

CEAC Report 2007-06

Report to: Mayor and Members of Council

From: Neil Morris, Chair, Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC)

By: Provincial Planning Implementation Sub Group
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Date: July 26, 2007

Re: **Provincial Policy Conformity Work Plan**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Caledon Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) recommends to the Corporation of the Town of Caledon:

1. That Council receive CEAC report 2007-06;
2. That Council consider this report as a formal submission regarding the draft Provincial Policy Conformity (PPC) Work Plan, and as such forward to Planning and Development staff for their consideration; and,
3. That Council give serious consideration to broadening the Provincial Policy Conformity exercise to embrace policy enhancement in the context of a more sustainable environment including the recognition of possible climate change impacts.

INTRODUCTION

CEAC has taken a long-standing interest in provincial planning matters related to the Town of Caledon's Official Plan (OP) policy approach to the recognition, protection and stewardship of Caledon's natural environment. Activity #11 of the CEAC 2007 Work Plan includes the following anticipated activities:

- Continue to monitor, review and report on implementation of the Greenbelt Plan (GBP), the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), OMB Reform and Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan (GGHGP) and;
- Monitor and comment on, as appropriate, local conformity initiatives related to new Provincial Plans, legislation and the 2005 PPS.

CEAC has prepared a number of reports over the years on previous provincial initiatives including:

- Report 2004-01, *Comments on Bill 26 – Strong Communities Act*;
- Report 2004-02, *Response to the White Paper on Watershed-based Source Protection Planning*;
- Report 2004-06, *Planning Reform: Provincial Policy Statement: Draft Policies; Greenbelt Task Force Discussion Paper Toward a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt: (May 2004); Ontario Municipal Board Reform*;
- Report 2001-02 *Growth Management and Urban Expansion – Caledon’s Brief to the Province*;
- Report 2001-06, *Comments on the Report “ The Oak Ridges Moraine – Proposals for the Protection and Management of a Unique Landscape*;
- Report 2001-07, *Response to the Provincial Oak Ridges Moraine Initiative*; and,
- Report 2001-08, *Response to the Provincial Policy Statement 5-Year Review*.

CEAC welcomes this opportunity to provide comments and insight at this early stage in the development of the PPC Work Plan. Council and staff should be commended for their approach to community and stakeholder involvement in such an important initiative.

BACKGROUND

The following documents and presentations were reviewed as background to the preparation of this report:

- Presentation by Todd Salter at May 30, 2007 CEAC Meeting;
- Review of Planning and Development Report 2007-22, *Town of Caledon Provincial Policy Conformity Exercise Draft Work Plan and Official Plan 5 Year Public Meeting*;
- June 26, 2007 Public Meeting - Attendance and report back to CEAC by several subgroup members;
- Review of June 26, 2007 Public Meeting handouts; and,
- Submission by Jim Fonger, June 26, 2007, *Comments and Input for the Town of Caledon’s Provincial Policy Conformity Exercise and 5-Year Official Plan Review*.

Summary:

Section 26 (1) of the Planning Act (as amended by Bill 51) requires that Caledon’s OP meet a number of “tests” as follows:

- That it conforms to Provincial Plans and does not conflict with them,
- That it has regard to matters of provincial interest (section 2 of the Planning Act (the Act), and
- That it is consistent with PPS (section 3 of the Act)

Also an OP must be revised if it contains policies dealing with employment including designation of employment areas and any policies dealing with the removal of land from areas of employment.

New provincial legislative and policy changes that may require an OPA include, in chronological order:

- Provincial Policy Statement (March 1, 2005) – the OP must be consistent with the PPS
- The Greenbelt Act (Bill 135), February 24, 2005 and Greenbelt Plan – effective December 14, 2004 – the OP must conform to the Greenbelt Act and Plan
- The Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act (Bill 51) – October 19, 2006 – the OP must have regard to this Act
- Places to Grow (Bill 136) – June 13, 2005 and Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe – June 16, 2006 – the OP must conform to these Plans

There are a number of challenges facing the Town of Caledon as it embarks on the conformity exercise. Future policies of the Town must conform to the three provincial plans (ORMCP, GBP, Places to Grow Plan) and the PPS policy approach, while at the same time reflecting local planning and community values and existing Town policy. Also, Caledon must strive for consistent policies across the entire Town within different provincial plans.

Caledon's Provincial Policy Conformity (PPC) exercise will be guided by a set of principles to inform the process of determining the need to revise parts of the OP. In addition, consideration will have to be given to the development of the following:

- General policy subject areas,
- Their individual components and strategies, and
- The process of reviewing these components.

REPORT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this report are to provide comments in the following areas:

- A review of the guiding principles for both content and scope, and
- A review of the general theme areas and their related components for content and completeness.

DISCUSSION

CEAC supports the dual approach undertaken in the proposed PPC Work Plan i.e., that of developing key overarching principles to guide the conformity exercise and a scoping of the work into theme areas.

CEAC's primary comments lie in urging Council and staff to seriously consider moving beyond a "business-as-usual" policy conformity exercise to a more systematic realignment or enhancement of Caledon's policies within a sustainability framework. The timing appears propitious given the scope of the conformity requirements and the increased attention to climate change at both the federal and provincial levels of government. It is recognized that, through federal and provincial governmental funding

programmes, local municipalities are the most effective delivery agents of change needed to address the climate change challenge. To that end, we offer the following comments.

