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## Report 2024-155

**Report Title:** Provincial Planning Statement 2024 Policy Update

**Committee Name:** Economic Development, Tourism and Planning

**Committee Meeting Date:** December 4, 2024

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**Approved by:** Jennifer Moore, CAO

**Council Meeting Date:** December 18, 2024

**Strategic Plan Priorities:**  Innovate for Service Excellence  
 Ignite Economic Opportunity  
 Foster a Thriving Community  
 Propel Sustainable Growth  
 Champion a Vibrant Future

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### Information Report

**That** the Economic Development, Tourism and Land Use Planning Committee receive Report 2024-155 'Provincial Planning Statement 2024 Policy Update' for information; and

**Further That** the Committee recommend that County Council receive this report for information and direct staff to send a copy of this report to each Member Municipality for informational purposes."

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### Purpose

This report highlights key changes to Provincial land use policy and summarizes how the changes could impact land use planning decisions throughout the County.

## **Background**

On October 20, 2024, the Province of Ontario released the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (PPS 2024), which intends to update and streamline the land use planning policy framework across Ontario. The PPS replaced the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan).

The PPS 2024 provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS 2024 sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land province-wide, helping achieve the provincial goal of meeting the needs related to growth and quality of life for Ontarians.

## **Consultations**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing undertook three rounds of public consultations and Indigenous engagement between October 2022 and May 2024. The sessions intended to seek input to combine housing focused policies and consolidate them into one planning document (the PPS 2024). The goals of the proposed changes focused on five priority areas:

1. Generate an appropriate housing supply;
2. Make land available for development;
3. Provide infrastructure to support development;
4. Balance housing with resources; and
5. Implementation

## **Legislative Authority / Risk Considerations**

The Provincial Planning Statement is a policy statement issued under the authority of Section 3 of the *Planning Act*. The Provincial Planning Statement applies to all decisions in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter made on or after October 20, 2024.

## **Discussion / Options**

County Planning has summarized key changes to the PPS 2024 that relate to growth and development in Northumberland as follows:

### *Planning for People and Homes – Growth Targets (Policies 2.1.1 to 2.1.3)*

The PPS 2024 no longer requires municipalities to plan for specific population and employment targets for a horizon year (e.g., 2051) in accordance with the Growth Plan. However, new municipal official plans must demonstrate that municipalities will have enough land to meet projected population and employment needs for a time horizon of between 20 to 30 years.

County Planning will continue to advance the population and employment forecasts established through the Growth Management and Land Needs Assessment Report as part of the County Official Plan Update, which forecasts at least 122,000 people and 44,000 jobs in the County by 2051.

#### *Settlement Area – Intensification Policies (Policy 2.3.1.4)*

In accordance with PPS 2024, County Planning must establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas though it does not require the continued use of the built-up area that was delineated by the Province in 2016. While the PPS 2024 still uses the term 'built-up area' the focus, now, is on growth in 'Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs)' as priority areas for intensification. Approximately 85-95% of all intensification (i.e. infill and redevelopment) occurs within SGAs and/or other priority intensification areas. This generally includes established nodes and corridors, as well as other key redevelopment sites (e.g. brownfield sites, employment area conversion sites, other redevelopment areas). Outside of these areas (which are largely established stable residential neighbourhoods), intensification opportunities are limited and mostly comprise of additional residential units (i.e., ARUs/secondary units).

When it comes to identifying intensification opportunities, we feel that the emphasis should be placed on identifying priority intensification areas, including established nodes, corridors, and other redevelopment sites within SGAs. While the delineation of these areas is unlikely to change significantly over time, if new priority areas are identified, or the configuration of established SGAs change over time, then these areas could, and should, be added to the municipality's inventory of priority intensification areas through subsequent updates. In our opinion this is the most appropriate way to prioritize, direct and monitor residential intensification for municipalities over time.

#### *New Settlement Areas and Settlement Area Expansions (Policy 2.3.2)*

The PPS 2024 allows municipalities to consider new settlement areas and settlement area boundary expansions provided that the development can demonstrate that:

- Sufficient infrastructure capacity exists;
- Urban development is progressively phased, and
- Development on prime agricultural areas is avoided.

Since the Province's release of the PPS 2024, County Planning and Member Municipal Planning Staff have received development inquiries to consider the expansion and/or creation of new settlement areas across the County. County and Member Municipal Planners are currently monitoring these inquiries and its potential impacts on the County's urban areas, and rural settlement areas.

