

City of Mississauga

Corporate Report



Date: July 3, 2020

To: Chair and Members of Planning and Development Committee

From: Andrew Whittemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building

Originator's files:
LA.07.PRO

Meeting date:
July 27, 2020

Subject

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 and Land Needs Assessment Methodology

Recommendation

1. That the report titled "*Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 and Land Needs Assessment Methodology*" from the Commissioner of Planning and Building, dated July 3, 2020, be received.
2. That Council endorse positions and recommendations contained in this report.
3. That the City Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Report Highlights

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has proposed Amendment 1 to *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019* (Growth Plan) and an update to its Land Needs Assessment Methodology. This report highlights key changes proposed and provides comments to the Province for Council's endorsement.
- Key changes proposed to the Growth Plan include: updated growth forecasts, an extended planning horizon to 2051 and increased opportunities to convert provincially significant employment zones in major transit station areas. Proposed changes to the Land Needs Assessment Methodology simplify the process to determine the amount of greenfield lands needed to support forecasted growth.
- The proposed changes reinforce past provincial policy directions that seek to increase housing and land supply, particularly in greenfield areas.

Background

On June 16, 2020, the Province released Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan ([ERO 019-1680](#)) and an updated Land Needs Assessment Methodology ([ERO 019-1679](#)) to assess the quantity of land needed to accommodate forecasted growth.

The proposed amendment builds on changes made to the Growth Plan in 2019, and works with other recent changes to Ontario's land use planning system – including changes to the *Planning Act* through Bill 108, *More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* (partially proclaimed) and the updated *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020* (PPS). The proposed changes reinforce past provincial policy directions that seek to increase housing and land supply, particularly in greenfield areas.

This report highlights the key changes proposed that are of particular significance to Mississauga, identifies major implications for the City and provides staff recommendations to the Province. Council is being asked to endorse all comments contained in this report.

Comments

1. Updated Growth Forecasts and an Extended Planning Horizon

Provincial Proposal

Proposed Amendment 1 updates growth forecasts and extends the planning horizon for the Growth Plan from 2041 to 2051. To assist municipalities currently conducting their Municipal Comprehensive Reviews, the Province has maintained the same growth forecasts to the year 2041 and proposed three growth scenarios (Low, Reference, and High) between 2041 and 2051. The Province will select one of these scenarios based on feedback received.

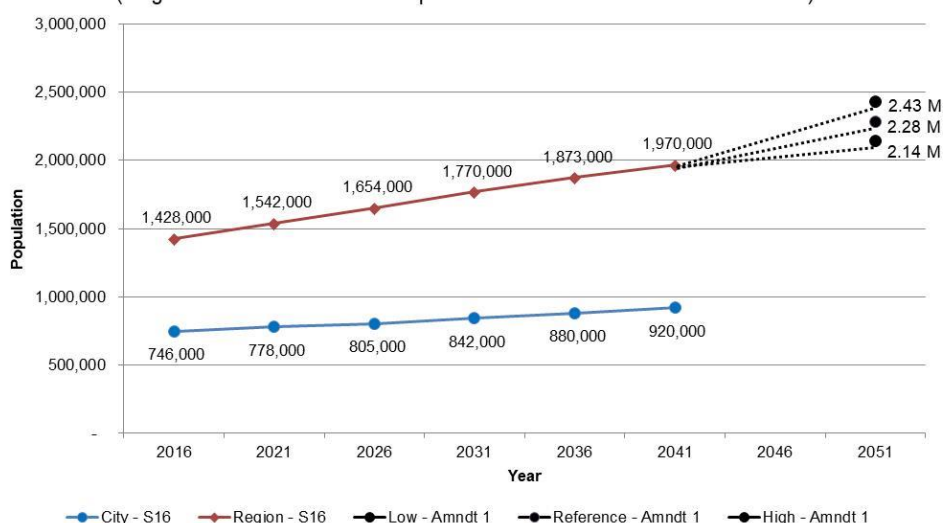
The Growth Plan's current growth forecasts anticipate that by 2041 Peel will be home to 1.97M people and provide 970,000 jobs. The proposed forecasts in Amendment 1 estimate that by 2051 Peel will reach a population of between 2.14M and 2.43M. By 2051 employment is projected to increase to between 1M and 1.14M. See charts on following page.

