Principles for building strong communities that have a clean and healthy environment and economic growth.

Land Supply – Settlement Area Boundaries

Planning for the City of Vaughan will be informed by the provision of an adequate supply of land. Policy 2.1.3 speaks to the requirement that municipalities maintain and plan for an appropriate supply and mix of land uses to meet projected growth needs for a time horizon of at least 20 years, but not more than 30 years. In order to ensure municipalities maintain an adequate supply of land, Policy 2.3.2 provides for the identification of new settlement areas and settlement boundary expansions outside of a municipal comprehensive review. Overall, Policy 2.1.6 speaks to the creation of complete communities, which includes areas within cities that “provide residents of all ages and abilities, equitable and inclusive access to necessities for daily living”.

Growth Forecasts for Large and Fast-Growing Municipalities

Schedule 1 of the PPS 2024 identifies a List of Large and Fast-Growing Municipalities containing twenty-nine (29) municipalities, one of which is the City of Vaughan. There are additional policies related to establishing density targets and watershed planning for large and fast-growing municipalities.

As a planning authority prescribed by recent legislation passed under Bill 185 and as a *large and fast-growing municipality* identified in the PPS 2024, the City, as of October 20, 2024, must also address growth forecast responsibilities outlined in the growth management policies of the PPS 2024 (Policy 2.1.1, 2.1.4). The City will be responsible for allocating population, housing, and employment projections based on a Provincial forecast. A Provincial Bulletin published by the Ministry of Finance will be released at a future date containing the forecast for all identified large and fast-growing municipalities (Policy 2.1.1). In addition, the City will continue to identify areas where growth and development will be focused and identify minimum density targets within new or expanded settlement areas (Policy 6.2.9.c). Policy 2.1.3 states that “any population potential approved by the Minister by way of a Minister Zoning Order shall be incorporated into the official plan and infrastructure plans at the time of a municipality’s official plan update”.

Targets

The PPS 2024 contains policies that require the establishment of density targets. There are three levels of minimum density targets to be incorporated into municipal Official Plans; minimum density targets for *intensification and redevelopment* within built-up areas

(Policy 2.3.1.4), minimum density targets within *major transit station areas* on *higher-order transit* corridors (Policy 2.4.2.2), and minimum density targets for the provision of housing that is *affordable to low and moderate-income households* (Policy 2.2.1). In addition, the City of Vaughan, as a *large and fast-growing municipality*, is encouraged to plan for a target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare in *designated growth areas* (Policy 2.3.1.5).

Housing

In addition to increasing land supply, the City is required to plan for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and establish minimum densities to provide choice for current and future residents. *Housing options*, as defined in the PPS 2024, speaks to housing types, which includes, but not limited to single, semi-detached, townhouses, multiplexes, low- and mid-rise apartments and different housing arrangements, which includes, but is not limited to *affordable housing*, additional needs housing, and student housing.

Policy 2.2.1.a speaks to working with Service Managers to establish and implement minimum targets for housing that is 'affordable to low-and-moderate income households'. York Region is the designated Service Manager for the York market area as identified in the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. Policy 2.2.1.b identifies new direction for municipalities to consider the development and/or redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional sites to meet broader housing objectives. Policy 2.2.1.c and 2.2.1.d speaks to promoting greater residential densities to support the use of active transportation and prioritizing intensification in proximity to transit corridors and stations.

Strategic Growth Areas & Complete Communities

The PPS 2024 outlines general policies that direct municipalities to provide for a range of housing options and mixed-use development within strategic growth areas (“SGA”). In addition to accommodating population and employment growth while providing access to equitable housing and supportive transit options, planning authorities are also directed to prioritize planning and investment for *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* within SGAs (Policy 2.4.1.3.a). Planning authorities should now consider planning for student housing in SGAs by developing a strategy (Policy 2.4.1.3.d). The PPS 2024 also supports the redevelopment of commercially-designated retail lands to support mixed-use residential development (Policy 2.4.1.3.e). The definition of SGA has also expanded to include “existing or emerging downtowns, lands adjacent to publicly assisted post-secondary institutions, underutilized shopping malls and plazas” (pg. 53).

Major Transit Station Areas

Major Transit Station Areas (“MTSAs”) are intended to support growth in areas within a 500m to 800m radius of a transit station. Policy 2.4.2.1 requires planning authorities to delineate boundaries and implement minimum density targets for *major transit station areas* on higher order transit corridors. Policy 2.4.2.5, however, permits the delineation of MTSAs that are not located on higher order transit corridors and encourages municipalities to set minimum density targets for these areas. A new section is introduced, Policy 2.4.3 *Frequent Transit* Corridors, which concerns public-transit service that operates at least every 15 minutes in both directions throughout the day and Policy 2.4.3.1 requires planning authorities to plan for intensification on lands adjacent to existing and planned *frequent transit* corridors, where appropriate.

