

## Our Plan Toronto: Update on Growth Plan Conformity and Municipal Comprehensive Review

**Date:** December 21, 2021

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

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

**Wards:** All

### SUMMARY

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The Growth Plan Conformity and Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) is provincially required and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has established July 1, 2022 as the date by which municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area must have completed their MCRs.

As reported by the Province's Auditor General in her December 2021 report, since 2017, the Province has put in place numerous changes to Growth Plan policies, which has created instability in the planning process and challenged municipalities' abilities to implement provincial policies in their local plans. In 2017, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing amended the Growth Plan and gave municipalities five years, until July 2022, to update their official plans. However, the Ministry amended the Growth Plan again in 2019 and 2020.

Despite the challenging date to meet conformity with the Growth Plan, the complexity of Toronto's MCR, and operating in a completely virtual environment, staff have continued to advance components of the MCR, including a citywide engagement program, analysis of the 140 employment land conversion requests and identifying Major Transit Station Areas city-wide. This report provides City Council with an update and describes next steps on the Growth Plan Conformity exercise and MCR, named Our Plan Toronto. It also recommends that Council request the Minister extend the date by which the City's conformity exercise is to be completed by one year to July 2023.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to exercise his legislative authority under Section 12(3) of the *Places to Grow Act* to set an alternative

timeframe of July 2023 by which the City of Toronto's Official Plan must conform with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

2. If the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing grants the extension in Recommendation 1 of the report from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, City Council direct the Chief Planner to hold a statutory public meeting under Section 26 of the *Planning Act* in the first half of 2023 to consider the Municipal Comprehensive Review.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on June 29, 2020, City Council approved the work plan for the City's required Growth Plan Conformity and Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The work plan report described the six streams of work: Managing Forecasted Growth through Intensification; Protecting Employment Lands; Considering Requests to Convert Employment Areas; Updating the Official Plan's Environmental Policies; Engagement Strategy; and other policy matters. The Decision History can be accessed at this link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH14.4>

## **COMMENTS**

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The following sections provide an update of the different streams of work identified in the approved work plan report, including a summary of next steps for each work stream.

### **1. Managing Forecasted Growth through Intensification (Intensification Strategy)**

There are over 400 Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Area, 180+ (or 44 per cent) of which will be located within the City. A major component of the intensification strategies for municipalities within the GGH is the Provincial requirement to individually delineate MTSAs and to assign minimum density targets to each. The breakdown of the MTSA shares amongst GGH municipalities are: Peel Region - 91 MTSAs; York Region - 78 MTSAs; Waterloo Region - 24 MTSAs; Hamilton - 17 MTSAs; Durham Region - 8 MTSAs; and Halton Region - 8 MTSAs.

In addition to adopting an Inclusionary Zoning policy framework, the Planning Act requires that municipalities delineate Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) and assign minimum densities per building and structure. To date, staff have brought forward draft delineations for 24 PMTSAs and 4 MTSAs for the basis of consultation

and Council has adopted 2 PMTSAs that staff submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the Minister's approval in December 2020. To date, no decision has been made by the Minister on these 2 PMTSAs (Finch West and Sentinel station areas). At this same meeting, Committee will consider the final delineations and associated policies for 16 Downtown PMTSAs and 23 draft PMTSAs along the Bloor-Danforth line. These are all being advanced in accordance with the prioritization framework set out in the work plan report.

Other components of the intensification strategy, which are underway include: the reviews of some of the Urban Growth Centres; the required Land Needs Assessment; and the optional delineation of Strategic Growth Areas. These components will incorporate the 2016 Census results as the baseline to assess the impacts of the strategy on population, households and employment. Results of the 2021 Census will be released throughout 2022 and will not be fully available until November 2022, after the bulk of the MCR analyses are completed. The 2021 Census was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and this may affect long-term trends. Initial information will be reviewed as it becomes available.

### **Next Steps**

Staff are continuing the background work on the remaining MTSA and additional PMTSAs and designing a virtual engagement program to receive input on the draft delineations and minimum density targets. To assist with capacity building on the MTSA work stream, staff and retained engagement consultants (Dillon Consulting Limited) developed an interactive engagement tool where members of the public can access information and provide their comments in a virtual format. The interactive engagement tool can be accessed at this link:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b27b774fe9f04047b14956f689a7762f>

The remaining draft MTSA and PMTSAs will be advanced to Planning and Housing Committee throughout the first half of 2022. This includes identifying the station areas that will need local area studies in order to demonstrate that there is a plan in place to meet the required minimum densities set out in the Growth Plan.

## **2. Protecting Employment Lands**

Staff have retained Hemson Consulting with Cushman & Wakefield to assist the City with the required Employment Study. This study will include the development of detailed *Employment Area* profiles that will provide current trends and area-specific data of the City's diverse *Employment Areas*. Findings from this study will help inform draft Official Plan policies and support assessment of employment lands conversion requests.

### **Next Steps**

Prior to preparing draft economic and *Employment Area* policies, staff from City Planning and Economic Development and Culture Divisions will be undertaking sector specific engagement in Q1-2022 to better understand the challenges faced by employers and the potential opportunities that can be addressed by land use policies.