The final forecast selected for Peel would then be applied as a minimum, as the proposed policies allow municipalities to develop their own higher growth forecasts through the Municipal Comprehensive Review process. The proposed policies do not place any limits on a municipality in terms of how much they can exceed the provincial forecasts, nor do they explain if the forecasts can be adjusted.

Municipalities would be required to plan to the new 2051 planning horizon and incorporate the forecasts prior to the July 1, 2022 Growth Plan conformity deadline.

Population Growth Comparisons for the Region of Peel and City of Mississauga

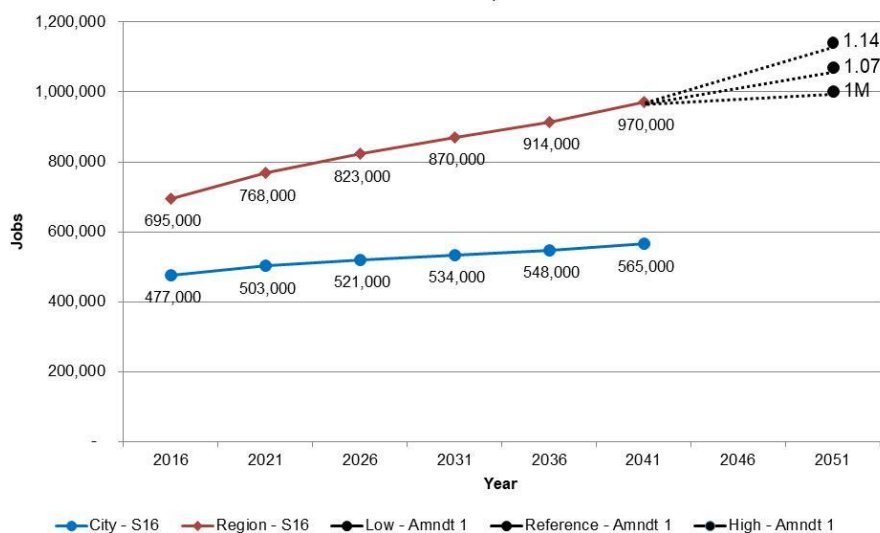
(Region's Scenario 16 and Proposed Amendment 1 Growth Scenarios)



Note: Dotted lines are for illustrative purposes and to demonstrate the trajectory of forecasted population growth for each growth scenario from the year 2041 to the year 2051. Figures for the City and Region's Scenario 16 growth forecasts are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Employment Growth Comparisons for the Region of Peel and City of Mississauga

(Region's Scenario 16 and Proposed Amendment 1 Growth Scenarios)



Note: Dotted lines are for illustrative purposes and to demonstrate the trajectory of forecasted population growth for each growth scenario from the year 2041 to the year 2051. Figures for the City and Region's Scenario 16 growth forecasts are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Impact to Mississauga

Peel Region has spent years preparing for its Municipal Comprehensive Review and developed all of its current analysis in line with the Growth Plan's 2041 planning horizon. The introduction of new forecasts and an extended planning horizon well into this review process will require agreement over new allocations between the three area municipalities in a short time frame. Additionally, the growth assumptions underpinning these new forecasts will likely need to be re-tested across the entire planning horizon (not just the additional 10 years). For example, the proposed forecasts assume three quarters of housing in Peel will be ground related out to 2041 and 2051; while the Region's current forecasts assume two thirds will be ground related to 2041. These types of misalignments would likely result in all growth assumptions needing to be assessed.

The proposal to treat provincial growth forecasts as minimums, and allowing municipalities to develop forecasts above the minimums is also a concern to staff. This proposal could further complicate regional allocation processes as landowners may advocate for higher numbers and municipalities may need to undertake additional analysis to rationalize the province's own targets.

The extended forecast period will also have implications for future servicing and financing studies. Once the allocations are set, Staff will have to identify and cost the additional infrastructure required to service the added population and employment, particularly for road and water/wastewater services (at the Region). This could delay planned development charges updates and other studies.

