

# Peel Region Official Plan Review

## Summer Update



### Message from the Chief Administrative Officer, David Szwarc

Welcome to the third in a series of newsletters on the Peel Region Official Plan Review (PROPR). We've passed the halfway point of the PROPR process and we are working at full capacity to meet the June 2009 deadline to ensure our Official Plan conforms to provincial requirements.

The Places to Grow plan requires that we plan for a "culture of conservation" while the Planning Act requires us to address sustainability specifically.

In this context, the Region of Peel is taking the lead in addressing sustainability from both a policy perspective and ensuring it becomes the standard by which municipal decisions are made. Specifically, the Region is incorporating sustainability principles in the Peel Region Official Plan through the PROPR process. To help us, we held a sustainability workshop on June 6, 2008 to apply a sustainability lens on various policy areas based on the four pillars of sustainability - social, cultural, environmental and economic. We also took the opportunity to ask stakeholders for their input on how sustainability policies could be applied within a regional setting.

The workshop was an intense day of collaboration, and we received diverse input on sustainability, which will be used to assist planners in developing draft Official Plan amendments to meet provincial policy requirements and to shape development towards a more sustainable future in the Region and future work to ensure the Region embraces the sustainability concept in its own decision-making.

The PROPR process is an open and collaborative exercise between your regional government and you, our citizens and stakeholders. We work closely with our area municipal partners who are also going through their municipal conformity exercises. Visit [www.peelregion.ca/officialplan](http://www.peelregion.ca/officialplan), and you can view and comment on our recently released *Sustainability Background Paper* and many other discussion papers.

As we move toward our deadline, we will be posting more discussion papers on our website and will continue to invite you to share your thoughts on Peel as we plan for the future.

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### Editorial + Design Committee

- Liliana da Silva
- Irene McCutcheon
- Edwin Niemeyer

Did you know?

In Peel, the use of sustainable modes of transportation to get to work (such as public transit, walking or bicycling) increased from 15 per cent in 2001 to 16 per cent in 2006.

Source: 2006 Census Canada

Over the past six months, the PROPR process has progressed well, aided by a series of consultations (including sustainability, agriculture and significant woodlands and significant wildlife habitat) and background papers on sustainability and growth management, as well as the release of the *Agriculture Discussion Paper*.

Along with significant progress on the Natural Heritage focus area (see pages 4-5) and on the Sustainability focus area (see pages 1 and 3), we are also making strides on growth management. Peel's population is expected to increase significantly over the next 25 years, and we need to ensure we manage growth in an efficient and effective manner. Our *Growth Management Background Paper* provides growth projections to 2031 as well as an overview of the provincial and area municipal planning context related to growth. The background paper is also available online for download.

A discussion paper on agriculture has been released and stakeholder consultation continues. The *Agriculture Discussion Paper* provides potential policy directions to ensure a vibrant, healthy and sustainable agricultural sector in Peel Region to 2031. It can also be found online for download and comment. As we move forward in developing agricultural related ROP policies, we will continue to collect input and work closely with our area municipalities, the farming community, agricultural organizations, agro-industries and other stakeholders.

Consultation on the PROPR process will continue as we release discussion papers and eventually draft Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPA) for public input and Council consideration. In addition to the mandatory public open houses and public meetings, various consultation events will be held. Please let us know if you would like more information on any of our PROPR focus area activities, or would like to invite Peel staff to speak to your group.

**Peel Region Official Plan Review Focus Areas:**



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On June 6, 2008 the Environment, Transportation, and Planning Services department hosted the Peel Sustainability Workshop: Towards Policies and Outcomes for a Sustainable Region. The workshop was preceded by the release of the *Sustainability Background Paper* and over 60 key stakeholders gathered to provide input on sustainability policy issues. Attendees were introduced to a suggested sustainable development framework for the Region's Official Plan.

The day commenced with a presentation on climate change by Arvin Prasad, Director of the Planning Policy and Research Division at the Region of Peel. Climate change is one of the most important issues of our time and is one of the drivers of the environmental pillar of sustainability.

At the workshop, stakeholders provided input and feedback on the PROPR focus areas by examining current or prospective Regional Official Plan policies through a sustainability lens which included the environmental, social, economic, and cultural pillars of sustainability. Their ideas will be considered for possible amendments to the Region Official Plan.



