

Summary of Provincial Planning Framework Respecting Major Transit Station Areas and Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

Planning Act

1. Removal of Parking Minimums

Bill 185, *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* received Royal Assent on June 6, 2024 which, amongst other legislative changes, amended the *Planning Act* to add subsection 16 (22) which prohibits official plans from containing policies which establish parking requirements (except bicycle parking) within delineated Major Transit Station Areas or Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

While the Urban Hamilton Official Plan does not contain any policies which conflict with subsection 16(22) of the *Planning Act*, the proposed official plan amendments include new policies to provide clear policy direction that for lands within the delineated Major Transit Station Areas no minimum parking requirements shall apply.

The parking rates for residential uses in Section 5: Parking of Zoning By-law No. 05-200 were amended in April 2024 (through Report PED23156) to apply a geographic based approach to residential parking rates, reflecting differences in urban form, transportation options, and existing residential travel behaviours. The majority of lands within the Major Transit Station Areas are located in Parking Rate Area 1 which does not have minimum parking requirements for residential uses except for visitor parking requirements. The parking rates will need to be further amended as part of the implementation of the Major Transit Station Areas to remove minimum parking requirements for residential and non-residential uses.

Under Section 26(9) of the *Planning Act* the City has three years following the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approving the Major Transit Station Area Official Plan Amendment to update the Zoning By-law to conform.

2. Protected Major Transit Station Areas

Protected Major Transit Station Areas are a sub-set of Major Transit Station Areas, with legislative requirements identified in the *Planning Act*. If a municipality wishes to establish a Protected Major Transit Station Area in its Official Plan, it must include:

- mapping showing the boundaries of each Protected Major Transit Station Area;
- policies detailing the permitted land uses in the delineated area; and
- prescribe minimum densities for new buildings and structures in the area.

Official Plan policies for Major Transit Station Areas and Protected Major Transit Station Areas are subject to the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The *Planning Act* does not allow any appeals with respect to certain policies for Protected Major Transit Station Areas to ensure planned densities are realized.

To identify all the delineated Major Transit Station Areas in the City of Hamilton as Protected Major Transit Station Areas, draft minimum densities in units per hectare

(UPH) and people and jobs per hectare (PJH) have been applied to all blocks within the Major Transit Station Areas. Mapping of the draft minimum densities forms part of the proposed official plan amendments.

Similar to removal of parking minimums, the City will have three years from when the Province approves its Major Transit Station Area Official Plan policies to update the Zoning By-law instituting minimum density requirements.

The permitted land uses are applied within the delineated areas based on the land use designations identified on Schedule E-1 – Urban Land Use Designations or Map B.6.1-1 – Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan – Land Use Plan, Map B.6.2-1 – Ainslie Wood Wesdale – Land Use Plan, Map B.6.4-1 – West Hamilton Innovation District – Land Use Plan, Map B.6.6-1 – Strathcona – Land Use Plan and Map B.6.7-1 – Centennial Neighbourhoods – Land Use Plan within the Urban Hamilton Official Plan as well as Schedule M-2: General Land Use Plan within the West Harbour (Setting Sail) Secondary Plan within the Former City of Hamilton Official Plan.

2.1 Amendments to Protected Major Transit Station Areas

On October 23, 2025, the Province introduced *Bill 60, Fighting Delays, Building Faster Act, 2025*. Bill 60 received Royal Assent on November 27, 2025. The Province amended the *Planning Act* to remove the requirement for Ministerial approval of Official Plan Amendments that authorize residential uses on land within a Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMSTA). Amendments proposed to alter the other required PMTSA Official Plan policies (e.g., minimum densities) would not be exempted from Ministerial approval.

The City's comments in response to ERO 025-1097 are attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED26020. This was the only amendment to the *Planning Act* made through Bill 60 that was supported by staff as it will decrease the amount of time it takes municipalities to make modifications to established Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

3. Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary Zoning policies can be applied in Protected Major Transit Station Areas in accordance with subsection 16(4) and (5.1) of the *Planning Act*. The City of Hamilton is recommending all Major Transit Station Areas be identified as Protected Major Transit Station Areas to enable the establishment of Inclusionary Zoning policies in the official plans in the future. O Reg. 232/18 provides direction for what the official plan policies authorizing inclusionary zoning shall include and what studies need to be completed prior to considering an inclusionary zoning framework. Inclusionary zoning is an optional tool available to municipalities and is not a requirement for Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

The City has completed the required background studies needed prior to implementing Inclusionary Zoning, and Council has directed staff to proceed with further work to undertake consultation and develop detailed recommendations for consideration. This is being undertaken as part of a separate project.

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

On October 20, 2024, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) replaced both the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019, as amended) and the Provincial Policy Statement (2020). The definition of a “Major Transit Station Area” and the prescribed minimum density targets for types of higher order transit that were previously in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe were carried over into the Provincial Planning Statement (2024).

Major Transit Station Areas are identified in the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) as strategic growth areas for intensification to support high ridership levels on existing and planned higher-order transit infrastructure (bus and light rail rapid transit, subways, and commuter rail services). Geographically, Major Transit Station Areas include lands located within an approximate 800 metre radius of an existing or planned higher order transit station or stop. In Hamilton, 19 Major Transit Station Areas have been identified and are focused on the planned B-Line Light Rail Transit stops as well as the GO Transit commuter rail stations (see Appendix “A”).

Major Transit Station Areas must be planned to achieve a minimum density of residents and jobs at full build-out, depending on the planned transit service, as prescribed by the Provincial Planning Statement (2024). Areas supporting Light Rail Transit stops must meet a minimum density of 160 persons and jobs per hectare (combined), and areas supporting commuter rail stations like GO Transit rail stations must achieve a minimum density of 150 persons and jobs per hectare (combined). If a station area cannot meet the assigned minimum density target, an alternative target must be requested and approved by the Province.

The delineation of minimum density targets for Major Transit Station Areas previously formed part of a Municipal Comprehensive Review in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2020). While no longer required through a Municipal Comprehensive Review, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) requires official plan amendments to delineate the boundaries of major transit station areas on higher order transit corridors be adopted under section 26 of the *Planning Act*.