

Proposed Amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 – Preliminary City Comments

Date: July 28, 2020

To: City Council

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

On June 16, 2020, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing released Proposed Amendment 1 to a Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 and Proposed Lands Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Province is requesting comments on both proposals by July 31, 2020.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019) (the "Growth Plan") sets out a long-term framework for managing growth by providing population and employment forecasts for upper- and single-tier municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and policy direction on where and how to grow. While the current Growth Plan came into effect in May 2019, the current population and employment forecasts have not been updated since 2013. The Land Needs Assessment methodology called for by the Growth Plan provides municipalities with direction on determining the quantity of land needed to accommodate growth to the horizon of the Growth Plan.

This report provides preliminary staff comments and recommendations on Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan) which includes new growth forecasts (Schedule 3) and a new planning horizon, along with a proposed new Land Needs Assessment Methodology.

Staff comments focus on our preliminary assessment of the potential implications and impacts to the City resulting from the new forecasts, the proposed land needs assessment methodology, the revised policies, and the proposed transition to the new policies and procedures.

The proposed amendments to the Growth Plan have the effect of extending the horizon of the Growth Plan and its policies through to 2051 from 2041. Increasing long range growth planning for the Region from 21 years to 31 years. This exceeds the recently amended Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020 which set a 25 year growth planning horizon.

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan will affect where the City will experience growth and development pressures and will require legislated updates to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law through a mandatory Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The City's recommended requests to the Province described in this report, are in keeping with previous Council decisions and seek to ensure the integrity of the City's Official Plan.

Any major policy amendments to the Official Plan would require a consultative and extensive work program effort that is intended to take place during the City's next MCR which work program was approved by Council at its June 29-30, 2020 meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council request that that Province continue to provide land use certainty for all Provincially Significant Employment Zones throughout the City through the deletion of the proposed amendment to policy 2.2.5.10 of the Growth Plan.
2. City Council request that the Province revise Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan (2019) to extend the date by which municipalities must conform with the policies in the Growth Plan to July 1, 2023.
3. City Council request the Province to revise Proposed Amendment 1 of the Growth Plan policies and mapping to recognize and include additional "Provincially Significant Employment Zones" in the City of Toronto, (including the City's major office parks) as identified in the report entitled Proposed Amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 - Preliminary City Comments dated February 25, 2019 adopted by Council at its meeting on February 26, 2019.
4. City Council request the Province to enable the use of Zoning with Conditions as permitted under section 113 (2) of the City of Toronto Act 2006 by passing a regulation under sections 122.1 to allow the City to address the protection and retention of employment uses with any approved conversion request.
5. City Council recommends the Province use "Mock A" Reference forecast in order to maintain the continuity and consistency of the long-range population forecasts in the face of near-term uncertainty as the "Mock A" Reference Forecast for population is recommended for inclusion in the final Amendment 1.
6. City Council recommends that the Province review in consultation with City staff the Reference Forecast for employment for the City of Toronto for 2031 and 2041 with regards to historical trends in the City's employment.
7. City Council recommends that the Province delete the proposed amendment to policies 2.2.1.1 and 5.2.4 as they are inconsistent with the fundamental structure and intentions of regional growth planning embodied in A Place to Grow.

8. City Council recommends that the Province provide further detail and the opportunity for the City to review and to provide comments on the draft Land Needs Assessment guidance material prior to it being formally released.

9. City Council request that the Province revise Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan to continue to protect the habitat of endangered and threatened species from the establishment of new mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits and quarries.

10. City Council forward this item to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing by the Province's commenting deadline of July 31, 2020.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City Planning Division confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in the report in the current budget year or in future years.

DECISION HISTORY

On January 15, 2019, the Province released Proposed Amendment 1 to the previous Growth Plan (2017). At its meeting of February 26, 2019, City Council adopted a number of requested revisions to the draft Growth Plan (2019). These comments were forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for consideration. The Decision History can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH2.4>.

The Province brought into effect A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe ("Growth Plan (2019)") on May 16, 2019. At its meeting on October 15, 2019 the Planning and Housing Committee considered a report (September 30, 2019) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning that described requirements for the Growth Plan (2019) conformity exercise and Municipal Comprehensive Review. The Decision History can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH9.2>.

The Committee requested the Chief Planner to report on a work program and associated timing for the completion of the required Growth Plan conformity exercise.