#### *Sewage, Water and Stormwater – Rural Settlement Areas [Policy 3.6.5.c]*

The PPS 2024 includes a new sub-policy that permits partial services accommodating individual on-site water (well) services for new developments within rural settlement areas with existing municipal sewage services or private communal sewage services. This sub-policy helps support rural settlement area boundary expansions by providing flexibility to accommodate individual well water services where municipal or private communal sewage services exist to accommodate more housing.

County Planning and Member Municipal Planners will monitor development inquiries considering this policy and its potential impacts within the County's rural settlement areas.

### *Lot Creation in Designated Rural Areas [Policy 2.6.1.c]*

The PPS 2024 now permits residential development on rural lands where site conditions are suitable for the provision of appropriate sewage and water services. Settlement areas throughout Northumberland are the focus of growth and development. In accordance with growth trends for Northumberland, County Planning will continue to direct the majority of growth and development to established settlement areas, including rural hamlets.

### *Lot Creation within Prime Agricultural Areas*

In 2023, the Province proposed a new policy that would allow lot creation within designated prime agricultural areas for up to four residential lots. However, this policy did not make its way to the final version of the PPS 2024. Rather, PPS 2024 lot creation policies within agricultural areas are consistent with previous versions of the PPS that only allow residential lot creation within prime agricultural areas to one new lot per farm consolidation (i.e., residence surplus to an agricultural operation).

County Planning will continue to monitor and review development proposals within prime agricultural areas in accordance with the PPS 2024 policy requirements.

### *Additional Residential Units within Prime Agricultural Areas (Policy 4.3.2.5)*

In an attempt to increase housing supply across the Province, the PPS 2024 introduced a new sub-policy, which requires municipalities to authorize in their official plans and zoning by-laws permissions to allow up to two additional residential units where a residential dwelling is permitted on a lot in designated prime agricultural areas.

County Planning will continue to work with its Member Municipalities to ensure that future development applications to permit an accessory dwelling(s) within prime agricultural areas are located in a manner that will minimize any adverse impacts on surrounding agricultural land uses. County Planning will also continue to coordinate with County Public Works and Inspection Services to monitor and comment on additional residential units within prime agricultural areas to ensure no adverse impacts on County infrastructure, and that each dwelling is adequately serviced.

### *Other Policy Updates [Policies 2.4.1.3 e) and 3.1.5]*

The PPS 2024 expands on the definition for intensification, which now includes underutilized shopping malls and plazas. Where underutilized shopping malls and plazas exist, the Province now considers those sites as opportunities for intensification purposes to support housing. Throughout the County, some intensification of shopping malls and plazas are evident (such as the inclusion of additional commercial-retail buildings in urban areas).

The PPS 2024 also introduces policy that encourages Planning authorities and school boards to collaborate and consider innovative approaches in the design of schools and associated childcare facilities in urban areas that are municipally serviced and can accommodate compact built form. The PPS 2024 provides an example of schools integrated in an apartment building.

Where opportunities exist, County staff along with its Member Municipalities, stakeholders and local school boards will collaborate and evaluate any opportunities within existing municipally serviced urban areas to explore the (re)development/integration of residential land uses in commercial shopping malls/plazas, schools and/or childcare facilities across the County.

## **Financial Impact**

N/A

## **Member Municipality Impacts**

Municipal official plans are the most important vehicle to implement the PPS 2024 and for achieving comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning. The County Official Plan coordinates cross-boundary matters to complement the actions of other planning authorities and promote mutually beneficial outcomes. The ongoing County Official Plan update, prepared in consultation with member municipalities will include a policy framework that is consistent with PPS 2024 requirements. Member municipal official plans will also need to be updated with the new PPS 2024 requirements.

## **Conclusion / Outcomes**

The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 (PPS 2024) is an Ontario-wide land use policy document that replaces and combines the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan. The PPS 2024 provides updated land use policies focused on building homes, supporting infrastructure, conserving natural heritage, water and agriculture, as well as protecting public health and safety. All municipal decisions related to development must be consistent with the PPS 2024. County Planning along with the Member Municipal Planners will reference and implement the PPS 2024 in land use planning decisions and development recommendations across the County.

## **Attachments**

1. Report 2024-155 ATTACH 1 'PPS and Growth Plan Comparison Chart'