Employment

Supporting a modern economy requires promoting economic development and competitiveness. A revised definition in the *Planning Act* for “Area of Employment” will also come into effect on October 20, 2024, which provides that specified uses are not business and economic uses for the purposes of the definition. The new definition is as follows:

“area of employment” means an area of land designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic uses, those being uses that meet the following criteria:

1. *The uses consist of business and economic uses, other than uses referred to in paragraph 2, including any of the following:*
 - i. *Manufacturing uses.*
 - ii. *Uses related to research and development in connection with manufacturing anything.*
 - iii. *Warehousing uses, including uses related to the movement of goods.*
 - iv. *Retail uses and office uses that are associated with uses mentioned in subparagraphs i to iii.*
 - b. *Facilities that are ancillary to the uses mentioned in subparagraphs i to iv.*
 - c. *Any other prescribed business and economic uses.*
2. *The uses are not any of the following uses:*
 - a. *Institutional uses.*
 - b. *Commercial uses, including retail and office uses not referred to in subparagraph 1 iv; (“zone d’emploi”)*

The definition of *employment area* in the new PPS means those areas designated in an Official Plan for clusters of businesses and economic activities in addition to areas of land described by subsection 1(1.1) of the *Planning Act*. Explicitly, this includes manufacturing, research and development in connection with manufacturing, warehousing, goods movement, associated retail and office and ancillary facilities and explicitly excludes institutional and commercial uses, including retail and office not associated with the primary employment use.

The PPS 2024 contains policies that speak to employment uses outside of *employment areas*. Policy 2.8.1.2 encourages locating employment uses (i.e. industrial, manufacturing, and small-scale warehousing) adjacent to *sensitive* land uses that do not have *adverse effects* within SGAs and in mixed-use areas where *frequent transit service* is available. In general, major office and major institutional development is directed to MTSAs and other SGAs where frequent transit service is available (Policy 2.8.1.4).

Removing lands from *employment areas* can be pursued at any time by a planning authority where it has demonstrated compliance with the criteria outlined in Policy 2.8.2.5:

- a) *there is an identified need for the removal and the land is not required for employment area uses over the long term;*
- b) *the proposed uses would not negatively impact the overall viability of the employment area by:*
 1. *avoiding, or where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating potential impacts to existing or planned employment area uses in accordance with policy 3.5;*

2. *maintaining access to major goods movement facilities and corridors;*
- c) *existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities are available to accommodate the proposed uses; and*
- d) *the municipality has sufficient employment lands to accommodate projected employment growth to the horizon of the approved official plan.*

As part of an official plan review process, updates to *employment areas* shall ensure that land use compatibility between *sensitive land uses* and *employment areas* is maintained. Policy 2.8.1.3 outlines a transition zone within 300 metres of *employment areas* where long-term economic impacts are to be minimized and mitigated.

Land Use Compatibility

Compatibility requirements for the planning and development of sensitive land uses in the vicinity of industrial, manufacturing or major facilities are provided.

The PPS 2024 maintains similar policies to the PPS 2020 that intend to ensure the continued operation of *major facilities* and compatibility of adjacent *sensitive land uses* as identified in Policy 3.5.1.

In the context of a development application, Policy 3.5.2 provides that it is no longer necessary to demonstrate that there is an identified need for the proposed sensitive land use or that alternative locations for the proposed use have been evaluated and there are no reasonable alternative locations. The policy does require avoidance of adverse effects, and where avoidance is not possible, it requires potential adverse effects to industrial, manufacturing or other major facilities to be minimized and mitigated.

Sewage, Water and Stormwater

While planning for an increase in residential housing supply and non-residential uses, planning authorities must also plan to maintain appropriate *municipal sewage services* and *municipal water services*. A comprehensive municipal planning approach to growth management, sewage and water service capacity is required by planning authorities. Policy 3.6.1 directs that sewage and water services are to be accommodated to address forecasted growth in a “timely manner”. Policy 3.6.1.b refers to providing services in a manner that can be sustained, is feasible and financially viable, protects human health and safety as well as the environment and aligns with comprehensive municipal planning. Policy 3.6.1.c includes a reference to promoting energy conservation and policy 3.6.1.d requires the integration of servicing and land use considerations at all stages of the planning process. Policy 3.6.1.e requires planning authorities to consider opportunities to allocate and reallocate, if necessary, the unused system capacity of *municipal water services* and *municipal sewage services* to support the efficient use of these services to meet current and projected needs for an increased housing supply.

Individual on-site sewage services and *individual on-site water services* are permitted in certain circumstances as outlined in Policy 3.6.4, which also encourages that the long-term impacts are assessed at the time of an official plan review or update.