Staff are also concerned that this policy could risk an over designation of greenfield land in municipalities that are eager to expand settlement areas without the corresponding demographic need. This could lead to more costly and fragmented growth across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Comment to the Ministry:

- *Given most municipalities have planned to a 2041 horizon, staff request that the new 2051 planning horizon be introduced as part of the next Municipal Comprehensive Review process. This will allow for ample time for municipalities to allocate growth from 2041 to 2051 and determine the optimal locations to direct this additional growth.*
- *Staff recommend that the Province adopt either the reference scenario or the low scenario for the Region of Peel. The Region's approved growth forecasts align most with the growth trajectory of the low and reference growth scenarios suggested in Proposed Amendment 1.*

- *Staff further suggest that the Province not treat its growth forecasts as minimums. These forecasts provide certainty for the City's land-use and infrastructure planning processes and allows for more accurate projection of Development Charges. Treating these growth forecasts as minimums risks the over consumption of greenfield land leading to disjointed growth and increased servicing obligations. If the minimums are maintained, it is recommended that guidelines be provided on when municipalities may consider forecasting above the minimums and by how much.*

2. Land Needs Assessment Methodology

Provincial Proposal

In 2018, the Province issued a comprehensive and standardized methodology for municipalities to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth. The newly proposed Land Needs Assessment Methodology would replace the existing methodology. It provides a high level, flexible and simplified approach that directs municipalities to plan for a sufficient and appropriate mix of land to meet housing needs (with a focus on market housing), employment needs, infrastructure needs and complete communities. Municipalities can determine how to undertake this planning work, and when these objectives are satisfied.

The proposed methodology does not preclude municipalities from considering alternative assumptions about population and employment growth to 2051. These assumptions could be used to establish higher density targets. The inclusion of lower density targets than those required in the Growth Plan would still require Minister's approval.

Impact to Mississauga

The proposed methodology is not expected to directly impact Mississauga; however, it could impact the process and amount of greenfield land released in Peel through expansions to the settlement area boundary. Any excess supply of greenfield land could lead to more fragmented and costly development.

The City of Mississauga should continue to advocate for a Regional approach to growth management that seeks to maximize intensification opportunities and proactively plans to reduce consumption of greenfield land (e.g. testing growth scenarios with higher density and intensification targets).

Comment to the Ministry:

- *The Province has a comprehensive methodology in place that brings a consistent and transparent approach to calculating land needs across the Greater Golden Horseshoe. It is suggested the Province maintain this existing methodology and not replace it with*

the proposed methodology that provides less certainty and guidance for identifying land needs and defining settlement areas expansions.

- *If changes are made to the methodology, the Province should consult further with municipalities and stakeholders to ensure this process incorporates prior agreed practices that provide clear direction for land requirements. Staff also suggest that more guidance be provided on what growth assumptions are reasonable to test (e.g. particularly around market housing), and also how to prioritize intensification and the optimization of existing infrastructure.*
- *Given the planning horizon has been extended by a decade, the methodology could also consider requirements to undertake phased land release to ensure greenfield areas evolve as complete communities and municipalities can avoid extending municipal services to multiple subdivisions concurrently.*

3. Major Transit Station Areas in Provincially Significant Employment Zones

Provincial Proposal

The Province amended the Growth Plan in 2019 to enable municipalities a small window to convert lands within employment areas to non-employment uses prior to the next Municipal Comprehensive Review in 2022, so long as lands were not located within a Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ)¹. All lands located within PSEZs continued to require provincial approval for conversion through the Municipal Comprehensive Review process.

The proposed amendment modifies this policy, enabling municipalities to convert any employment areas within major transit station areas (MTSAs) outside of a Municipal Comprehensive Review process; irrespective of it being in a PSEZ or not.

Clarity is required on whether this policy would apply to this earlier window, or if moving forward all conversions of PSEZ lands in MTSA could take place outside of the Municipal Comprehensive Review process.

Impact to Mississauga

Given the proposed policy only applies to municipally initiated conversions; its impacts are expected to be minimal. However, the proposed policy could put pressure on councils to initiate studies that would facilitate employment lands conversions within MTSAs.