At its meeting on June 29 and 30, 2020 City Council considered a report (May 19, 2020) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning that outlines City Planning staff's recommended approach and work plan that will ultimately result in Official Plan Amendments required to achieve the Official Plan's conformity with the Growth Plan (2019). The Decision History can be accessed at this link:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH14.4>.

COMMENTS

The New Growth Forecasts

The Minister of Municipal Affairs initiated a review and update of the Distribution of Population and Employment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Schedule 3 to the Growth Plan), in accordance with policy 5.2.4.7. Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan provides updated population and employment forecasts for upper- and single-tier municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and extends the planning horizon from 2041 to 2051. The Ministry is considering three growth outlooks for the purposes for consultation: a Reference Growth Forecast, a High Growth Scenario, and a Low Growth Scenario.

The Province hired Hemson Consulting to undertake the update to the Growth Forecasts and they prepared a detailed 85 page background report entitled [Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Forecasts to 2051](#).

New Population and Employment Forecasts

The Ministry is considering amending the Growth Plan with one of the following growth outlooks: The Reference Growth Forecast, High Growth Scenario, or Low Growth Scenario for the forecast numbers. The Reference Forecast represents the most likely future growth outlook and is the result of extensive modelling and analysis. The High and Low Scenarios illustrate possible growth prospects under a set of variable assumptions about the future economic outlook. The Ministry is seeking feedback on the forecast and the two scenarios as set out in the charts below.

A Place to Grow Proposed Amendment 1 Forecasts for the City of Toronto

Table 1: A Place to Grow Proposed Amendment 1 Population Forecasts for the City of Toronto

Population (000s)	2031	2041	2051
Reference	3,190	3,400	3,650
Low	3,190	3,400	3,440
High	3,190	3,400	3,770

Table 2: A Place to Grow Proposed Amendment 1 Employment Forecasts for the City of Toronto

Employment (000s)	2031	2041	2051
Reference	1,660	1,720	1,980
Low	1,660	1,720	1,860
High	1,660	1,720	2,060

The Proposed Amendment contains two sets of scenarios. The "Mock A" tables contain Reference, Low and High forecasts for the years 2031, 2041 and 2051 as shown above. The "Mock B" tables contain only the 2051 forecast as shown in the 2051 column in the tables above.

It is important to note that the 2031 and 2041 figures are unchanged from the existing Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan. Retaining the existing population forecasts enables the continuity of the work that municipalities have undertaken to bring their official plans into conformity with the existing forecasts.

The updates to the Growth Plan forecasts are not directly aligned with the Census years, and this is appropriate as Census data can take some time to be distilled and analyzed to provide direction for growth forecasting. As with the 2013, and 2017 amendments to the Growth Plan coming on the heels of the 2011 and 2016 Census, staff anticipate that these forecasts will need to be reviewed once the results of the 2021 Census become available. This is particularly necessary in order to assess the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Population Forecasts

According to Statistics Canada's latest population estimates for the City of Toronto, released in February 2020, the City's population including estimated net Census under-coverage as of July 1, 2019 was estimated at 2,965,713. If the population forecasts supporting Schedule 3 as appears in the Growth Plan 2013 and 2019 are interpolated to 2019, the forecasted population at 2019 would be 2,931,000. The City's latest population estimate is 34,713 people above the interpolated forecast. Consequently, the City's population is on track with the Growth Plan forecasts to 2031, if not slightly ahead.

The underlying technical forecast study on which the proposed Schedule 3 forecasts are based discusses the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic. It notes that these forecasts were originally premised on the population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe being consistent with the Ministry of Finance Population Projections through the forecast period. However, the study states that the proposed population forecasts were revised with a reduction of approximately 13% growth over the 2016 to 2021 period and a corresponding decline of 15% in GGH employment in 2020 Q2 with about three-quarters of the job losses anticipated to be recovered by 2021 Census Day. The study states: "The long-term effects of the pandemic are very uncertain..." (p. 5).

In light of the uncertainty due to COVID-19 and the recovery, along with the upcoming 2021 Census, staff are recommending the Province use the "Mock A" (multi year) Reference Forecast to inform Schedule 3 of the amended Growth Plan.