Energetic and enthusiastic participants provided the following ideas for the Region to consider in working towards being a more sustainable organization:

- Become more socially sustainable in accommodating immigrants and reduce social housing wait times
- Provide incentives for sustainable development: tax increment financing and development charges
- Promote Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) municipal buildings and include shower facilities to promote cycling and walking to work
- Adopt adaptive environmental management practices into the Region Official Plan
- Gradually replace entire fleet of Region of Peel vehicles with energy efficient vehicles.

These and other ideas will be considered for future implementation and will be part of subsequent work on corporate sustainability.



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# Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat Consultations



The Region, through its Natural Heritage Policy Review component of the Peel Region Official Plan Review, and the Town of Caledon, through its Provincial Policy Conformity (PPC) exercise, have identified the need to undertake a Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat Study. The purpose of this study is to provide a scientific basis for the identification of significant woodlands and significant wildlife habitat, and to provide direction for the development of appropriate policies that will conform to Provincial planning policy.

While both the Region of Peel and the Town of Caledon Official Plans currently contain policies regarding woodlands, these policies require review given recent Provincial directions and new technical guidance. As well, neither plan contains a specific policy addressing significant wildlife habitat. Notably, the Region of Peel and Town of Caledon are the first municipalities in Ontario to undertake a significant wildlife habitat study at a region and town-wide level. It is anticipated that this study will assist the Region and Town in refining the Provincial significant wildlife habitat guidelines to make them specific to Peel and Caledon, to the greatest extent possible.

Given that a large proportion of the Region's natural habitat is located in Caledon, the Region and Town are undertaking the work as a joint study in order to share resources, improve efficiencies, and to develop a consistent method for identifying significant woodlands and significant wildlife habitat at both the Regional and Town levels.

In January 2008, a consultant team led by North-South Environmental Inc. (ecologists), with assistance from Dougan & Associates (ecological consulting and design), and Sorensen Gravely Lowes (planners) were retained to undertake this study. The same team has been retained to undertake the Region's Natural Heritage Policy Review, under the leadership of Sorensen Gravely Lowes, to translate the input and recommendations from this study into policy. A Core Management Team comprising key staff members from the Region, Town and consultant team is leading the study.



# Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat Consultations



Extensive stakeholder and public consultations have been undertaken as part of this technical study:

- Meetings with the Municipal Staff Working Group and Technical Advisory Team
- Stakeholder Consultations
- Caledon Council Workshops
- Public Open Houses

An environment-themed workshop is also scheduled to take place in late 2008 to further engage stakeholders on work related to Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat.

Comments received to date include:

- General support on proposed approach and draft recommended criteria and thresholds
- Protection of Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat should not be an additional burden on landowners
- A large portion of the Town of Caledon is already regulated by Provincial Plans
- Criteria and thresholds should distinguish between natural and built features



- In addition to the protection of these natural heritage features and areas there is a need for management plans, stewardship and restoration activities
- Policy for Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat must be flexible and allow for validation and refinement through site level studies (e.g. Environmental Impact Studies)
- Policy for Significant Woodlands and Significant Wildlife Habitat should not discourage landowners from practicing stewardship on their lands
- Existing normal farm practices should continue to be permitted within areas identified as “significant”

The final technical report will be posted on [www.peelregion.ca/officialplan](http://www.peelregion.ca/officialplan) in early fall 2008, and members of the public will be given an opportunity to provide their comments and feedback. In addition, presentations to Town of Caledon and Region of Peel Councils are also being planned.



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The PROPR Agriculture Workshop took place on April 9, 2008 at the Brampton Fairgrounds. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the draft *Agriculture Discussion Paper* prepared as part of the PROPR consultation process, and the Region's efforts to bring its Official Plan into conformity with the requirements of the Provincial Policy directives.

Nick Ferri, Chair of the Peel Agricultural Advisory Working Group noted that this workshop reflected the desire of the Region to consult with the Peel farming community on matters of interest to them and to foster better understanding and cooperation between all concerned. Approximately 100 participants from the Peel farming community, area municipalities, Peel Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Farmland Trust, and other stakeholders attended the workshop.

The broad range of issues discussed fell under four main areas:

- How do we protect prime agricultural lands in Peel over the long term to provide the farming industry with certainty in the use of such lands for agricultural and related purposes?
- Where is the most appropriate land for agricultural activity (i.e., cash crops, orchards, livestock, greenhouses and near urban agriculture) to occur in the Region of Peel?
- What approach would best support farmers in remaining financially viable?
- What role does the agricultural industry have in improving the health and social wellbeing of residents, maintaining reliable food supplies, strengthening the economy and ensuring the overall sustainability and liveability in Peel?



