



HELP US TO FIGHT SPRAWL DEVELOPMENT!

Ontario's Ford Government is at it again, proposing to weaken important provincial planning rules designed to prevent urban sprawl in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

The government is [proposing changes to A Place to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) – the provincial plan that 'provides a framework for growth management in the region'. This current proposal builds on harmful changes made in 2019, adding to the dismantling of effective growth management in Ontario.

Ontarians have **until July 31st** to comment on the proposed changes through the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW & SAY ABOUT THE PROPOSED CHANGES:

i) Proposed changes through Amendment No 1 of A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe include:

a) More flexibility for siting of aggregate extraction operations - The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH) is proposing to remove the Growth Plan policy that prohibits wayside pits and quarries in the habitat of endangered and threatened species throughout the Natural Heritage System (4.2.8.2 a) ii). MMAH argues that making aggregate resources available 'close to market' is critical to the success of the Growth Plan, and that the change will not impact the Greenbelt.

Tell MMAH that this argument is unfounded. Aggregates operations can already occur throughout most of the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), including the Natural Heritage System. Given that the purpose of the Natural Heritage System is to protect biodiversity, **tell MMAH that prohibiting aggregate extraction within the habitats of our most vulnerable plants and animals is the bare minimum that should be required.**

b) Increasing the Plan Horizon Year to 2051 - The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing is proposing to extend the plan horizon year in the Growth Plan **from 2041 to 2051**. Tell MMAH that this 10 year extension of the Plan Year Horizon is not justified – there is no real land demand. Extending the Plan Horizon Year will only facilitate more urban boundary expansions – especially in municipalities that are not striving to intensify the built up area and increase the density in greenfield areas.

c) Modifications to Population & Employment Growth Forecasts - MMAH has initiated a review and update of the 'Distribution of Population & Employment' for the Greater Golden Horseshoe & is seeking feedback on a 'Reference Growth Forecast' which 'represents the most likely future growth outlook and is based on extensive modelling & analysis', along with a 'high growth scenario' and a 'low growth scenario'. MMAH is also proposing that municipalities be allowed to 'use higher forecasts through the municipal comprehensive review process'.

Tell MMAH that getting Population & Employment Growth Forecasts right is incredibly important. Urge MMAH to ensure that forecasts are accurate and that consideration of distribution of jobs and population is done in a manner designed to promote the emergence of sustainable, inclusive, climate-resilient communities across the GGH. Let them know that you do not support allowing municipalities to use higher forecasts as this could facilitate more sprawl and undoes the benefits that a region-wide approach to growth forecasts brings.

ii) Proposed Land Needs Assessment Methodology for A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the GGH

MMAH proposed methodology changes could take the Growth Plan away from 'target-based' to 'market demand based'

land needs assessments.

Tell MMAH that you want to see target-based (versus purely market-based) land needs assessments that are carefully chosen, closely monitored, and that are supported by other effective policy measures designed to facilitate the desired change in how urban areas in the Greater Golden Horseshoe evolve and grow. Remind MMAH that the GGH Growth Plan must place priority on an intensification first approach in order to curb sprawl, protect prime agricultural land and natural areas, and to create urban communities that are sustainable, inclusive and climate resilient.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP FIGHT THE PROPOSED CHANGES

Environment Hamilton urges you to voice your opposition to this round of the Ford government's proposed changes to the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan. You will find details below about how to submit your comments through the Environmental Registry of Ontario. Use our notes above to help guide you in preparing your comments. **Note that the comment deadline is July 31st, 2020.**

Step-by-Step Instructions For Preparing Environmental Registry Comments:

- To access the Environmental Registry of Ontario visit: <https://ero.ontario.ca>
- Register an account in your name (top right-hand corner).
- You will be commenting on two different postings on the Environmental Registry of Ontario:
 - i) Proposed Amendment 1 to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe:**
<https://ero.ontario.ca/index.php/notice/019-1680>
 - ii) Proposed Land Needs Assessment Methodology for A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the GGH:**
<https://ero.ontario.ca/index.php/notice/019-1679>

Other Actions You Can Take

- Connect with your MPP and voice your concern. Visit www.ola.org/en/members/current for MPP contact info.
- Connect with your City Councillor and the Mayor and let them know you are concerned about these changes and want to see the city strive not to sprawl. Municipalities must meet MINIMUM intensification and density targets but they can choose to aim higher. Visit www.hamilton.ca/council-committee/mayor-council for Mayor and Councillor contact information.
- Submitting your own comments & concerns in your own words has the greatest impact but you can also make use of letters already prepared by other organizations. Ontario Nature has one they have prepared in response to these two proposals which you can use or share with others. You can access it here: <https://ontarionature.org/take-action/advocate-for-nature/>
- Check out Environmental Defence's **Smart Growth Toolkit** to learn more about what progressive planning needs to look like in Ontario. See www.environmentaldefence.ca/smart-growth-toolkit/
- Visit our website for resources, updates and news on this issue: www.environmenthamilton.org/take_action
- Join Environment Hamilton – It's **FREE** and you will receive our e-blast updates with information about other upcoming events and ways to get involved. Visit: www.environmenthamilton.org/join .
- Finally, if you value the work we do, please make a one-time donation or consider becoming a monthly donor. We can't do what we do without your involvement and support! Visit www.environmenthamilton.org/donate_one

