

Proposed 2023 Provincial Policy Statement Changes

Topic Area	Proposed Change / Integration
Aggregates	The proposed PPS (2023) has not made significant changes to the aggregate resources section. References to rehabilitation in speciality crop areas have been removed – however rehabilitation in these areas would be directed by the Greenbelt Plan. [Proposed Section 4.5]
Agriculture	The proposed PPS (2023) eliminates the requirement to use the provincially-mapped Agricultural System (which was introduced through the 2017 Growth Plan). Municipalities would now lead the designation of prime agricultural areas, including specialty crop areas. Using the provincial mapping remains an option, as the definition of “Agricultural System” includes identification of an agricultural land base “based on mapping provided by the province where mapping is available and requested”. [Proposed Section 4.3.1]
Agriculture	The proposed PPS (2023) eliminates alternative evaluations for settlement area expansions. Under the PPS 2020, a proposed settlement area expansion into prime agricultural areas required an evaluation of alternative locations for expansion.
Agriculture	The proposed PPS (2023) expands the definition of “on-farm diversified uses” to include all “land-extensive energy facilities”, such as ground-mounted solar or battery storage, whereas previously only ground-mounted solar facilities were identified. [Proposed definition of “on-farm diversified use”]
Built Boundary	The proposed PPS (2023) has not carried forward the concept of a delineated built-up areas that was previously contained in the Growth Plan.
Employment Areas	The proposed PPS (2023) changes the definition of “employment areas”. A corresponding change to the Planning Act is also being proposed through Bill 97. The focus of the definition is now on uses that cannot locate in mixed use areas, such as heavy industry, manufacturing and large scale warehousing. [Proposed definition of “employment areas”]

Employment Land Conversions	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) allows municipalities to consider (and landowners can apply for) the removal of land from employment areas outside of a municipal comprehensive review. The tests to be met include that there is a need for the removal, and the land is not required for employment uses over the long term.</p> <p>Currently, the PPS 2020 requires planning authorities to protect and preserve employment areas for current and future uses and permits conversions within employment areas to non-employment uses only where it had been demonstrated that the land was not required for employment purposes over the long term and that there is a need for the conversion.</p> <p>The Growth Plan requires that conversions of lands within employment areas may only be permitted through a municipal comprehensive review where the applicant had satisfied certain criteria</p> <p>In the proposed PPS 2023, an employment conversion request can happen at any time. Applicants do not need to wait until a municipality is undertaking a municipal comprehensive review. [Proposed section 2.8.2.4]</p>
Growth Management	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) has not carried forward the Growth Plan requirement for municipalities to plan to specific population and employment targets for a horizon year.</p> <p>The expectation that municipalities will continue to use the 2051 targets at a minimum. Over time, municipalities will be expected to carry out their own forecasting.</p> <p>[Proposed section 2.1 & 2.1.3.]</p>
Growth Management	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) requires municipalities, when updating official plans, to have enough land designated for at least 25 years (a change from up to 15 years), with planning expressly allowed to extend beyond this horizon for infrastructure, employment areas and strategic growth areas. [Proposed section 2.1.1]</p>
Housing	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) expands the definition of “housing options”. Municipalities are already required to provide for 15 years of designated and available residential land and a three-year supply of serviced land for an appropriate range and mix of “housing options”. The definition has been expanded to specifically include more examples of “soft intensification” and broader housing arrangements and forms. [Proposed definition of “housing options”]</p>

Housing	The proposed PPS (2023) removes the definition of “affordable”. The PPS 2020 generally defined “affordable” as a function of income for ownership and rental housing. This approach is consistent with the province’s proposed changes to the inclusionary zoning regulation. [Proposed definitions]
Intensification	The proposed PPS (2023) establishes broader permissions for residential intensification. The proposed PPS 2023 provides three specific examples of residential intensification, to facilitate future development: (1) the conversion of existing commercial and institutional buildings for residential use, (2) development and introduction of new housing options within previously developed areas, and (3) redevelopment that results in a net increase in residential units. [Proposed section 2.2.1.b) 2.]
Intensification	The proposed PPS (2023) removes mandatory intensification and density targets for all municipalities. The Growth Plan required municipalities to meet specific intensification and density targets to accommodate forecasted growth. This requirement has not been carried forward, except for the density targets for MTSAs in large and fast-growing municipalities. Instead, municipalities are encouraged to establish density targets “as appropriate, based on local conditions.” Large and fast-growing municipalities are also encouraged, but not required, to plan for a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs per gross hectare. [Proposed section 2.3.5]
Land Use Compatibility	The proposed PPS (2023) encourages industrial and manufacturing uses that do not give rise to potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants to be developed outside of employment areas in strategic growth areas and other mixed-use areas where frequent transit service is available. It also promotes the transition of uses in lands outside of employment areas to prevent adverse effects on sensitive land uses. [Proposed section 3.5]
Land Use Compatibility	The proposed PPS (2023) enhances protections for industrial and manufacturing uses as well as other major facilities from encroachment of sensitive land uses while making subtle, but critical, revisions to the policy language. [Proposed section 3.5]
Land Use Compatibility	The proposed PPS (2023) removes requirement for proponent of sensitive land uses to demonstrate need or evaluate alternative locations for sensitive land uses where avoidance of adverse effects is not possible. [Proposed section 3.5]