### **3. Considering Requests to Convert Employment Areas**

The City received over 140 requests to convert *Employment Areas* as part of the MCR, which account for approximately 8 per cent of all the lands designated *Core Employment Areas* and *General Employment Areas* in the Official Plan. Over 100 of these requests were submitted between July 5, 2021 and August 3, 2021, after which staff have communicated that requests would not be accepted. In relation to some of these requests, some Official Plan Amendment applications have also been filed. To assist staff with the review of these conversion requests, Council introduced a new user fee for *Employment Area* conversions at its meeting on December 16, 2020, intended to provide staff resources to undertake this work. Staff recruitment for the positions funded by the new user fee is ongoing and is expected to be completed by Q1-2022.

For context, other GGH municipalities received the following number of conversion requests: York Region - 71 requests; Waterloo Region - 57 requests; Hamilton - 48 requests; Durham Region - 48 requests; Peel Region - 41 requests; and Halton Region - 40 requests.

#### **Next Steps**

Staff will be advancing "preliminary assessments" for each complete conversion request to Planning and Housing Committee in Q1-2022. Each preliminary assessment will provide a high level summary of the area and policy context and identify preliminary issues that will help structure discussions with each of the proponents. These discussions will occur after Committee's consideration of the associated preliminary assessments.

There are approximately nine conversion requests where staff have not received the necessary materials and studies to undertake the required review. Staff will bring forward a final report on these "incomplete" conversion requests recommending Council's refusal, given the lack of information for staff to adequately review the request.

### **4. Updating the Official Plan's Environmental Policies**

Staff are updating the environment and climate change policies in light of the City's declaration of a climate emergency, including TransformTO - Critical Next Steps for Net Zero by 2040 recently adopted as amended by City Council and any revisions necessary to further advance climate change mitigation, resilience and conform to the Growth Plan Climate Change policies.

#### **Next Steps**

Staff will bring forward draft environment and climate change policy amendments for Committee's consideration in late-Q1-2022. Proposed updates will build on existing policies and include identifying key hydrologic features and functions; refining policies aimed at reducing waste and promoting a Circular Economy; and ensuring that the Official Plan sets the stage for getting to Net Zero emissions. These draft policies will be used for the basis of consultation.

## **5. Engagement Strategy**

Given that the citywide engagement strategy was required to be virtual, staff retained Dillon Consulting Limited with RallyRally and Maximum City to design a graphic identity and named the project, Our Plan Toronto. Staff initiated the engagement program in May 2021 with a series of targeted stakeholder meetings that continued throughout the summer and included a video to explain the process. The video can be accessed at this link: <https://youtu.be/-3ITFf1Oea8>.

The second phase of engagement took place between September and December 2021 and included two virtual town halls hosted on October 20, 2021, four themed stakeholder meetings (Employment & Future of Work; Neighbourhoods & Complete Communities, Affordable Housing & Intensification; and Environment & Climate Change), additional stakeholder meetings, and featured the Chief Planner and Deputy Mayor Bailao on an episode of TVO's The Agenda. The episode can be accessed at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WVotHk30uY>. The Phase 2 Engagement Summary Report (Executive Summary) is found in Attachment 1.

### **Engagement with equity deserving groups**

Staff and the consultant team have initiated a Community Leaders' Coalition (CLC) comprised of representatives who are affiliated with community, advocacy, and Indigenous groups working in communities across the city. The CLC is intended to provide staff input on the challenges faced by marginalized communities within the city. To date, staff have hosted three meetings with the CLC. The organizations participating in the CLC are found in Attachment 2.

### **Indigenous engagement**

Staff and the consultant team have identified Indigenous Treaty Rights Holders and Organizations that staff will be engaging with over the course of the MCR. The focus on these engagement meetings have been centred on amplifying Indigenous voices into the engagement process, building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous groups, along with discussing ways in which Official Plan policies can achieve Reconciliation objectives. To date, staff have held five meetings with Indigenous Rights Holders and care-takers. The Treaty Rights Holders and Organizations to whom staff have reached out is found in Attachment 3.

### **Youth engagement**

Staff and the consultant team have designed an online exercise that has been distributed to Grades 7-12 teachers within Toronto's school boards. This student exercise is intended to help youth better understand climate change and identify adaption measures found within their respective communities. The online student exercise was distributed to teachers in November 2021 and can be accessed at this link: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7b2c6d77bac64c3eb713f1af6d31cbff>.

## 6. Other Policy Matters

City Planning is concurrently undertaking other citywide policy reviews, which may result in the delineation of Strategic Growth Areas or revisions to citywide policies, including, Growth Funding Tools and Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods. Any resulting policy changes may help inform, or be informed by the work plan for the Municipal Comprehensive Review.

### Next Steps

Staff and the consultant team will continue to organize and host follow-up stakeholder meetings in January 2022 as part of the second phase. Meetings with the Community Leaders' Circle and Indigenous Treaty Rights Holders and organizations will also continue to be organized and held. Upon drafting Official Plan policy amendments, staff and the consultant team will organize and hold citywide engagement events to seek input in advance of bringing forward Final Reports to Planning and Housing Committee and Council. Staff will continue to maintain and update the project webpage at this link: [www.toronto.ca/ourplan](http://www.toronto.ca/ourplan).