Employment Forecasts

The 2019 Growth Plan contains employment forecasts for the City of Toronto. Employment is forecast to grow to 1,720,000 jobs by 2041. This same forecast appears in Proposed Amendment 1. If the average rate of employment growth reported by the Toronto Employment Survey 2019 were to continue (2.1% annually over the last ten years), Toronto would be likely to reach the Growth Plan 2041 forecast between 2023 to 2025, at least sixteen years before the forecast year. Therefore, this forecast does not reflect the recent employment growth of the City. The medium and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are not yet known. The forecast study supporting the revised forecasts in Proposed Amendment 1 states that the forecasts incorporate a severe economic contraction in 2020 while anticipating a return to pre-pandemic expectations within three years. Nevertheless, the study observes that the pandemic has the potential to affect the assumptions of the forecast such as overall economic shifts and work practices including telework, all of which will necessitate ongoing monitoring.

Proposed Amendment 1 appends a new forecast horizon of 2051 and a Reference forecast of 1,980,000 jobs by that year. The forecast study supporting the proposed Schedule 3 forecast suggests an average annual growth rate of 10,629 jobs per annum from 2016 to 2051. Over the past ten years, the City's employment grew by 2.1% or 27,661 jobs per annum or 2.6 times this rate of growth. The longevity of the Toronto Employment Survey, first launched in 1983, enables the calculation of average annual employment growth over the past thirty-five years of booms, busts and recoveries to compare to the proposed employment forecast at its new horizon thirty-five years beyond 2016. The City's total employment grew 1.1% or by 12,237 jobs per annum since 1984. This growth rate is 15% above the average annual growth rate suggested by the forecast study supporting the revised employment forecasts in Proposed Amendment 1. This suggests that the Reference Forecast may underestimate the city's employment growth over the long term.

While the forecasts and the City's measured employment growth are not perfectly aligned, the use of the "Mock A" Reference Forecast is still acceptable and appropriate as there is nothing in the Growth Plan that prevents the City from exceeding the forecast or planning for more employment growth, in order to ensure the reference forecasts are accurate, it is recommended that the Province review in consultation with the City Staff the Reference Forecast for employment for the City of Toronto for 2031 and 2041 with regards to historical trends in the City's employment.

Land Needs Assessment Methodology

Policy 2.2.1.5 of the Growth Plan requires upper- and single-tier municipalities to use the Land Needs Assessment Methodology (LNA) issued by the Minister to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan.

The proposed revised Land Needs Assessment Methodology eliminates the majority of the guidance of the 2018 Guidance document. The proposed Methodology is helpful in providing flexibility for each municipality to develop and apply its own methodology for assessing its land needs within the context of this general guidance. Rather than a comprehensive document which provides explicit direction, the revised methodology is at a high level and provides significant flexibility.

Implementation of the proposed methodology is likely to result in many different approaches to land needs assessment across the Greater Golden Horseshoe rather than the standard process referred to in the current Growth Plan. While the proposed methodology places increased emphasis on addressing the needs of the market and historical trends, clear direction on how market demand is to be achieved along with other Growth Plan objectives towards higher density, and transit supportive and walkable communities focused on producing a variety of affordable housing forms is not provided.

The LNA is anticipated to be the key vehicle of the Province's new "market based" policies set out in the PPS 2020 update. In the absence of the formal guidance document, and with the flexibility proposed with the new methodology, staff anticipate the new LNA process to create potential tension in the system with the interpretation and implementation of the policy and LNA methodology.

As the guidance material could assist in eliminating much of this potential conflict, staff recommend that the Province provide further detail and the opportunity for municipalities to review and to provide constructive comments on the draft guidance material before it is formally released.

The Revised Policies

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) in Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZs)

In May 2019, the changes to the Growth Plan provided new policies to enable the conversion of lands within employment areas to non-employment uses in advance of the Municipal Comprehensive review process. However, certain employment areas were identified as Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ) and lands located in a PSEZ could only be converted to non-employment uses through ministerial approval of a city-initiated MCR.

The Province is now proposing to revise Growth Plan (2019) Policy 2.2.5.10 to allow the conversion of lands identified as PSEZ provided that the lands are located within a MTSA.