Additional Guiding Principles Should Be Considered:

- New Guiding Principle to be added after #2

Go beyond conformity to provincial policy to move Caledon into a new arena of sustainability. Rationale: Given the broad scope (town-wide and far-reaching nature of provincial changes) of the conformity exercise, where possible and in keeping with Guiding Principle #2, Caledon should take this opportunity to comprehensively update its overall OP policy approach to incorporate a sustainability agenda which recognizes the climate change dynamic. The urgency of the climate change imperative coupled with the scope of the PPC exercise suggests that now is the time for Caledon to show leadership by designing a far-reaching sustainability strategy that would put Caledon into the forefront of progressive Canadian municipalities.

CEAC understands that this would greatly expand the scope of the conformity exercise and that the current budget would need to be increased. CEAC envisions that the design and development of such a sustainability strategy for the Town of Caledon could be undertaken as a stand-alone project but one that runs parallel to and is integrated with the PPC exercise.

- New Guiding Principle # 7

Collaborate with all relevant departments, agencies and stakeholders at key points of the PPC process, particularly at the outset of the process. Rationale: An integrated approach to provincial conformity and sustainability requires multiple perspectives and coordination among all stakeholders. It is important therefore that the PPC process be as participatory and collaborative as possible. Where appropriate, other Town and/or Regional departments such as infrastructure, transportation, tourism and recreation, economic development, environmental progress, and external stakeholders should be included in the PPC process. Time should be taken at specific stages of the PPC exercise to ensure that key stakeholders and the general public understand and appreciate the intent and significance of all proposed policy revisions.

General Theme Areas and Related Considerations

The Key Topic Areas noted in Report 2007-22 have been well chosen and, together with the related considerations noted for each area, provide an excellent framework for the policy analysis to follow. CEAC has suggested a number of additional considerations in a number of topic areas, as noted below, which we believe will clarify and broaden the scope of the analysis.

Please note: The following additions are predicated on the addition of a new Guiding Principle (noted above) such that policy decisions will be considered through the lens of

addressing sustainability, including consideration of climate change targets, as a core Town principle.

Key Topic Area # 1: Growth forecasts and density/intensification targets

- The allocation of the “unallocated” 2031 population allotment for the Region must be considered insofar as the impact on density/intensification targets are concerned.
- Aggressively embrace the potential for meeting density and intensification targets through the development of Mayfield West and the redevelopment of under-utilized areas in Bolton including the South Hill Shopping Area.

Key Topic Area # 2: Employment

- The relationship between increased density/intensification, more affordable housing, and an improved live/work ratio in Caledon should be clarified to define any policy revisions that might be advisable to enhance employment opportunities in Caledon.
- Assess the employment/industry development vision currently espoused by the Chamber of Commerce for its policy impact
- Assess and consider the potential for agriculturally-related employment

Key Topic Area # 3: Transportation

- The implications of the 410 extension, the GTA West Corridor, and proposed long-term transit system changes within Caledon, e.g. regional bus services and a GO Transit station in Bolton, should also be assessed.
- Assess the implications of the Bolton Arterial Road network with regard to conformity to provincial policy
- Assess the policy implications for Town transportation networks in the event that a carbon tax is imposed at the provincial or federal level.

Key Topic Area # 4: Agricultural/Rural Policies

- Within the context of fairness and equity for all citizens, consider the removal of policies that have the potential to discourage long term, sustainable agricultural operations.
- Consider the protection of all Class I, II and III land (Canada Lands Inventory) from any use or development that would render it unusable for food production in the future.
- Are Town policies conducive to “buying local” (e.g., farmer’s markets, organic farming products, and heritage food products) or are they neutral or negative to long term agricultural viability?

Key Topic Area # 5: Conservation and Efficiency (Changed from Sustainability)

- Adaptive management is under consideration as a process to guide a number of operational factors with a possible application being sustainability and the climate change components that significantly impact it.

Key Topic Area # 6: Water Resources/Watershed Planning

- The permitting of water-taking policies within the boundaries of the Town may require revision in the context of water conservation in an era of climate change impact.

Key topic Area # 7: Natural Heritage System

- The Town's current policies and the Conservation Authorities' Generic Regulations encourage the preservation and enhancement of natural areas and resources, e.g. woodlots, wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity, etc.

Key Topic Area # 8: Significant Woodlands/Significant Wildlife Habitat Study

- No additional comments

CONCLUSION

As indicated, CEAC supports the work plan's dual approach of developing key principles to guide the conformity exercise and scoping the work into theme areas. CEAC supports the eight themes and recommends a number of additions to what might be considered under the various topic areas.

CEAC's primary comments lie in urging Council and staff to seriously consider moving beyond a "business-as-usual" policy conformity exercise to a more systematic realignment or enhancement of Caledon's policies within a sustainability framework. The timing appears propitious given the scope of the conformity requirements and the increased attention to climate change at both the federal and provincial levels of government. It is recognized that, through federal and provincial governmental funding programmes, local municipalities are the most effective delivery agents of change needed to address the climate change challenge.

CEAC will continue to participate where appropriate in this conformity initiative and welcomes any opportunity to work with Council and staff on moving Caledon forward into a more sustainable future.