### Requested Extension to Conformity Date

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing amended the Growth Plan in 2017 and gave municipalities five years, until July 2022, to update their official plans. The Ministry subsequently amended the Growth Plan again in 2019 and 2020, but did not extend the conformity date. Section 12(3) of the *Places to Grow Act* allows the Minister to set an alternative conformity date. This report recommends that Council request an extension from the Minister to allow staff to deliver a Final report to Council in the first half of 2023.

The planning policies related to MTSAs, PMTSAs and the relationships to Inclusionary Zoning and other changes brought forward by the Province including legislative deadlines related to new growth funding tools and the priority given to Transit Oriented Communities and complications related to land use planning, are all relatively new and being considered at the same time. In addition, an extension would enable discussions to occur with those who made requests to convert *Employment Areas* in order to achieve better outcomes.

In addition to the legislative and policy realities described in this report, staff were required to re-design and execute a completely virtual Municipal Comprehensive Review work plan and engagement strategy resulting from public health guidance for remote work. This also included the reallocation of staff resources to address the City's COVID response.

For context, Halton Region and Durham Region submitted extension requests in February 2021 and July 2020, respectively.

More importantly, the pandemic has exacerbated and highlighted the existing disparities that Torontonians are facing, in addition to creating new challenges, some of which the Official Plan could address. The exercise of reviewing and updating the Official Plan to a 2051 horizon will require additional time, staff effort and meaningful engagement to provide a land use plan that implements the widely accepted objectives of "building

back better" for a post-COVID future, especially in consideration of building a more inclusive and climate adapted City.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Phase 2 Engagement Summary (Executive Summary)

Attachment 2: Community Leaders' Coalition

Attachment 3: Indigenous Treaty Rights Holders and Organizations - Outreach

## **Attachment 1: Phase 2 Engagement Summary (Executive Summary)**

(Provided separately)



## **Attachment 2: Community Leaders' Coalition**

The Community Leaders Circle is intended to include leaders from organizations across the city that are working with marginalized, racialized and underrepresented populations facing issues of social, cultural and economic exclusion and inequity.

- Albion Neighbourhood Services
- Black Planners and Urbanists Association
- East Scarborough Storefront/Centre for Connected Communities
- Focused, Involved, Transformed (Friends in Toronto Community Services)
- Food Share Toronto
- Friends of Ruby
- Inner City Outreach
- Jane and Finch Action Against Poverty
- Keele-Finch Area Community Improvement Project
- Mabelle Arts
- North York Women's Shelter - NYWS
- Parkdale People's Economy
- Paul Bailey
- Rexdale Community Hub
- Scadding Court Community Centre
- Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities
- Scarborough Community Renewal Organization
- Shift Happens
- South Riverdale Community Health Centre
- Stop Gap
- The 519 Community Centre
- Thorncliffe Park Women's Committee
- Toronto Centre for Community Learning and Development
- Toronto Council on Aging
- Toronto Public Library
- Toronto Youth Cabinet
- West Neighbourhood House
- West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Center
- WoodGreen Community Services
- Youth Without Shelter
- YWCA Toronto

## **Attachment 3: Indigenous Treaty Rights Holders and Organizations - Outreach**

### **Treaty Rights Holders and Caretakers**

The list below identifies the rights holders and care-takers that have been contacted for involvement in Our Plan Toronto.

- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN)
- Williams Treaty Nations:
  - Chippewas of Beausoleil First Nation
  - Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
  - Chippewas of Rama First Nation
  - Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation
  - Mississaugas of Curve Lake First Nation
  - Mississaugas of Hiawatha First Nation
  - Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Haudenosaunee Development Institute
- Huron-Wendat Nation
- Metis Nation of Ontario

### **Organizations**

The list of organizations below are those that have been contacted for involvement in Our Plan Toronto. Throughout this project the City is growing relationships and continuing to reach out to Indigenous organizations in Toronto.

- 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations
- Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee (Item AA11.4: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.AA11.4>)
- Aboriginal Housing and Support Centre
- Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
- Aboriginal Legal Services
- Anduhyau
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Association for Native Development in the Performing and Visual Arts (ANDPVA)
- ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency
- Gabriel Dumont Non - Profit Homes Inc.
- Humber College - Aboriginal Resource Centre
- Matriarchal Circle
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training (and MBDC)
- Na-Me-Res
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Native Men's Residence
- Native Women in the Arts
- Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto (NWRCT)

- Native Youth Resource Centre
- Nishnawbe Homes
- Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network
- Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
- Ryerson Aboriginal Student Services
- Shared Path
- Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council
- Toronto and York Region Métis Council
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- Toronto District School Board
- Toronto Indigenous Business Association (TIBA)
- Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction
- Toronto Inuit Association
- Urban Indigenous Education Centre - TDSB
- Wigwamen
- York University - Centre for Aboriginal Student Services