



## Growth Plan (2019) and Municipal Comprehensive Review / Conformity Exercise Requirements Report

**Date:** September 30, 2019

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

**From:** Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

---

On May 16, 2019, the Province brought into effect **A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 ("Growth Plan (2019)")**, for which all planning matters are required to conform. This new Growth Plan replaces the previous Growth Plan (2017). The *Places to Grow Act, 2005* requires that official plans must be amended to conform to the Growth Plan by a specified time period. In 2017, the Minister of Municipal Affairs directed that by July 1, 2022 official plans be brought into conformity with the previous Growth Plan (2017). With the release of the new plan in May 2019, a new conformity date was not set. It is staff's understanding that the City's Official Plan must be brought into conformity by July 1, 2022.

This report highlights the policy areas contained within the Growth Plan (2019) that will be addressed through a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). Staff will report in the first quarter of 2020 to the Planning and Housing Committee on a detailed work program, resources and the associated timing for completion of the next MCR.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. Planning and Housing Committee request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to report in the first quarter of 2020 to the Planning and Housing Committee on a work program and associated timing for the completion of the required Growth Plan conformity exercise.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

---

The recommendation in this report has no financial impact.

## DECISION HISTORY

---

On January 15, 2019, the Province released Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan (2017). At its meeting of February 26, 2019, City Council adopted a number of requested revisions to the draft Growth Plan (2019). These comments were forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for consideration. The Decision History can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH2.4>.

The first MCR was adopted by Council through Official Plan Amendment 231 (OPA 231) in 2013 and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2014.

Significant portions of OPA 231 have been approved including policies pertaining to the land use designations and mapping and multiple citywide and site specific settlements. Key portions of OPA 231 that remain before LPAT, include citywide policies related to the conversion of *Employment Areas*, retail and office replacement. There are approximately 80 site specific appeals to OPA 231. Council's decision on OPA 231 can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PG28.2>.

The conversion / forecasting phase of the hearing is currently being held, while the retail phase is scheduled for nine days in May 2020. The LPAT is continuing its mediation on both the office replacement and retail phases. The outcome of the LPAT decision will be informative to the City's work on the upcoming MCR

## COMMENTS

---

The Growth Plan (2019) defines a municipal comprehensive review as, "A new official plan, or an official plan amendment, initiated by an upper- or single-tier municipality under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* that comprehensively applies the policies and schedules of this Plan." The Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) is also known as the conformity exercise that all municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe area are to conduct as required by Provincial legislation.

This report describes the following four major Growth Plan (2019) policy matters that are required to be addressed through the conformity exercise for the City:

1. Managing forecasted growth through intensification;
2. Protecting employment lands;
3. Considering requests to convert employment lands; and
4. Developing environmental policies.

A report in the first quarter of 2020 will outline a detailed work program and associated timing to achieve conformity with the Growth Plan (2019). This subsequent report will also describe the citywide engagement process that will be undertaken to ensure that Torontonians, businesses, and other stakeholders are consulted throughout the conformity exercise.

## 1. Managing forecasted growth through intensification

The Growth Plan (2019) sets out the requirement for municipalities to develop an intensification strategy to achieve minimum intensification targets that are both set out in the Growth Plan (2019) or that will be determined through the MCR. This intensification strategy will be informed by the required Lands Needs Assessment, which is intended to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to the 2041 horizon of the Growth Plan (2019). The Q1 2020 report will describe in greater detail the necessary components to the Lands Needs Assessment.

### *Minimum Density Targets set out in the Growth Plan (2019)*

The Growth Plan (2019) sets out minimum density targets for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and Urban Growth Centres (UGCs). MTSAs are the lands around transit stations generally defined as the areas within an approximate 500-800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk. Through the MCR, the City is required to delineate the 160+ MTSAs within the City and to demonstrate that each MTSA is planned to meet the prescribed minimum density targets (200 residents and jobs per hectare for subways; 160 residents and jobs per hectare for light rail transit; and 150 residents and jobs for GO Transit rail). The Minister may approve the use of lower density targets for particular MTSAs where it can be demonstrated that the target cannot be achieved because development is prohibited by provincial policy or severely restricted on a significant portion of the affected lands (i.e., floodplains), or there are a limited number of residents and jobs associated with the built form, but a major trip generator or feeder service will sustain high ridership at the station or stop.

Given the number of potential MTSAs, the Q1 2020 work program report will provide prioritization criteria for Council's consideration, which will outline an orderly approach to completing the necessary work to achieve conformity with the Growth Plan (2019). This Q1 2020 report will also outline potential MTSAs that may be delineated in advance of the MCR's completion that are identified in the *Planning Act* as "Protected Major Transit Station Areas" or PMTSAs. The Growth Plan (2019) allows municipalities to delineate these PMTSAs in advance of the next MCR, provided that a very detailed implementation framework is brought into effect in accordance with Section 16(15) of the *Planning Act*. Such a framework must identify the number of residents and jobs per hectare, permitted uses and minimum densities with respect to buildings and structures in the area.

Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) are defined as, "existing or emerging downtown areas shown in Schedule 4 and as further identified by the Minister on April 2, 2008." Currently, there are five UGCs identified: Etobicoke Centre, Downtown Toronto, Yonge-Eglinton Centre, North York Centre, and Scarborough Centre, each of which has a Council-adopted Secondary Plan in place. UGCs in Toronto are required to be planned to achieve 400 residents and jobs per hectare. The subsequent report will outline any required updates to the in-force Secondary Plans that have not already gone through a review exercise.

### *Minimum Density Targets to be determined through the next MCR*

The Growth Plan (2019) requires municipalities to delineate strategic growth areas and the delineated built-up areas within the City. Strategic growth areas (SGAs) are

generally defined as areas to be the focus for accommodating intensification and higher-density mixed uses in a more compact built form, which may include UGCs, MTSAs and other major opportunities that may include infill. The MCR may also identify lands along major roads or other areas with existing or planned frequent transit as potential SGAs.

The Growth Plan (2019) defines the delineated built-up areas as the limits of the developed urban area for the purpose of measuring minimum intensification targets. Toronto is the only Greater Golden Horseshoe municipality that is fully within the delineated built-up area and does not include any Greenfield areas or substantial Greenbelt areas. The Growth Plan (2019) encourages intensification generally throughout the delineated built-up area, which will be addressed through the MCR. The Q1 2020 report will outline the citywide scope that the required intensification strategy will address, including the identification of appropriate types and scale of development in strategic growth areas and transition of built forms to adjacent areas.

## **2. Protecting employment lands**

The Growth Plan (2019) requires municipalities to plan for all *Employment Areas* by regulating permitted land uses and establishing minimum density targets.

### *Regulating permitted land uses in Employment Areas*

The Growth Plan (2019) requires that municipalities will prohibit certain land uses (residential and other sensitive land uses) within lands designated as *Employment Areas*. The MCR concluded and considered by Council in 2013 that has received partial approval from the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal addressed the permission of uses and the Q1 2020 report will outline the level of review that will be undertaken during the next MCR on these recently approved employment policies. The Growth Plan (2019) also requires municipalities to either prohibit major retail uses or to establish size or scale thresholds for these uses.

### *Minimum density targets for Employment Areas*

The Growth Plan (2019) requires that municipalities establish minimum density targets for all *Employment Areas*. These density targets will be measured in jobs per hectare and will reflect the current and anticipated type and scale of employment anticipated for a specific *Employment Area*. There are approximately 8,100 hectares of lands designated as *Employment Areas* which accounts for 16 per cent of the City and the subsequent report will describe the work necessary to accomplish the analysis needed to achieve conformity.

## **3. Considering requests to convert employment lands**

The Growth Plan (2019) introduces an approach to protecting key employment areas, through the introduction of 29 Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs), ten of which are (partially or wholly) situated in Toronto. The ten PSEZs account for approximately 5,500 hectares (67% of the total *Employment Area* land base) and would be subject to land use conversions considerations during the next MCR. Similar conversion tests that were included in the previous Growth Plan (2017) appear in the 2019 Growth Plan. The five conversion tests for PSEZs are:

- 1) there is a need for the conversion;
- 2) the lands are not required over the horizon of this Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated;
- 3) the municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan;
- 4) the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the employment area or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan; and
- 5) there are existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities to accommodate the proposed uses.

The subsequent report will identify the work necessary to accommodate the anticipated individual requests to convert these lands.

Lands not identified as PSEZs in the Growth Plan (2019) account for approximately 1,600 hectares (33% of the total *Employment Area* land base). These non-PSEZs would be subject to conversions outside of the next MCR, provided that the conversion meets specific Growth Plan (2019) tests, including the maintenance of a significant amount of jobs on the lands. Although outside of the next MCR, potential conversion requests will require a level of analysis to ensure that these tests are satisfied and in conformity with the Growth Plan (2019). The Q1 2020 report will describe the analysis necessary to review any submitted conversion requests of non-PSEZ areas.

#### **4. Developing environmental policies**

The Growth Plan (2019) requires municipalities to develop official plan policies related to conservation objectives related to: water, energy, air quality improvement, integrated waste management, and stormwater master plans. The Growth Plan (2019) also requires that municipalities develop official plan policies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals that are aligned with other provincial plans and policies for environmental protection. The Q1 2020 report will identify any technical studies required to achieve conformity, in consultation with other City Divisions.

## **Conclusions**

The conformity exercise represents a major work program item in response to the Province's release of the Growth Plan (2019). This Provincially legislated Municipal Comprehensive Review will result in a multi-year work program that will be described in greater detail in the subsequent first quarter 2020 report. The report will include anticipated timelines and resource requirements needed to achieve conformity by July 2022.

## **CONTACT**

---

Kerri A. Voumvakis, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning Division, 416-392-8148, [Kerri.Voumvakis@toronto.ca](mailto:Kerri.Voumvakis@toronto.ca)

Jeffrey Cantos, MCIP, RPP, PLE, Project Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning Division, 416-397-0244, [Jeffrey.Cantos@toronto.ca](mailto:Jeffrey.Cantos@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner and Executive Director  
City Planning Division