Natural Heritage

Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term. Policies relating to natural heritage remain largely unchanged and are coordinated with the policies of the

Greenbelt Plan. Policies in this section are explicit to where *development* and *site alterations* shall not be permitted (Policy 4.1.4, 4.1.5).

Water

Planning Authorities are required to protect, improve and restore the quality and quantity of water. Policy 4.2.3 directs that large and fast-growing municipalities like the City of Vaughan are encouraged to undertake watershed planning to inform planning for sewage, water services and stormwater management. To complete watershed planning, municipalities are encouraged to collaborate with applicable conservation authorities (Policy 4.2.5).

Agriculture

An agriculture system approach continues to be the method to maintain and enhance the Province's agricultural land base. Policy 4.3.1.2 supports the designation of Prime Agricultural Areas within a municipality's Official Plan for long-term agricultural use. Planning authorities are encouraged to support local food production (Policy 4.3.6) to foster a robust agri-food network. Policy 4.3.2.5 permits up to two additional residential units in accordance with provincial legislation, provided that at least one of the additional residential units is located within or attached to the principal dwelling.

Non-Agricultural Uses, such as the extraction of minerals, petroleum resources and mineral aggregate resources are subject to Policies 4.3.5.1.a and 4.3.5.1.b when determining use within prime agricultural areas. Additional provincial guidance is identified to provide further direction.

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

Properties which are listed on a municipality's register and not designated are no longer required to be conserved (Policy 4.6.1). Policy 4.6.1 requires protected heritage properties to be conserved. The previous requirement in the PPS 2020 was for significant built heritage resources to be conserved. This modified language means that properties which have been listed on a municipality's heritage register but which have not been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act would no longer be required to be conserved. This change is consistent with the Province's recent changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* via Bill 23, which makes 'listing' a temporary status for a property.

Aligned with strong coordination with Indigenous Communities (Policy 6.2.2), Policy 4.6.5 requires planning authorities to engage early with Indigenous communities and ensure their interests are considered when identifying, protecting and managing *archaeological resources, built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes*.

Natural Hazards & Human-Made Hazards

Development shall be directed away from areas of natural or human-made hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health or safety. Policy 5.2.1 requires planning authorities to collaborate with conservation authorities, where they exist, to identify *hazardous lands and hazardous sites*.

Implementation and Interpretation

Official Plans and Zoning Bylaws are to be kept up to date with the PPS 2024.

Policy 6.1.5 and 6.1.6 identifies that planning tools (i.e. Official Plans and Zoning By-laws) are to be kept up to date with the PPS 2024. Monitoring the progress of the implementation of the PPS 2024 is encouraged (Policy 6.1.10), however, Policy 6.1.9 allows the Province to identify key indicators to measure the outcome, relevance and efficiency of the policies in the PPS 2024. With regards to policy interpretations, Policy 6.1.11 clarifies that *strategic growth areas* and *designated growth areas* are not land use designations. Policy 6.1.12 and 6.1.13 clarifies that density targets represent minimum standards that will be revisited at the time of each official plan update.

Co-ordination

To achieve the outcomes of the PPS 2024, municipalities are required to coordinate with key stakeholders and partners. Policy 6.2.9 outlines the new responsibilities the City of Vaughan has as a planning authority, which includes the allocation of population, housing and employment projections (Policy 6.2.9.a), identification of strategic growth areas and related minimum density targets (Policy 6.2.9.b), identification of minimum density targets (Policy 6.2.9.c), and coordination across municipal boundaries (Policy 6.2.9.d).

Policy 6.2.2 to 6.2.8 identify the level to which municipalities are to coordinate with key stakeholders. Municipalities are required to coordinate with:

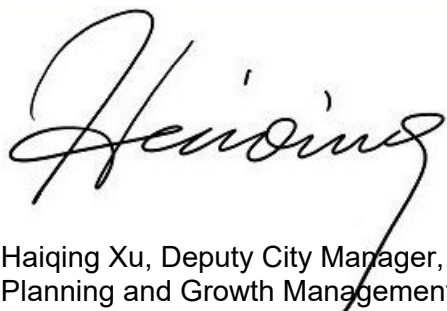
- Indigenous Communities (Policy 6.2.2),
- The public and stakeholders (Policy 6.2.3),
- School boards (Policy 6.2.4), and
- Publicly-assisted post-secondary institutions to plan for student housing and development of a student housing strategy (Policy 6.2.5 and 6.2.6)

1. Conclusion

The policies of the PPS 2024 will come into effect on October 20, 2024 and following this date, 'all planning decisions shall be consistent with the policies of the new PPS 2024.' The City of Vaughan is currently undergoing an Official Plan Review which will consider necessary policy modifications to be consistent with the PPS 2024.

Should you have any questions regarding this Communication, please contact Christina Bruce, Director, Policy Planning & Special Programs at 905-832-8585, extension 8231

Respectfully,



Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager,
Planning and Growth Management