¹ Approximately 97% of Mississauga's employment lands are located within PSEZs

The proposed policy could offer the City greater flexibility and allow for advanced conversions of employment areas that have been the subject of Council approved studies (e.g. Dundas Connects and potentially Clarkson in the future).

MTSA boundaries are still being defined in Mississauga, but it is anticipated that 28 of the City's MTSA's include PSEZ lands. It will be important that these areas are well managed, their economic functions are protected and speculative activity is minimized.

Comment to the Ministry:

- *City staff support that any conversions must be municipally initiated. It is suggested further clarity be provided on the timing of when this policy would apply (e.g. pre or post the Municipal Comprehensive Review in 2022).*
- *In line with the policies of the new PPS, it is suggested that the Province include additional policies in the Growth Plan that consider land use compatibility and incorporating high density employment as part of the employment land use conversion criteria.*

4. Mineral Aggregate Operations:

Provincial Proposal

Proposed Amendment 1 would remove the prohibition on new mineral aggregate operations, wayside pits, and quarries from habitats of endangered species and threatened species within the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan. This change will not impact the Greenbelt.

Impact on Mississauga

The impact of the proposed aggregate policy changes will likely be minimal in Mississauga. The City has only one licenced quarry and given the City's density and high land values it is unlikely that any new aggregate operations will establish themselves in Mississauga. However, across the Greater Golden Horseshoe the policy could lead to reduced efforts to retain and recover species under risk of decline or extinction as it would further compromise their habitat.

Comment to the Ministry:

- *Removing protections for species at risk to accommodate growth could impede the efforts to retain and recover species that are already impacted by the effects of habitat loss and degradation caused by humans and development. City staff encourage the Province to prioritize recovery of species at risk.*

5. Alignment with Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS):

Provincial Proposal

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing released an updated PPS for planning matters on May 1, 2020. The PPS provides overall planning policy direction on matters of provincial interest. Any council decision on a planning matter, including development applications, must be consistent with the PPS. The PPS is also a policy document considered at Local Planning Appeal Tribunal hearings. The Growth Plan is proposed to be amended to align with the PPS 2020 in the following items:

- Indigenous Communities Engagement: Require planning authorities to engage and co-ordinate on planning matters with Indigenous communities and to provide the necessary information to ensure the informed involvement of these communities. As in the PPS, 2020, the updated policies are strengthening the previous one that only encouraged municipalities to engage and co-ordinate planning matters with Indigenous communities.
- Changes to definitions for the following five terms to align with the PPS, 2020: Cultural Heritage Landscape, Ecological Function, Habitat of Endangered Species and Threatened Species, Impacts of a Changing Climate, and On-farm Diversified Use. In addition, the definitions for Municipal Water and Wastewater Systems and Public Service Facilities have also been updated.
- Housekeeping Changes to reflect the new PPS approved in 2020, including references to the PPS, the change to a 25 year planning horizon and a reference to the Policy Statement: Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans.

Impact to Mississauga

Staff support the proposed updates that strengthen the language for Indigenous engagement. The proposed policies align to Mississauga's ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities on land use planning, cultural heritage and archaeological matters.

The changes to definitions and housekeeping changes are to align the Growth Plan with the PPS and other Provincial legislation. There are no anticipated impacts to Mississauga.

Comment to the Ministry:

- *Staff have no comments on this proposal.*

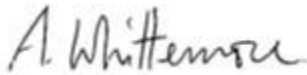
Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts resulting from the recommendations in this report.

Conclusion

The Growth Plan is a critically important document with direct implications to the City of Mississauga. Staff are appreciative for the opportunity to comment on proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan and the updated Land Needs Assessment Methodology.

While staff support for the Province's efforts to bring more housing to market, there remain concerns that the proposed changes could result in over designation of greenfield lands leading to more costly and fragmented development. Staff are also concerned that the changes will impact the City's ability to achieve current Municipal Comprehensive Review timelines (e.g. to be completed by 2022) and consider that the amendment regarding the 2051 forecast should be enacted for the next Municipal Comprehensive Review.



Andrew Whitemore, M.U.R.P., Commissioner of Planning & Building

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