This proposed change to the PSEZ policy framework affects approximately 38 MTSAs throughout the City. The amount of *Employment Areas* that could be affected is approximately 1,150 hectares (or 13% of all *Employment Areas*) reducing the overall area that is afforded the unfettered PSEZ recognition from 67% to 54%. Attachment 2 to this report sets out the breakdown of area of the lands affected by the proposed policy. Attachment 3 to this report illustrates the potentially affected *Employment Areas* within PSEZs, given that they overlap with MTSAs. These *Employment Areas* that are

identified as Provincial Significant Employment Zones along planned or existing transit routes provide a level of land use certainty for businesses.

Land use certainty is important for business owners to remain competitive and be able to expand their operations with the knowledge that conflicting or sensitive land uses will not be introduced nearby to negatively impact current and future operations. In their report entitled, "Economic Value of the City's Employment Lands", the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture and Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, describe the merits of and benefits to the preservation of *Employment Areas*. The report can be accessed at:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-64931.pdf>

Staff are recommending the following two amendments to the Growth Plan and one implementation tool in support of the protection of vital Employment areas:

- The Province revise Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan to continue to provide land use certainty for all Provincially Significant Employment Zones throughout the city by restricting conversions to permit non-employment uses through the Municipal Comprehensive Review only.
- The Province to revise Proposed Amendment 1 of the Growth Plan policies and mapping to recognize and include additional "Provincially Significant Employment Zones" in the City of Toronto, (including the City's major office parks). The additional Provincially Significant Employment Zones have been identified in the [report](#) from Chief Planner adopted by City Council on February 26, 2019. (Gregg we will add the TMMIS link)
- The Province enable the use of Zoning with Conditions as permitted under section 113 (2) of the City of Toronto Act 2006 by passing a regulation under sections 122.1 to allow the City to address the protection and retention of employment uses with any conversion request.

Alignment with Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

Given the most recent changes to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, (PPS) proposed Amendment 1 proposes to change the Growth Plan policies to ensure continued alignment with the new PPS, which came into effect on May 1, 2020. These changes, which are mostly technical in nature, are intended to ensure that the Growth Plan reflects up to date references to the new PPS and maintains consistency across the planning system with things such as definitions and planning horizons. Staff have no concerns with these technical amendments however some of the concerns regarding the new PPS remain outstanding and the revised language in the Growth Plan does nothing to address them. The report can be accessed at this link:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-138422.pdf>

Mineral Aggregate Operations

The Province is proposing to remove the protections of "habitat of endangered and threatened species" for the establishment of mineral aggregate operations, new

wayside pits and quarries (Policy 4.2.8.2.a.ii). This proposed removal would reduce protection to the region's most vulnerable species. While there are no active aggregate operations in the City, many endangered and threatened species rely on a range of habitat throughout their life cycle without regard for municipal boundaries. Toronto's Natural Heritage System is part of a regional system linking wildlife habitat from the Lake Ontario shoreline to the Oak Ridges Moraine. This proposed change reduces the opportunity for municipal land use planning to protect the region's most vulnerable species when they conflict with siting of new aggregate operations.

Staff recommend that the Province revise Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan to continue to protect the habitat of endangered and threatened species from the establishment of new mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits and quarries.

Mandatory Engagement with Indigenous Communities

The policies in the Growth Plan policy regarding engagement with indigenous communities have been modified to better align with the new PPS policy regarding mandatory engagement. The new policy states that "Municipalities **shall** engage Indigenous communities..." and " Planning authorities **shall** co-ordinate planning matters with Indigenous communities throughout the planning process ". These policy changes have no impact on the City's current practices as their intent and outcomes are currently practiced and in place at the City. The City values and actively engages with indigenous communities on land use matters following the City's well established protocols.

High Growth Forecast use - Policy 2.2.1.1 and 5.2.4

The Proposed Amendment would amend Policy 2.2.1.1 and 5.2.4 to enable single and upper-tier municipalities to establish forecasts higher than those that appear in Schedule 3 their respective municipal comprehensive reviews. One of the primary purposes of the Growth Plan is to coordinate and manage regional planning across the GGH. Section 2.1 of the Growth Plan states: "To better co-ordinate planning for growth across the region, this Plan provides population and employment forecasts for all upper- and single-tier municipalities in the GGH. These growth forecasts are utilized to set and budget and plan for local, regional and inter-regional infrastructure. These growth forecasts are a foundational component of the Growth Plan. They are to be reviewed in consultation with municipalities at least every five years." De-coupling forecasted growth from the Growth Plan through the use of individual municipal forecasts impacts the objective of coordinated growth management. Rather, Schedule 3 needs to be reviewed at least every five years, in concert with the release of the national Census and in consultation with municipalities.

