

# City of Mississauga

# Corporate Report



Date: September 4, 2020

To: Chair and Members of General Committee

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

Originator's files:  
LA.07.PRO

Meeting date:  
September 23, 2020

## Subject

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

## Recommendation

That the report titled "*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 September 4, 2020, be received.

## Report Highlights

- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has adopted Amendment 1 to *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019* (Growth Plan) and updated its Land Needs Assessment Methodology. This report highlights key changes proposed and impacts for the City of Mississauga.
- Key changes proposed to the Growth Plan include: updated growth forecasts which are now treated as minimums, an extended planning horizon to 2051 and increased opportunities to convert Provincially Significant Employment Zones in Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). 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 proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan and an updated Land Needs Assessment Methodology to assess the quantity of land needed to

accommodate forecasted growth. Staff prepared a [Corporate Report](#) and comments to the Province for the July 27, 2020, Planning and Development Committee meeting.

On August 28, 2020, the Province formally amended the Growth Plan to include all but one of the proposed policies. Specifically, the Province rolled back a policy that would have permitted aggregate operations in habitats of endangered and threatened species. This report highlights the new policies that are of particular significance to Mississauga and identifies major implications for the City.

## Comments

### 1. Updated Growth Forecasts and an Extended Planning Horizon

#### Provincial Policy

Amendment 1 extends the planning horizon for the Growth Plan from 2041 to 2051, and provides new forecasts for this 10 year period.

The Province initially released three growth scenarios for 2041 to 2051 for feedback (Low, Reference and High). The Province has now adopted the “Reference” growth scenario for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The forecasts to 2041 anticipate Peel will be home to 1.97M people and provide 970,000 jobs. The new forecasts estimate that by 2051 Peel will add a further 310,000 residents and reach a population of 2.28M; and add 100,000 jobs to employ 1.07M people.

New policies allow these forecasts to be applied as minimums, with municipalities permitted to develop their own higher growth forecasts through the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process. The policies do not place any limits on a municipality in terms of how much they can exceed the provincial forecasts, nor do they explain how the forecasts can be adjusted.

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

#### Impact to Mississauga

Mississauga currently has a growth allocation of 920,000 residents to 2041; staff anticipate that this number will increase to approximately one million residents at 2051. The Region has advised that the final growth allocations are tracking to Regional Council for approval in December 2020. City staff are part of several working committees with Regional Staff and will report to Council on the progress of future negotiations.

There are several key questions Regional Council will need to consider for the new allocation.  
*What percentage of new growth will be in intensification areas?*

We anticipate Regional staff will prepare several scenarios for local staff and Council consideration. The range will likely be between the current Growth Plan minimum of 50% intensification and previous Growth Plan long-term target of 60%. Approximately half of the Region's new housing growth has been infill over the last three years, much higher than historic levels.

*What share of future intensification growth will be in Mississauga?*

Consistent with prior allocation exercises, Mississauga will likely accommodate a majority Regional growth within intensification areas. Mississauga has a strong planning framework in place (e.g. major nodes, community nodes, corridors, intensification areas) and has been undertaking detailed planning for many areas throughout the city (e.g. Dundas Connects, Ninth Line, Re-imagine the Mall etc.). These efforts will enable the City to absorb any portion of additional growth within the contemplated range with limited policy adjustments. Any proposed changes will be considered through the City current official plan update.

In an intensification focused city like Mississauga, the market will ultimately determine how many units will be absorbed. i.e. The number of housing units approved through planning applications each year is well in excess of the number of building permits issued.

*Should an alternative higher 2051 target be considered?*

We do not expect this will be considered in Peel. Higher targets would need to be justified and would likely lead to more greenfield land designations.

## **2. Land Needs Assessment Methodology**

### Provincial Policy

In 2018, the Province issued a comprehensive and standardized methodology for municipalities to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth.

The new Land Needs Assessment Methodology replaces this methodology. It provides a flexible 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. The new methodology does not allow for staged land release. Municipalities can determine how to undertake this planning work, and when these objectives are satisfied.

The 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 methodology is not expected to directly impact Mississauga; however, it impacts the amount of greenfield land released in Peel through expansions to the settlement area boundary. This will also have an effect on the long term costs of providing Regional services.

#### *What should be the planned density of greenfield growth?*

As Brampton's remaining greenfield land will be fully developed during the forecast period, several thousand hectares of developable land in Caledon will need to be incorporated into the settlement boundary area. This is where the extension of the planning horizon from 2041 to 2051 will be particularly pronounced. The planned density of development will impact the amount of land required for development and the cost of servicing. Development proposed in the Ninth Line area is over 80 people and jobs per hectare, and Mayfield West Stage Two Phase Two at over 70 people and jobs per hectare. This illustrates that greenfield growth can occur well beyond the provincial minimum of 50. Some landowners may argue that the market would prefer subdivisions with densities below 70 people per hectare. Planned density is likely to be a key issue in the fiscal impact analysis and broader MCR discussion.

#### *Settlement boundary expansion lands need to be released concurrently*

The new methodology also limits the ability to stage land release, so all lands to support growth to 2051 will be released once the Region updates its Official Plan (i.e. approximately 2022). In Caledon, it is likely that several thousand hectares of lands. Staff expect this change in methodology will shift the focus to servicing, particularly water and wastewater. The Province mandates a three year supply of serviced residential units, but with more lands having development permissions simultaneously, there may be more pressure to expand infrastructure.

### **3. Major Transit Station Areas in Provincially Significant Employment Zones**

#### Provincial Policy

Previously, municipalities had 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)<sup>1</sup>.

The new policy framework now extends this window to allow conversion of PSEZ lands that are also located within major transit station areas (MTSAs).

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

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

An advantage of the policy is that it offers the City greater flexibility to move ahead with the conversion of employment areas that have been the subject of Council approved studies (e.g. Dundas Connects and potentially Clarkson GO area in the future).

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

## **4. Mineral Aggregate Operations:**

### Provincial Policy

The Province originally proposed to 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 (outside of the greenbelt). The final policies do not include this change.

### Impact on Mississauga

Staff support the Province's decision to maintain the protection of the habitats for endangered and threatened species within the Natural Heritage System.

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<sup>1</sup> Approximately 97% of Mississauga's employment lands are located within PSEZs

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

### Provincial Policy

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 to strengthen requirements to engage Indigenous communities, as well as better align definitions and planning horizons between the two policy documents.

### 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.


Staff support all the house-keeping changes made to better align the two policy documents. There are no anticipated impacts to Mississauga.

## Financial Impact

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

## Conclusion

While staff support for the Province's efforts to bring more housing to market, there remain concerns that the changes could result in over designation of greenfield lands leading to more costly and fragmented development. Efforts to update the growth forecasts will also need to be prioritized in order to achieve current Municipal Comprehensive Review timelines (e.g. to be completed by 2022). The planned density and location of future greenfield growth and the corresponding servicing costs will be a key consideration.



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