

For Information

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DATE: December 10, 2007

SUBJECT: **STATUS REPORT ON THE PEEL REGION OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW (PROPR)**

FROM: M.D. Zamojc, P. Eng., Commissioner of Environment, Transportation and Planning Services

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide an update on the status of the Peel Region Official Plan Review (PROPR) in relation to the approved work program and schedule.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- This is a first in a series of status reports on the PROPR. A status report on PROPR will be brought forward every six months during 2008 and 2009.
- PROPR is moving forward consistent with the work program and schedule which was developed in close collaboration with area municipal staff and approved by Regional Council on September 13, 2007.
- Environment, Transportation and Planning Services (ETPS) staff are currently developing discussion papers in the following subject areas: urban development, transportation, agriculture, energy and greenbelt conformity. Other focus area discussion papers are expected to be released later in 2008.
- In addition, specific studies are being completed to develop a Regional Housing Strategy, sustainability work and facilitate PROPR consultation sessions. Other studies are expected in the New Year to address specific issues outlined in the work program.
- ETPS staff has been working with area municipal staff through involvement in focus area studies in terms of providing input on terms of reference, scope of work, representation on working group(s), participation in consultant selection and study supervision.
- Regional staff are currently organizing for various consultation events for stakeholders including a transportation and energy workshop (January 28, 2008) and a sustainability workshop (April 2008). Additional consultation sessions will be scheduled throughout 2008 and Council will be advised of the dates accordingly.

**DISCUSSION****1. Background**

On September 13, 2007 Regional Council received a report entitled "Peel Region Official Plan Review – Work Program" (approved under Resolution 2007-1103), which provided a work program and schedule as the basis for PROPR. In order to focus on conformity with Provincial initiatives, the work program confirmed 15 focus areas for PROPR (including Managing Growth; Regional Housing Strategy; Employment Land Policies; Transportation; Water Resources; Natural Heritage; Agriculture; Greenbelt Conformity; Integrated Waste

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Management; Energy; Air Quality, Sustainability; Monitoring Policies, Communication, Consultation and Engagement; and, Planning Tools and Updates).

The above noted focus areas can be categorized into the following themes: sustainability, managing growth, environment, transportation and communication, consultation and engagement. The following section of this report provides a status update on each of these themes in relation to the PROPR work program and schedule.

### 2. PROPR Status Update

#### a) Sustainability

A key underlying theme affecting all focus areas of the PROPR is sustainability. Given the requirements set out in Provincial legislation (such as incorporating sustainability as a 'Provincial interest' under the *Planning Act*), and more importantly the increasing research and public awareness on sustainability including climate change issues, this component of PROPR will provide a valuable context for the Regional Official Plan (ROP). In working towards the above objectives, a study will be undertaken to address the four pillars of sustainability from a research and policy perspective while examining the possibility for corporate leadership in this area. A sustainability workshop is being organized for April 2008 to identify changes required to the ROP.

#### b) Managing Growth

The managing growth component largely focuses on conformity with the Provincial Places to Grow initiative, which requires upper-tier municipalities to plan for 40 percent of new residential growth by intensification within an established built boundary by 2015, and for each year thereafter until 2031, while meeting density requirements on a regional basis for greenfield areas (50 residents and jobs combined per hectare). ETPS staff will be reporting on the final draft of the built boundary in a separate report to Council.

A key component of managing growth is the urban development focus area, which will allow staff to analyze population, employment and area municipal intensification projections in order to provide Council with a recommendation for a preferred distribution of population and employment, both within and outside of the built boundary, to the planning horizon of 2031. This analysis is dependent on receiving forecast data from the area municipalities, which should be available in March 2008, and will be carried out once area municipal intensification work is completed. A technical working group, consisting of staff from the Region and area municipalities, has been established to lead this component of the work program. In the interim, a discussion paper is currently being developed to gain input on possible policy directions.

To support the above, the infrastructure focus area will examine the implications of intensification on both hard and soft services. ETPS staff are in the process of hiring consultants to undertake this analysis. In addition, the above will build on the work presented at the May 17, 2007 Council workshop on long range plans to support growth and intensification in Peel. Consistent with Council direction, a follow-up workshop on the financial implications of intensification is being organized for fall 2008. Furthermore, the possible incentives to intensification are being examined. A background paper is currently being drafted, which will be ready for release in the New Year.

In terms of the employment land focus area, a technical working group, consisting of staff from the Region and area municipalities has been established. Members of the

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technical working group have been involved in defining the scope of the project, exploring opportunities to share data and resources, and determining regional level policy issues to support the Provincial Places to Grow Plan requirements such as protecting the existing employment land base while planning for new strategic employment opportunities. Area municipal employment lands will be examined from a supply perspective initially and then background research will be undertaken to launch the study further exploring the demand and supply of employment lands by type while recommending policy options to protect the existing supply of employment lands in the region. The employment land project is designed to build on the employment land studies which are being completed by the area municipalities.