Staff recommend that the proposed amendment to policies 2.2.1.1 and 5.2.4 be deleted as they are inconsistent with the fundamental structure and intentions of regional growth planning embodied in A Place to Grow.

Transition

The Province is proposing that all planning matters would be required to conform to the Growth Plan as amended by Proposed Amendment 1. The Province is only proposing transition for planning matters under the new Growth Plan for items currently before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) where a hearing is complete, but no decision has been issued. All other planning matters will be required to conform to the new Growth Plan, as amended upon the Province's enactment of Proposed Amendment 1.

The Province is not proposing to extend the date by which all municipalities must have their official plans conform with the Growth Plan, despite the announcement of Proposed Amendment 1. All municipalities are required to bring their respective official plans into conformity with the Growth Plan by July 1, 2022. This date was set on June 12, 2017, which was shortly after the Province brought into effect the **previous** Growth Plan (2017).

Since that date, a new Growth Plan (2019) was brought into effect on May 16, 2019, which is now proposed to be amended through Amendment 1. Should Amendment 1 be brought into effect immediately upon the comment closing date, the City would only have two years to undertake its Municipal Comprehensive Review and Growth Plan (2019) conformity exercise. Previously, the City had **five** years, as indicated in the letter from the Ministers to the Mayor in Attachment 2 to this report. Given the complexity of the upcoming MCR (as described in [Item PH14.4](#)) and proposed policy changes outlined in Proposed Amendment 1, the City will be challenged to achieve conformity by July 1, 2022. In order to ensure sufficient time to address all the background work and decision making moving forward with the MCR, the Province should consider the extension to the date by which municipalities must conform with the policies in the Growth Plan to July 1, 2023.

Next Steps

City Planning staff, in coordination with other divisions, will continue to monitor the review of the proposed amendments to the Growth Plan and take appropriate action to ensure the policy framework continues to support the City's vision for growth.

Upon the Province's enactment of any changes to the Growth Plan, City Planning staff will report to the Planning and Housing Committee if necessary on any required

changes to the work program describing the necessary projects, timelines and resource requirements to accomplish the next Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and achieve conformity with the amended Growth Plan by 2022.

CONTACT

Kerri A. Voumvakis, Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, 416-392-8148,
Kerri.Voumvakis@toronto.ca

Mark Christie, Project Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, 416-395-7095,
Mark.Christie@toronto.ca

Kelly Matsumoto, Practice Lead, Planning & Administrative Tribunal Law, 416-392-8042
kelly.matsumoto@toronto.ca

