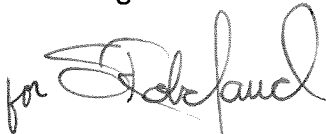


Hamilton

INFORMATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	May 17, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	A Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Jason Thorne General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

The purpose of this Information Update is to provide an overview of high level changes and new policy directions in A Place to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, released on May 2, 2019, which will come into effect on May 16, 2019. A more detailed staff report on these changes will be presented to Planning Committee in June, 2019.

A Place to Grow (“Growth Plan, 2019”) replaces the Growth Plan, 2017, known as Places to Grow.

In January, 2019, the Province released a draft Amendment No. 1 to the Growth Plan, 2017 for comment. The City provided comments to the Province on the draft Amendment No. 1 in advance of the commenting deadline. Many of the changes which were proposed through Amendment No. 1 have been carried forward into the new Growth Plan, 2019.

The primary areas of change are summarized below:

1. Residential Intensification Target

The residential intensification target is a measure of the number of residential units constructed annually within the delineated built-up area (the developed urban area). This target is measured as a percentage of the total units constructed each year. In the first Places to Grow Plan released in 2006, this target was 40%, meaning that 40% of residential units had to be constructed within the built-up area each year. This target is currently incorporated into the City’s Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP). There has

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been significant variation in this target since the first Growth Plan was adopted in 2006. The chart below summarizes the change to this target in the 2006 and 2017 Growth Plans, draft Amendment No. 1, the City’s comments on Amendment No. 1, and the new Growth Plan, 2019:

Time Period	2006 Growth Plan	2017 Growth Plan	Draft Amendment No. 1	Council Request - Amendment No 1 Comments	2019 Growth Plan
2021 - 2031	40%	50%	60%	50%	50%
2031 - 2041	N/A	60%	60%	60%	50%

As noted, the 2017 Growth Plan had introduced a gradual increase to the target from 50% to 60% over the planning period. Draft Amendment No. 1 had increased this target to 60% for the entirety of the planning period, while the City’s comments on Amendment No. 1 had requested that the graduated target increase be maintained. In the 2019 Growth Plan, the target has been reduced to 50% for the entirety of the planning period.

Overall the change from the 2017 Growth Plan to the 2019 Growth Plan is a decrease in the intensification target for the latter half of the planning period (2031 to 2041) from 60% down to 50%. In terms of actual numbers, this change would result in a requirement for approximately 3,800 fewer units to be constructed within the built-up area between 2031 and 2041.

2. Designated Greenfield Area Density Target

The Designated Greenfield Area (DGA) is the land within the City’s urban boundary that is not within the delineated built-up area. Generally these areas are undeveloped lands which are identified to accommodate a significant portion of future growth. The DGA can be broken down into the lands that are already within the City’s urban area (“Existing DGA”) versus lands that may be added to the urban area through a future urban boundary expansion (“New DGA”). Currently, the City’s UHOP plans for a density target of 50 person and jobs per hectare (pjh) across the entirety of the DGA, which was the target in the 2006 Growth Plan. The 2017 Growth Plan introduced separate minimum density targets for the City’s Existing vs New DGA, which has since been removed in the 2019 Growth Plan. The changes are summarized below:

DGA Location	2006 Growth Plan*	2017 Growth Plan	Draft Amendment No. 1	Council Request - Amendment No 1 Comments	2019 Growth Plan
“Existing DGA”	50 pjh	60 pjh	60 pjh	60 pjh	50 pjh
“New DGA”	50 pjh	80 pjh	60 pjh	80 pjh	50 pjh

* Note: 2006 Growth Plan measured this target against the entirety of the DGA, including employment lands. In 2017 and 2019 Growth Plans, employment lands are not included (see below).

As noted above, draft Amendment No. 1 had proposed a lower DGA target for New DGA to 60 pjh from the 80 pjh which had been in the 2017 Growth Plan. Council's comments on Amendment No. 1 had requested the target to remain at 80 pjh for New DGA. The 2019 Growth Plan has lowered the minimum density target further for both the Existing and New DGA, and applies one target to the entirety of the DGA.