Another significant area for conformity to the Provincial Places to Grow Plan, is the requirement to complete a Housing Strategy. A Regional Housing Strategy is currently being developed to address the full range of housing types and densities to support intensification and density targets. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with the Regional Human Services Department as well as the area municipalities.

**c) Transportation**

Another key component of the PROPR is the transportation focus area, which aims to meet the requirements and policies set out in the Provincial Policy Statement and Places to Grow Plan. In order to meet Provincial requirements, the Region is building on the previous transportation planning work undertaken during the Regional Official Plan Strategic Update, by reassessing the Long Range Transportation Plan. In working towards the above objectives, Regional staff have developed a draft Transportation Background and Challenges paper to facilitate consultation with stakeholders. Furthermore, in order to discuss issues outlined in the paper and gain stakeholder feedback, a workshop will be held on January 28, 2008.

**d) Environment**

Policies related to water resources will be updated considering recent provincial legislation, plans, policies, existing data, studies, recommendations of watershed plans and best practices. The policy review will include a joint study with the Town of Caledon to develop policies for the Region and the Town. A Water Resources Municipal Working Group has been established to guide the study.

The Region's existing ROP policies and mapping related to natural heritage will be updated to reflect Provincial policies, plans and Provincial and Conservation Authority background studies. In order to meet the above objectives, this focus area includes a joint study with the Town of Caledon on significant woodlands and significant wildlife habitat. Furthermore, Regional joint staff are collaborating with area municipal and Conservation Authority staff through a working group and technical advisory team to guide the study process.

The agriculture focus area is a key component of the PROPR. Regional staff are working towards updating ROP agricultural policies and mapping to reflect Provincial policies, plans and implementation of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan. As such, Regional staff has consulted with the Peel Agricultural and Rural Water Quality Advisory Committee (PARWQAC). A focused follow-up consultation meeting with PARWQAC and stakeholders is scheduled for January 2008. A draft discussion paper on agriculture and policy options will be released shortly.

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The greenbelt focus area considers the incorporation of the Protected Countryside land designation and other policies related to the Provincial Greenbelt Plan in the ROP. This objective is largely being met through the natural heritage and agriculture focus areas. However, a draft discussion paper is being developed and will be released shortly.

The Provincial Places to Grow Plan promotes a culture of conservation requiring municipalities to implement integrated waste management. Regional staff will be updating ROP policies related to waste management by incorporating the results of the draft Long Term Waste Management Strategy.

An important component of the PROPR is the energy focus area. The energy focus area will incorporate requirements outlined in the Provincial Places to Grow Plan and address the lack of energy policies in the existing ROP. In working towards the above objectives discussions have taken place with key stakeholders to understand energy issues and possible policy directions. Based on research and input received, a Preliminary Directions Energy Discussion Paper is being drafted. The discussion paper will be utilized to gain input at an energy workshop currently being organized for January 28, 2008.

The air quality focus area aims to meet the requirements set out in the Provincial Policy Statement and Provincial Places to Grow Plan by developing ROP policies related to air quality. Regional staff have been building on significant work already completed by other Regional initiatives such as the Region's Clean Air Strategy. A draft air quality background paper has been prepared and will be available shortly. A discussion paper will be developed in the New Year, which will include possible ROP policy options for consultation.

**e) Communication, Consultation and Engagement**

Stakeholder and public input into the proposed updates to the ROP is vital to the success of PROPR. The purpose of this focus area is to raise awareness, engage and involve stakeholders and citizens so that meaningful input and feedback is received on draft policies. This objective will also fulfill the requirements under the *Planning Act* for public consultation. A key component is focused consultations such as the upcoming transportation and energy workshop (January 28, 2008) and the sustainability workshop (April 2008).

Also, consistent with the PROPR work program, a newsletter was released in September 2007 to raise awareness of PROPR. The next PROPR newsletter will be released in March 2008. Lastly, the PROPR website ([www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan](http://www.peelregion.ca/planning/officialplan)) has been launched with up-to-date information on the PROPR process.

**CONCLUSION**

The Peel Region Official Plan Review (PROPR) is moving forward consistent with the approved work program and schedule. In addition to the technical working groups that have been established for specific PROPR focus areas, continued collaboration with the area municipalities is being undertaken through the Planning Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of senior level policy staff from the Region and area municipalities. The Planning TAC meets regularly to oversee and direct the PROPR process. TAC has agreed that Regional Official

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Plan Amendments (ROPAs) will be processed in advance of area municipal work in order to provide time for area municipal official plan amendments to achieve conformity with the ROPAs. It is expected that ROPAs will be presented to Regional Council beginning in Fall/Winter 2008. Regional staff will continue keeping Council, stakeholders and the public apprised of PROPR efforts through regular PROPR status reports.



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**Approved for Submission:**



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c. Legislative Services

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