

WHAT KIND OF ONTARIO DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN?



Possibility grows here.

COORDINATED LAND-USE PLANNING REVIEW: GROWTH PLAN 101

Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH): A Framework for Growing Smarter

Do you want to live in an Ontario characterized by transit friendly communities, permanently protected green space, and a thriving agricultural industry?

If you're like the vast majority of Ontarians, the answer is yes!

The good news – that future is entirely possible. In fact, the wheels are already in motion. We just need to pick up the pace and ensure we stay on the right track.

There are two key land-use plans that, together, provide a framework to achieve a vision of the future in which smarter growth prevails – the **Greenbelt** and the **Growth Plan** for the Greenbelt Golden Horseshoe.

Here's the bottom line: The Greenbelt Plan outlines where growth **should not occur** and the Growth Plan outlines **where and how** it should.

Why Do We Need a Growth Plan?

We live in the most populated region in Canada, which will only continue to grow. Over the next 25 years, our region's population is expected to explode by 50 per cent to 13.5 million. The Growth Plan aims to ensure we grow smarter and stop paving over farmland, destroying wetlands, and cutting down trees to build ever-sprawling car-dependent neighbourhoods.

We've also learned that this type of growth is expensive to service as brand new infrastructure is needed to provide far reaching communities with water, roads, schools, and community centres and has left many of us stuck in traffic commuting to and from work to the detriment of our family lives and our health.



The Greater Golden Horseshoe, showing inner and outer ring municipalities.

The objective of the Growth Plan is to deliver a future characterized by smarter growth – mixed-use communities that are close-knit, walkable, low-carbon, affordable, and transit-friendly. This model saves taxpayers millions of dollars in unnecessary infrastructure costs, leaving more money for transit to help ease congestion and reduce dependency on automobiles.

How is the Growth Plan Changing How We Grow in the GGH?

The basics of the Growth Plan are simple – it provides a framework for smarter growth by directing municipalities to create complete communities with a mix of housing options that are close to transit and amenities like shops, services, schools and other community facilities, instead of sprawling outward into farmland and greenspace.

The Growth Plan contains rules that encourage the construction of additional housing options, which offers more choice and meets consumer needs by building communities they can live and work. These mixed-use developments include commercial and residential places, while conserving productive farmland and important natural features and spaces.

The Growth Plan does still allow for new homes to be built on undeveloped 'greenfields', however, this is only supposed to be permitted when specific criteria are met. The Plan identifies key growth areas, directs our region's municipalities to develop in areas already serviced by infrastructure and sets minimum density targets for new "greenfield" development.

The Growth Plan doesn't call for change overnight; it's a **long-term blueprint** with a planning horizon of 2041. Specifically, the Growth Plan:

- **Projects where population and employment growth** will occur across the GGH municipalities until 2041.
- **Sets minimum density targets.** The Growth Plan establishes a target of 50 people and jobs per hectare for new development.
- **Sets minimum intensification targets.** The Growth Plan establishes a target of 40 per cent intensification in existing built-up areas.

Want to learn more about smart growth principles and how they can improve the quality of life in your community? Check out our Planning 101: Getting Smart about Growing Smart: **How growing smart can improve your community and your quality of life.**

Who's Responsible for Making Sure the Growth Plan is Applied?

Like the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan is a provincial plan that is implemented primarily by GGH's municipalities. GGH municipalities are required by the province to update their Official Plans to conform to Growth Plan requirements. How effectively municipalities have accomplished this is a matter of considerable debate.



Pickering's city centre is one of 25 existing or emerging downtown areas identified in the Growth Plan as an "urban growth centre". The city of Pickering is in the midst of implementing plans to turn its downtown into a transit and community hub.

"IF WE CONTINUE TO CONSUME LAND FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT AT THE RATE WE HAVE BEEN FOR THE PAST THREE DECADES, WE WILL JEOPARDIZE THE FINANCIAL, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT MAKE THE REGION SO ATTRACTIVE TO NEW RESIDENTS AND NEW ECONOMIC GROWTH. DEVELOPMENT WILL CONSUME 1,000 SQ KM OF PRIMARILY AGRICULTURAL LAND BY 2031, AN AREA TWICE THE SIZE OF TORONTO"

Government of Ontario,
A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
Discussion Paper, Summer 2004. P.5

“I SUPPORT THE GREENBELT BECAUSE IT PRODUCES AMAZING FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND AWARD-WINNING WINES, WHILE CONTRIBUTING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS, NATURALLY FILTERING OUR AIR AND WATER AND HELPING TO KEEP THE REGION COOL.”

David Suzuki
Renowned environmentalist and broadcaster

Is the Growth Plan Delivering on its Vision?

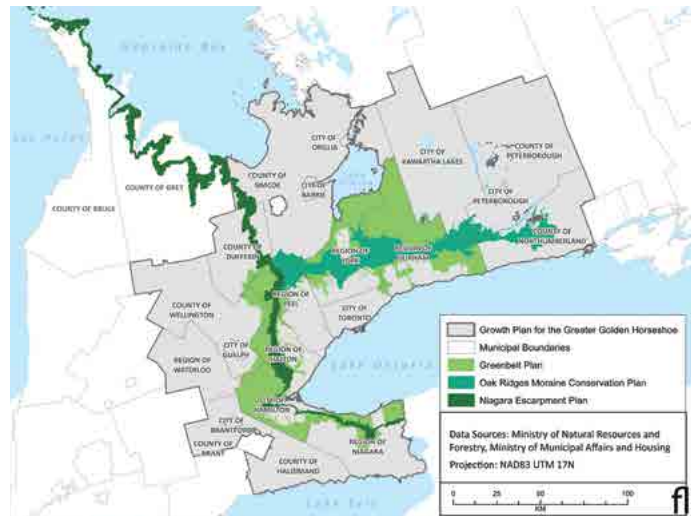
It’s been over 10 years since the Growth Plan came into effect, so the big question is – is the Plan accomplishing what it set out to do?