While the 2019 Growth Plan has returned the DGA density target to 50 pjh (consistent with the 2006 Growth Plan), the lands across which this target is measured have changed. The 2006 Growth Plan applied the DGA density target to all DGA lands, including lands designated employment, and only excluded natural heritage features from the calculation. The 2017 Growth Plan revised this measure by removing employment lands from the DGA density target calculation, and this has been maintained in the 2019 Growth Plan. Employment lands are traditionally developed at lower densities than non-employment DGA lands.

3. Settlement Area Boundary Expansion

The changes to the settlement area boundary expansion policies were previously introduced through Amendment No. 1, and have been carried forward to the Growth Plan, 2019.

The key changes allow for urban boundary expansion / adjustment to occur in advance of the completion of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), approximately 2022, on the following basis:

- Urban boundary expansion, to a maximum of 40 ha, subject to criteria; and,
- Urban boundary adjustment provided there is no net increase of land within the settlement area.

Both the 2006 and the 2017 Growth Plans had only permitted an urban boundary expansion to occur as part of the MCR. The rationale for this restriction was to ensure that any expansion of the urban boundary was fully considered in a comprehensive process which holistically evaluated the City's land need to the planning horizon and made informed recommendation on preferred growth areas.

It is important to note that the policies would allow the boundary expansion to be privately-initiated, and further, the policies would allow for multiple expansions, each to a maximum area of 40 ha, prior to the MCR.

4. Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs) and Employment Land Conversion

Significant changes have been made regarding employment area policies, previously introduced through Amendment No. 1, and carried forward into the Growth Plan, 2019 with some modifications.

A key policy change allows for the conversion of some employment lands to non-employment designations outside of the MCR process, whereas the 2006 and 2017 Growth Plans had only permitted employment land conversion to occur as part of the MCR. The new policy allows for conversion of employment lands to occur in advance of the completion of the MCR (approximately 2022) provided that the lands to be converted meet certain criteria, maintain a significant number of jobs (established through development criteria), and are not located within a Provincially Significant Employment Zone. The policy permits the employment land conversion in advance of the MCR to be privately-initiated.

The concept of Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs) has been added to the Growth Plan, 2019. PSEZs are areas defined by the Province for the purpose of long term planning for job creation and economic development. Lands within PSEZs are protected from conversion to a non-employment designation in advance of the MCR. Within Hamilton, three areas have been identified as PSEZs:

- Red Hill North and South Business Parks;
- Hamilton Airport Employment Growth District; and,
- Hamilton Bayfront and employment lands along the QEW.

The draft mapping released as part of Amendment No. 1 had identified these three areas as PSEZs, but the mapping of the areas did not match the City's Official Plan mapping. This discrepancy has been corrected with the release of revised mapping with the Growth Plan, 2019. The City's remaining business parks have not been identified as PSEZs.

5. Climate Change

The Growth Plan, 2019 has carried forward changes in language and policy direction regarding climate change that were first proposed as part of Amendment No. 1. The Growth Plan, 2019 removes references to the following:

- Previous greenhouse gas emission reduction targets which had been a part of the Ontario Climate Change Strategy. The Plan instead references a target of a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030.
- The long term goal of net-zero, low carbon communities, replaced with a goal of environmentally sustainable communities.

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- The former Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and the Climate Change Action Plan, 2016.

6. Municipal Comprehensive Review Process Changes

As had been noted in the staff report on Amendment No. 1, certain policy changes which have been carried forward into the Growth Plan, 2019 will have the impact of creating a simpler and more flexible process for municipalities to follow in completing the MCR. The changes include:

- Removal of the requirement to complete an Employment Strategy;
- Removal of the requirement to complete a Housing Strategy;
- Added flexibility in applying for alternative targets (eg. intensification and density targets) and reduced number of criteria that must be met to justify an alternative target; and,
- Flexibility in the requirement to complete watershed planning as part of the review of future expansion areas while maintaining the requirement to protect the water resource system.

A more detailed report will be brought forward to a future Planning Committee meeting.

If you require further information on the Growth Plan, 2019 or the GRIDS 2 / Municipal Comprehensive Review process, please contact Heather Travis, Senior Project Manager at ext. 4168 or by email at heather.travis@hamilton.ca.