Major Transit Station Areas	The proposed PPS (2023) carries forward the concept of major transit station areas from the Growth Plan, with the definition and minimum density targets being generally the same. [Proposed definition of “major transit station area”]
Natural Heritage	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) does not include natural heritage policies. These policies and related definitions remain under consideration by the government at the time of the April 6, 2023 release. The indication is that the natural heritage policies will be released through a separate ERO posting at a future date. [See note after proposed section 4.1]</p> <p>The vision statement in the proposed PPS 2023 suggests a shift in focus from conserving biodiversity and protecting essential ecological processes to one that balances the use and management of natural resources with attention to appropriate housing supply. [Proposed vision]</p>
Natural Heritage	The Growth Plan (2017) introduced a “Natural Heritage System For the Growth Plan” including mapping, definitions, and policies which were required to be implemented by municipalities through Official Plan updates. It is unclear if the Province intends to carry forward the requirements of the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan into the PPS (2023). [See note after proposed section 4.1]
Provincially significant employment zones	The proposed PPS (2023) has not carried forward Provincially Significant Employment Zones which were introduced to the Growth Plan in 2019. Lands designated as PSEZ are protected from conversion to non-employment uses, except where demonstrated to be appropriate through a full municipal comprehensive review. The implementation document suggests alternative approaches to protect these lands, possibly through the use of minister’s zoning orders
Rural Housing and Lot Creation	In addition to a principal dwelling associated with an agricultural operation in prime agricultural areas, the proposed PPS (2023) permits up to two additional residential units as subordinate to the principal dwelling. [Proposed section 4.3.2.5]
Rural Housing and Lot Creation	<p>The proposed PPS (2023), through a new policy, now permits the creation of up to three residential lots from an existing agricultural parcel. [Proposed section 4.3.3.1]</p> <p>The proposed PPS (2023) prevents zoning by-laws and Official Plan from being more restrictive in regards to the severing of agricultural lands. [Proposed section 4.3.3.2]</p>

Schools	The proposed PPS (2023), establishes schools as an element of a “complete community” and directs collaboration between planning authorities and school boards. [Proposed section 2.1.4 & 6.2.4]
Schools	The proposed PPS (2023) acknowledges and encourages the use of non-traditional school locations where appropriate for the community. [Proposed section 3.1.6]
Settlement Area Expansions	The proposed PPS (2023) removes the requirement to demonstrate “need” for a settlement area expansion. The proposed PPS 2023 also reduces the criteria that a municipality must consider before identifying a new settlement area or allowing a boundary expansion, focusing on whether there is sufficient capacity in infrastructure and public service facilities to support the expansion or new settlement area, and avoiding or minimizing impacts on agricultural land and operations. [Proposed section 2.3.4]
Settlement Area Expansions	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) has not carried forward the concept of a municipal comprehensive reviews which was cornerstone policy of the Growth Plan as a way to plan the expansion of settlement areas in an orderly fashion.</p> <p>The implication of this change is that municipalities may consider settlement area expansions at any time. There is no limitation on the ability of landowners from applying for an expansion. [Proposed section 2.3.4]</p>
Settlement Area Expansion	The proposed PPS (2023) would allow for the creation of new settlement areas. Previously this was not permitted. [Proposed section 2.3.4]
Large and Fast-Growing Municipalities	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) introduces and identifies “large and fast-growing municipalities” (Niagara Falls, St Catharines in Niagara) that must grow based on Growth Plan directions. [Proposed definition of “large and fast-growing municipalities” and Proposed Appendix – Schedule 1]</p> <p>“Large and fast-growing municipalities” will be required to identify strategic growth areas in their official plans [Proposed section 2.4.1.1] and encouraged to plan for a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare. [Proposed section 2.3.5]</p>

Strategic Growth Areas	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) has carried forward / integrated the concept of strategic growth areas from the Growth Plan. They are to be identified in official plans, and should be the focus of growth. They include major transit station areas. [Proposed section 2.4 and proposed definition of “strategic growth area”]</p>
Water Resource Systems	
Watershed Planning	<p>The proposed PPS (2023) includes significantly less of an emphasis on the need for watershed planning and subwatershed planning to inform land-use planning.</p> <p>The Growth Plan (2017) included numerous references to watershed and subwatershed planning – and the requirement for these to inform land use planning.</p> <p>With the exception of proposed policy 4.2.3 which encourages watershed planning there are no other references. There are no references to subwatershed planning in the proposed PPS (2023). [Proposed section 4.2.3]</p>