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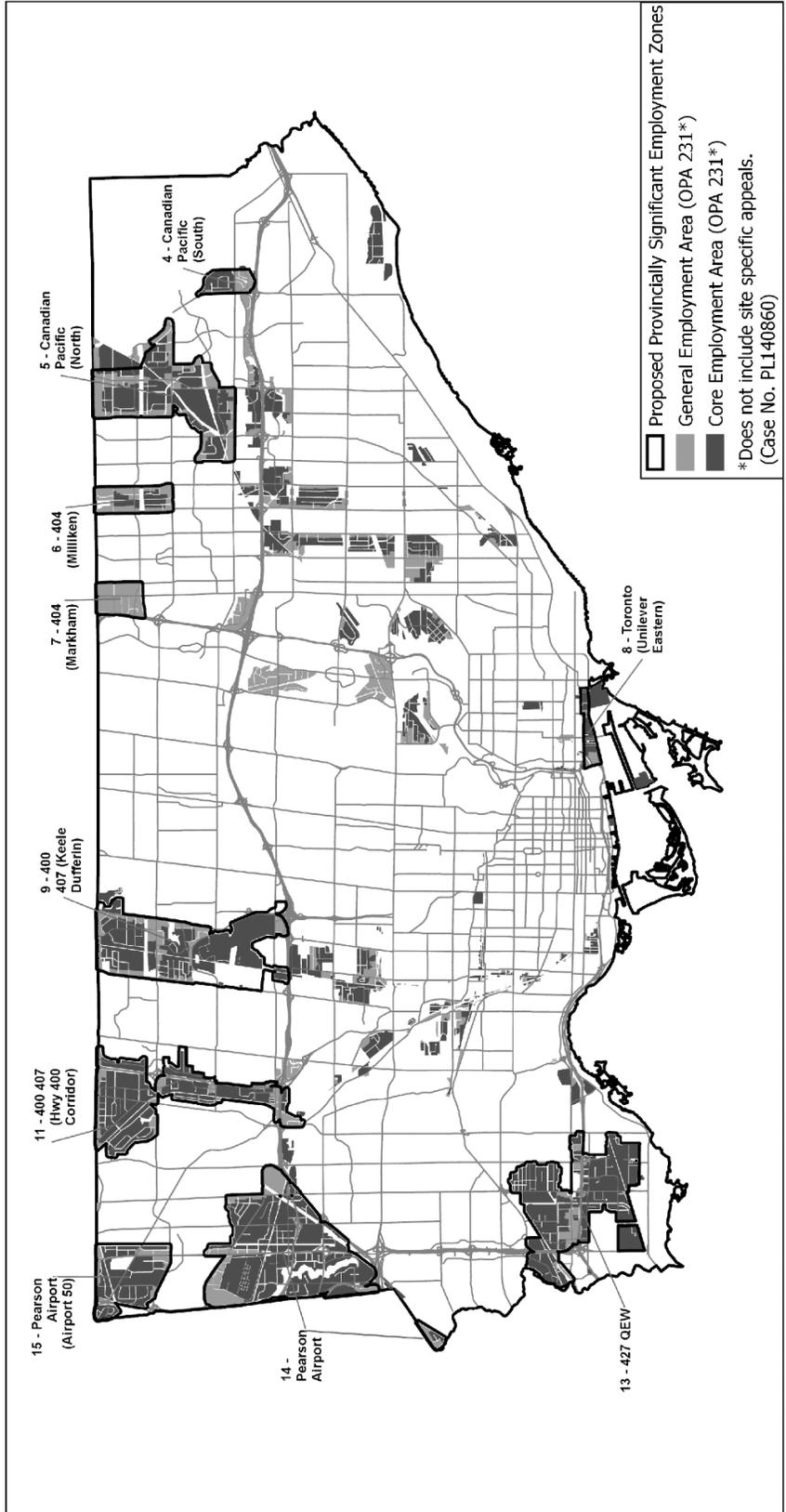
Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ)
Attachment 2: Breakdown of PSEZ / MTSA Land Areas
Attachment 3: Major Transit Station Areas Overlapping with Provincially Significant Employment Zones
Attachment 4: Ministerial Letter Establishing July 1, 2022 Conformity Date

Attachment 1: Provincially Significant Employment Zones (PSEZ)

TORONTO Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones



Toronto City Planning, Research and Information - January 29, 2019

Attachment 2: Breakdown of PSEZ / MTSA Land Areas

From the previous report (pre-Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan 2019)

Category	Land Area (ha)	Percentage of Total
Employment Areas Total	8,100	100%
Employment Areas Within a PSEZ	5,500	67%
Employment Areas Outside of a PSEZ	2,600	33%

If Amendment 1 was to be approved, as proposed the new breakdown would be:

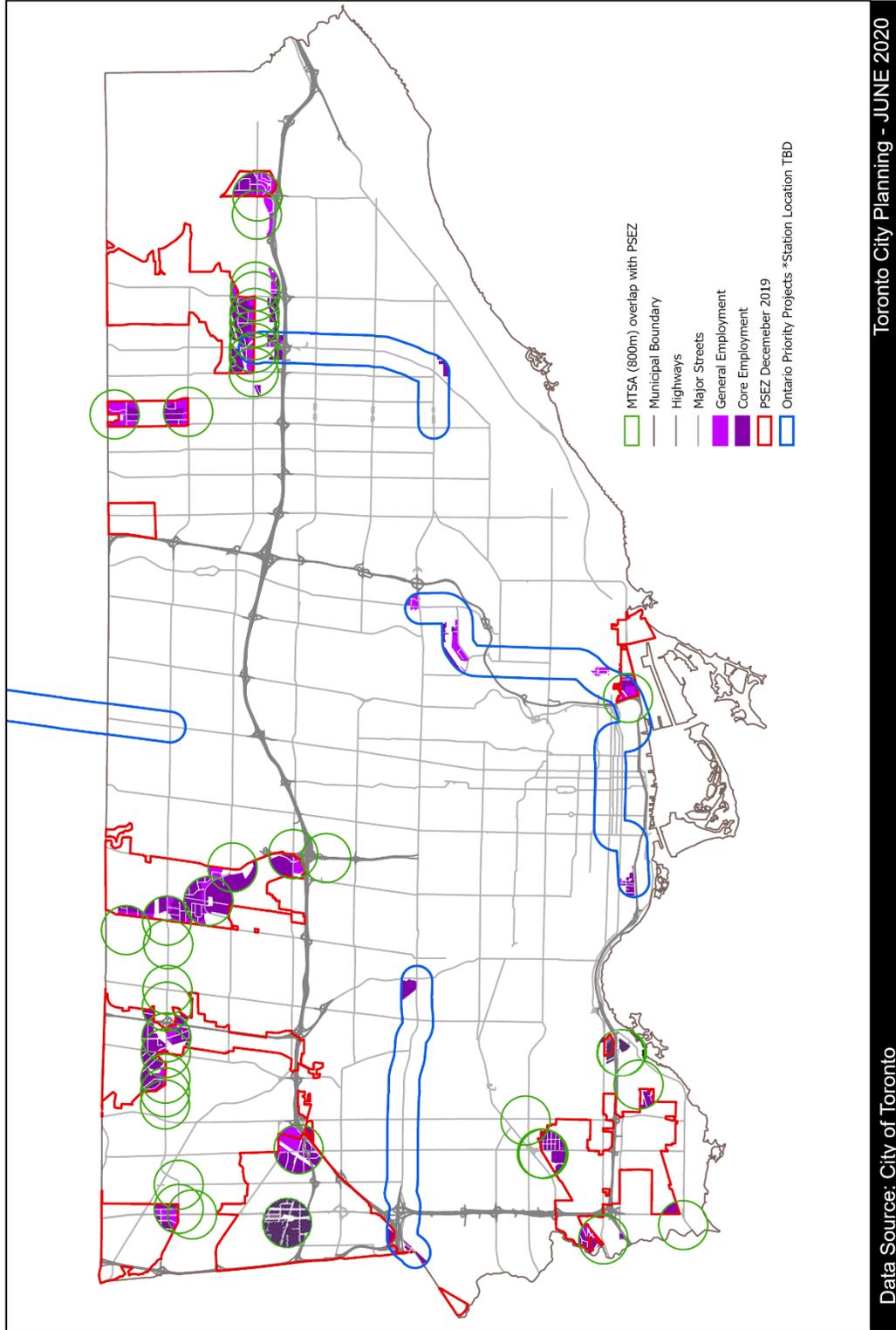
Category	Land Area (ha)	Percentage of Total
Employment Areas Total	8,100	100%
Employment Areas Subject to PSEZ Conversion Policies	4,350	54%
Total Employment Areas Not Subject to PSEZ Conversion Policies	3,750	46%

Of the 46% of Employment Areas Not Subject to PSEZ Conversion Policies:

Category	Land Area (ha)	Percentage of Total
Employment Areas Within a PSEZ and Within a Potential MTSA	1,150	13%
Employment Areas Outside of a PSEZ	2,600	33%

Attachment 3: Major Transit Station Areas Overlapping with Provincially Significant Employment Zones

Toronto Major Transit Station Areas Overlapping with Provincially Significant Employment Zones



Toronto City Planning - JUNE 2020

Data Source: City of Toronto

Attachment 3: Ministerial Letter Establishing July 1, 2022 Conformity Date

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs**

Office of the Minister

777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Tel: 416 585-7000
Fax: 416 585-6470

**Ministère des
Affaires municipales**

Bureau du ministre

777, rue Bay, 17^e étage
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Tél. : 416 585-7000
Télééc. : 416 585-6470



**Ministry of Natural
Resources and Forestry**

Office of the Minister

Room 6630, Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto ON M7A 1W3
Tel: 416-314-2301
Fax: 416-314-2216
www.ontario.ca/MNRF

Ministère des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts

Bureau du ministre

Edifice Whitney, bureau 6630
99, rue Wellesley Ouest
Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1W3
Tél: 416-314-2301
Télééc.: 416-314-2216
www.ontario.ca/MRNF

June 12, 2017

Your Worship
Mayor John Tory
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall, 11th Floor, East Tower
100 Queen St. West
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory:

Re: Provincial Land Use Plans

Following two years of extensive consultation, including recommendations from an Advisory Panel chaired by former federal cabinet minister and former Mayor of Toronto, David Crombie, we are pleased to provide you with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, Greenbelt Plan (2017), Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017) and Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017). The Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017) came into effect on June 1, 2017. The other three plans will come into effect on July 1, 2017.

