

OXFORD COUNTY

OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Phases 2 & 3

Project Update

County Council

May 25, 2022



Overview

- Why update the Official Plan
- Existing OP environmental resource policies
- Legislative context
- Policy focus areas
- Project timing
- Next steps

Why update the Official Plan?

- Legislative and policy changes
- Consider current local context
- Evaluate effectiveness of existing policies
- Improve and modernize approach, processes and requirements

Legislative Context

Planning Act

- Legislative authority for municipalities to regulate land use
- All planning policies/decisions must be 'consistent with' PPS

2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

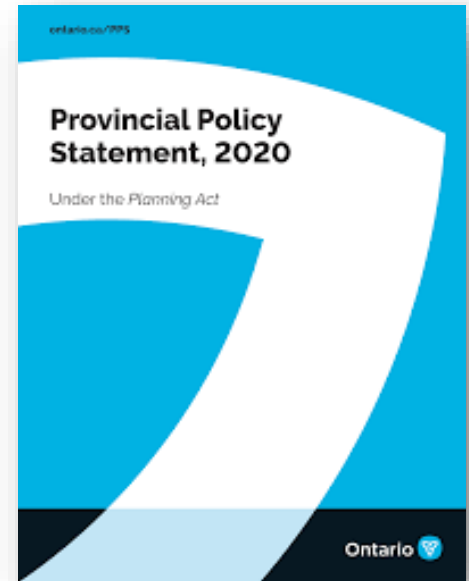
- Provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use
- Municipal policies may exceed minimum PPS standards, but shall not conflict

Provincial Guidance

- Natural Heritage Reference Manual,
- Wildland Fire Risk Assessment and Mitigation Reference Manual
- Draft Watershed Planning Guidance and Draft Subwatershed Planning Guidance

Other Provincial and Federal Legislation

- Species At Risk Act, Endangered Species Act, and the Fisheries Act;
- Ontario Heritage Act



Phase 2: Environmental Policies

- Phase 2 will focus on:
 - Natural Heritage
 - Open Space
 - Water Resources
 - Watershed planning
 - Surface and groundwater protection
 - Soils
 - Natural Hazards
 - Climate Change

Natural Heritage

- Existing policies established in 2006
- ONHSS was last updated in 2016 – updating mapping again now based on 2020 imagery.
- OP Updates will focus on incorporating a natural heritage ‘system’ into the Official Plan, building from Provincial guidance and ONHSS.
- Looking for early input to understand areas of interest and concern from area municipalities and the public.

Water Resources

- PPS, 2020 now requires municipalities to plan for 'water resource systems':
 - Includes using watersheds/subwatershed planning as part of the basis
 - Requirements for protection of water quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater features
 - Policies also need to address stormwater management and a changing climate
 - Updates to address Source Protection Plans are expected to be through separate amendment.

Open Space

- Policy updates will focus on:
 - alignment with Provincial requirements
 - incorporating local plans/studies (as applicable)
 - ensuring integration with other updates to the rest of the environmental resource policies

Soils

- Legislation regarding management of excess soils has seen a number of changes, which will be considered as part of these updates.

Natural Hazards

- Flooding

- PPS, 2020 includes emphasis on flooding impacts, including those that may result from a changing climate.
- Review will focus on ensuring policies meet Provincial standards and understanding local flood risks and implications.

- Hazardous Forest Types

- New type of natural hazard
- Province has developed guidance
- Focus is on directing development away from high risk areas and/or mitigating risks
- Staff will be undertaking analysis to better understand what “high risk areas” means in the Oxford context.

Climate Change

- PPS, 2020 speaks to mitigating and adapting to a changing climate with respect to:
 - Natural hazards
 - Water resource systems
 - Development and land use patterns
 - Infrastructure and public service facilities
- Updates to the renewable energy policies to respond to legislative changes resulting from the repeal of the Green Energy Act.
- Looking for input and feedback on climate change related aspects of other plans and strategies (e.g. Future Oxford) that may benefit from consideration as part of this update:
 - Biodiversity planning
 - Water conservation and efficiency
 - Transportation demand management, alternative modes of transportation

Phase 3: Cultural Heritage & Implementation Measures

- Updates to Section 3.3 Heritage Resources
 - Will focus on policy updates based on PPS, 2020 as well as a number of recent changes to the Ontario Heritage Act.
- Updates to Chapter 10 – Implementation Measures
 - Will focus on incorporating various Planning Act changes into the Official Plan
 - Complete application requirements to be updated through a separate amendment in response to Bill 109.

Next Steps

- Staff will be launching Phase 2 with some community engagement
- This will include:
 - Meetings with each of the Area Municipal Councils
 - Community engagement via Speak Up Oxford
- Feedback received will be used to understand areas of interest, inform research, and development of objectives, directions and policies.
- Phase 3 will be initiated following completion of ongoing projects, including the policy updates for 'additional residential units'.

Questions