

Summary of Report No. DS-2016-0060

Provincial Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review: Proposed Growth Plan, 2016 and Proposed Greenbelt Plan, 2016

On February 27, 2015 the Province of Ontario initiated a coordinated review of the following land use policy documents: the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*, the *Greenbelt Plan* and the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. These are long-range policy documents that serve to guide and direct municipal land use planning decisions in order to create vibrant and complete communities, protect the agricultural land base and ecosystems and to help support a strong and competitive economy.

On May 10, 2016 the Province released proposed changes to these four Plans and has requested public feedback by October 31, 2016. It is noted that only the proposed Greenbelt Plan, 2016 and the proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2016 (Growth Plan) are applicable to lands within the Town of Georgina. Given that Georgina's planning documents (i.e. Official Plan) will eventually have to conform to the policies contained within these two Plans, Report No. DS-2016-0060 was prepared to provide Town Council with staff's assessment of the proposed changes. This report was presented to Council on August 24, 2016 and its recommendations were adopted and forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Regional Municipality of York and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Below is a summary of the five major comments/concerns presented in the report:

1. **The Agricultural System, Rural Areas and Rural Lands**

The Province needs to utilize a more rigorous or accurate approach/process when identifying Prime Agricultural lands.

Where there are small pockets within the Prime Agricultural land base that are clearly not suitable for agriculture, policies should enable a municipality to consider allowing

non-agricultural uses where such development is compatible with and does not negatively impact surrounding lands uses.

The proposed Greenbelt Plan should also allow for a greater range of non-agricultural uses within Rural Areas.

2. **Designated Greenfield Area Density and Intensification Targets**

The proposed Growth Plan requires that upper-tier municipalities increase the minimum Built-up Area intensification target from 40 per cent to 60 per cent, and increase the minimum designated Greenfield Area target from 50 to 80 residents and jobs per hectare. The magnitude of these proposed increases and the lack of analyses on the potential impact these intensification targets may have on regional and local planning, raises a host of planning concerns. As such, the Town has requested that these changes not be adopted or be deferred to allow for further review and consideration by the Province in consultation with municipalities.

3. **Employment Areas**

The development of the “Keswick Business Park” is an important component of the Town’s Economic Development Strategy in terms of increasing non-residential assessment and creating new jobs. To provide for an enhanced transportation network to service not only the Business Park lands but also the existing business community as a whole, the Town is requesting that the proposed Growth Plan identify and recognize the extension of Highway 404 to Glenwood’s Avenue and a linkage between Highway 400 and 404 as priority infrastructure projects.

4. **Growing the Greenbelt**

With respect to the Province’s desire to grow the Greenbelt, the Town recommends revisions to the proposed Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan that would remove the Towns and Villages designation from the Maple Lake Estates lands in order to facilitate a proposed development approvals transfer to other lands to the south of the Maple Lake Estates site.

The Town is supportive of the Province reducing the Towns and Villages designation in the proposed Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan for the community of Pefferlaw. This would result in a designation that more accurately reflects the extent of the lands that may be considered for development under the Town's Official Plan (Pefferlaw Secondary Plan).

5. Implementation

The Province advises that it will deliver a number of supporting studies and information intended to help implement the new Plans, but the delivery of this material is anticipated to be some time after the new Plans are in place. This raises concerns in terms of municipalities being able to properly implement the Plans and/or bringing their Official Plans into conformity with the provincial Plans.

The Province needs to adopt reasonable municipal conformity time-frames that are aligned with the delivery of key supportive information by the Province.

The above is a summary of the comments/concerns that have been provided to the Province with respect to the proposed revisions to the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan. Report DS-2016-0060 in its entirety can be accessed on the Town's website at www.georgina.ca or a hard copy is available at the Georgina Civic Centre.

If you have any further questions, please contact **Harold Lenters, Director of Development Services** at hlinters@georgina.ca or call **905-476-4301 ext. 2246**.