As you are aware, the Greater Golden Horseshoe is Canada's largest economic engine and one of the fastest growing regions in North America. Located in the heart of the Great Lakes region, the Greater Golden Horseshoe contains many of Canada's most significant environmental features and landscapes, including the Niagara Escarpment, as well as some of Canada's most important and productive farmland. First Nations and Métis communities also have a unique relationship with the land and its resources, which continues to shape the character of the area today.

These four land use plans work together to manage growth, curb sprawl, encourage complete communities, protect green spaces for future generations and support economic development in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe and Niagara Escarpment area.

To develop these updated plans, we met with more than 4,600 attendees at town hall meetings, open houses and technical briefings, and received more than 42,000 comments. We heard from First Nations and Métis communities, municipalities, stakeholders, local residents, the Greenbelt Council, and the Niagara Escarpment Commission. This input has been invaluable in helping to shape the final plans as part of the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review.

The plans now work better together and are more responsive to the needs of Ontarians living and working in the region. The updated plans give communities a stronger planning framework with new and clearer policies on building compact, complete communities with a diverse range of housing options that better connect transit to where people live and work. They strengthen protection of employment lands, support a thriving agricultural sector, and strengthen protections for our natural heritage and water systems, wetlands, woodlands, plants and animals. The updated plans will also support actions to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities adapt to and become more resilient to a changing climate.

The Greenbelt has grown to include 21 major urban river valleys between the Greenbelt and Lake Ontario and their associated coastal wetlands, and five new parcels of land in Hamilton, Niagara, and Halton Hills as protected countryside.

The four plans are available for review and download on our website:

<https://ontario.ca/greatergoldenhorseshoeplans>.

You may also wish to contact the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' Municipal Services Offices closest to you for additional information on updated plans, or the Niagara Escarpment Commission for information on the updated Niagara Escarpment Plan:

Central (Toronto): (416) 585-6226 or 1-800-668-0230

Western (London): (519) 873-4020 or 1-800-265-4736

Eastern (Kingston): (613) 545-2100 or 1-800-267-9438

Niagara Escarpment Commission (Georgetown): (519) 877-5191

Niagara Escarpment Commission (Thornbury): (519) 599-3340

The *Places to Grow Act, 2005* provides that official plans must be amended to conform with a growth plan within three years of the effective date. The Act also provides that the Minister of Municipal Affairs can establish an alternative timeframe for conformity.

To synchronize the timeframe for municipal implementation of the Growth Plan, 2017 with legislated timeframes for implementation of the Greenbelt Plan (2017), and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017), the Minister of Municipal Affairs is directing July 1st, 2022 as the alternative date for upper and single-tier official plans to be brought into conformity with the Growth Plan, 2017.

Lower-tier official plans rely on the direction provided through upper-tier official plans and therefore the Minister of Municipal Affairs is directing an alternative date for conformity with the Growth Plan, 2017 and the applicable upper-tier official plan. For lower-tier municipalities, the conformity date will be within one year of the applicable upper-tier official plan taking effect.

To support implementation of these plans, the province is developing draft criteria, methods and mapping for the natural heritage system; draft interim mapping and implementation procedures for the agricultural system; as well as a land budget methodology. Municipalities will have an opportunity to provide input in the coming months.

We look forward to working with your municipality as we implement the new policies to support a strong, healthy and sustainable future for our growing region.

Thank you for participating in the Co-ordinated Review and for providing valuable recommendations and feedback. We look forward to continuing to work with you as important partners in shaping the future of this significant region of the Province.

Sincerely,



Bill Mauro
Minister of Municipal Affairs



Kathryn McGarry
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

Enclosure:

- Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017
- Greenbelt Plan (2017)
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)
- Niagara Escarpment Plan (2017)

cc/ Municipal Clerk
Planning Department Head