The contributions by participants are summarized as:

- Expand the Canadian Land Inventory Classification to include the concentration of active farming activities, available infrastructure and support services in determining agricultural land types.
- Provide for more compatible secondary farm businesses and greater flexibility in other permitted land uses.
- Preserve land for agriculture and ensure that the agricultural industry remains productive.
- Co-ordinate agricultural and growth management policies to minimize land use conflicts in the Greenbelt area.
- Compensate farmers for land stewardship and protecting wildlife habitats.
- Examine policies to encourage the cultivation of ethnic crops, and to assist immigrant farmers gain access to affordable farmland in Peel.
- Undertake detailed investigations before installing wind turbines to ensure the health and safety of residents.
- Include organic wastes from restaurants and hotels in the biomass to energy policy.



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## Did you know?

Peel and Halton had the highest labour force participation rates in the GTA (with 72 per cent each). This is an indicator of strength in Peel's economy.

Source: 2006 Census Canada



The Region of Peel is currently engaged in a series of planning studies as part of the requirements of the Places to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the Growth Plan) to bring the Region Official Plan into conformity with the provincial directions. At the same time the City of Brampton, Town of Caledon, and the City of Mississauga are doing similar Official Plan conformity exercises. In order to achieve provincial targets, the Region is working with its area municipalities in Peel to develop an appropriate allocation of population and employment forecasts to each municipality.

The Growth Plan established specific growth, intensification and density targets for the Region. The overall population target for the 2031 planning horizon is 1.64 million residents, while the employment target is 870,000 jobs. The Growth Plan also defined a residential intensification target. It is required that by the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within Peel Region will be within the built-up area. In addition, the Growth Plan established density targets for the designated greenfield area and the two urban growth centres within Peel (Mississauga City Centre and Downtown Brampton). The Growth Plan requires that a minimum combined density of 50 people and jobs per hectare be achieved within the Region's designated greenfield area. For the two urban growth centres identified within Peel, the Growth Plan establishes the density target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

All the above issues are related to growth management. They will be addressed in a future Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA). The current Region Official Plan was originally adopted by Regional Council in 1996. It sets out policies for a 25-year planning period ending in 2021. In 2005, the Region of Peel adopted Region Official Plan Amendment 15, which updated the Population and Employment Forecasts for the Region Official Plan. ROPA 15 forecasts have two different time horizons: 2031 for the Urban System (Brampton and Mississauga) and 2021 for the Rural System (Caledon). This amendment established the following figures for 2031 for Peel: 1.51 million people, 524,000 households and 847,000 jobs. These forecasts do not include any growth in Caledon between 2021 and 2031. These figures are also lower than the targets set out by the Provincial Growth Plan. In addition, the current Official Plan does not address the density and intensification targets established by the Growth Plan.

Growth forecasts are the basis for decisions regarding various regional services, particularly for water and wastewater, policing, ambulance services, waste management, human services, health planning and regional roads. In order to meet the needs of these services and meet the requirements of the Growth Plan, the Region of Peel will be developing various growth options as part of its ongoing work in planning for the 2011, 2021 and 2031 population and employment forecasts as well as region-wide intensification and density targets. A discussion paper and consultations will be undertaken as part of the Peel Region-Official Plan Review process. The outcome of this process will be an updated Official Plan including sections related to growth management.

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# Get Involved



**D**o you live, work or play in Peel? Do you operate a business or have a particular interest in Peel? Do you consider yourself or your organization a stakeholder? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then Peel Region encourages you to get involved in the planning process. We would like to hear about any thoughts, concerns or issues you have about planning in Peel.

We invite you to:

- Participate in various consultations on each focus area that will be held in 2008 – 2009;
- Provide input and share your ideas on the following discussion papers by visiting [www.peelregion.ca/officialplan/getinvolved.htm](http://www.peelregion.ca/officialplan/getinvolved.htm);
  - *Transportation Background and Challenges Paper*
  - *Agriculture Discussion Paper*
  - *Sustainability Background Paper*
  - *Growth Management Background Paper*
- Participate at open houses and public meetings on draft policies/amendments to the Region Official Plan, which are scheduled to occur during fall 2008 through to early spring 2009.



## Contact Us!

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