Many would argue that the Growth Plan has been limited in its success to date. For example, nearly all GGH municipalities are well behind achieving their density and intensification targets and new sprawling subdivisions can be seen sprouting up in many places surrounding Toronto.

What are some of the reasons for this? In addition to the time it takes for municipalities to adapt their Official Plans to comply with the Growth Plan, the majority of communities have only adopted the “minimum” targets. Just two municipalities plan to exceed the minimum targets outlined by the Growth Plan and many have been permitted by the Province to lower them.

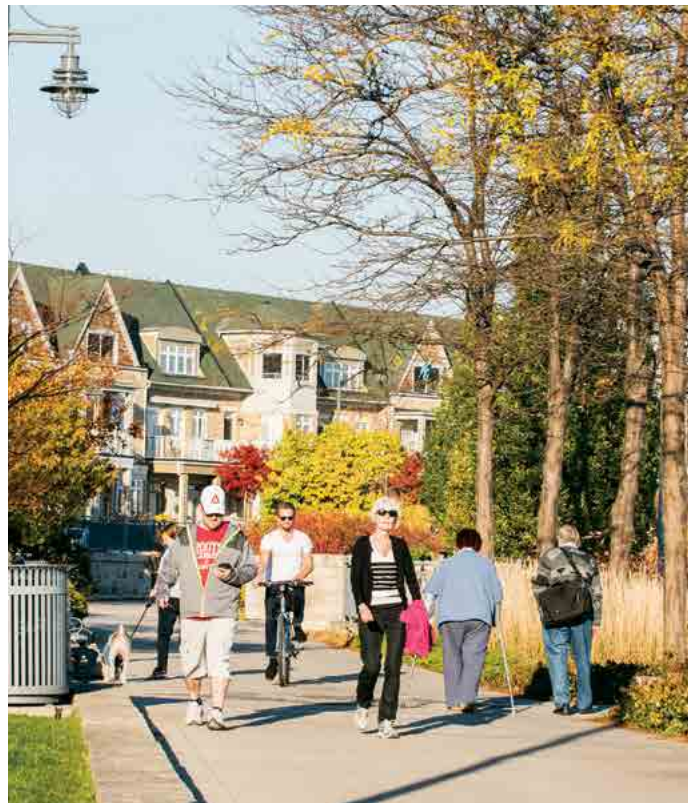
The ongoing Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review that began in early 2015 has shed more light on this issue. Formal submissions by many GGH municipalities demonstrated a resistance to transitioning to smarter growth principles in favour of the business-as-usual approach to development favouring **car-dependant**, sprawling communities.

Consultations with municipalities and the public revealed that more than a land-use plan is needed for the Growth Plan to achieve its vision – on the ground training and support for municipalities to successfully implement the Plan would go a long way to develop literacy around smart growth principles and ensure compliance on the ground.



▲ The Greater Golden Horseshoe and four land-use plans
Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2015. Our Region, Our Community, Our Home: A Discussion Document for The 2015 Co-ordinated Review. Toronto: Queen’s Printer.

▼ Brownfeild redevelopments, like the award-winning Port Credit Village, create walkable, livable neighbourhoods within existing urban boundaries.



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What Can You Do to Help Ensure a Sustainable Future for Your Community?

Get involved in the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review currently underway! The province has announced proposed changes to the Greenbelt and Growth Plans that indicate a strong commitment to curb urban sprawl and grow our communities smartly and greater support for agriculture and local food.

- **Big changes to the Growth Plan should help curb urban sprawl and encourage the development of compact, livable communities**, by directing 50% more growth to existing urban areas, and increasing density targets for projects on undeveloped green space from 50 to 80 people and jobs per hectare.
- Not only will this help us accommodate almost 3 million more people by 2031, it will make better use of the \$31 billion in provincial transit spending over the coming decade, and help us meet our ambitious climate change targets.
- The 5,500 Greenbelt farms will also benefit from the proposed changes to the Greenbelt Plan, which **enable farmers to be entrepreneurial by placing fewer restrictions on what they can do or build on their farms.**
- The revised Growth Plan will also **identify and protect an agricultural system for the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe, which builds on the Greenbelt** to ensure that the \$11 billion industry continues to grow and provide us with healthy, fresh local food.

Believe in Smart Growth and a Protected Greenbelt?

The province is currently seeking input on their proposed changes to the Greenbelt and Growth Plans until September 30, 2016.

Join Us In Showing Your Support for the Commitment to Curb Urban Sprawl and to Call on the Province to Move Quickly and Decisively to Grow the Greenbelt Further to Protect Vital Source and Drinking Water Resources.

Here's how to get involved:

1) Get informed

Visit our website for updates and resources related to the Coordinated Land Use Planning Review and province's proposed changes at www.greenbelt.ca

2) Join the #GrowourGB movement

A grassroots coalition of more than 100 community groups have joined forces to advocate for quick and decisive action by government to grow the Greenbelt to protect vital source and drinking water resources not included in the proposed changes.

3) Share your voice!

Attend one of the province's public open houses in May and June 2016 or submit a comment online through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website or through the Environmental Registry before September 30, 2016

(cover) Map Source: *Understanding the Fundamentals of the Growth Plan: Considerations for the 10-year Review*, by the Neptis Foundation (March 2015). This image has been modified from its original version to include Niagara Region in the inner ring.