

2017 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Proposed Changes Released by
MMAH on January 15, 2019

January 16, 2019



Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017

- Released on January 15, 2019 by MMAH
- Comments on proposed changes to be received by February 28, 2019
- **Employment Planning:** A modernized employment area designation system that ensures lands used for employment are appropriately protected while unlocking land for residential development. The proposed amendment includes:
 - Introduction of provincially significant employment zones identified by MMAH to be protected and not converted outside the municipal comprehensive review
 - A new policy that creates a one-time window to allow municipalities to undertake some conversions between the effective date of the proposed amendments and their next municipal comprehensive review, where appropriate and subject to criteria. Includes requirement to maintain a significant number of jobs on those lands
 - Removal of prime employment area designation
 - Modified language that requires municipalities to set multiple density targets for employment areas rather than a single target and that removes requirement for an employment strategy
 - Modified language regarding direction on locating and preserving employment areas adjacent to major goods movement facilities and corridors
 - Clarification that upper- and single-tier municipalities can designate employment areas at any time before the next municipal comprehensive review, including adding existing lower-tier municipal designations
 - A new policy that requires municipalities to retain space for a similar number of jobs when redeveloping employment lands
 - Clarification that within existing office parks, non-employment uses should be limited
 - Modified language that requires municipalities to provide for an appropriate interface to maintain land use compatibility between employment areas and adjacent non-employment areas

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- **Settlement Area Boundary Expansions:** A system that enables local municipal decisions on reasonable changes to settlement area boundaries in a timely manner so as to unlock land faster for residential and commercial development that supports more jobs and housing. The proposed amendment includes:
 - Clarifying policy to focus on outcomes rather than specifying types of studies to justify the feasibility and location of settlement area boundary expansions
 - A new policy that allows municipalities to adjust settlement area boundaries outside the municipal comprehensive review if there is no net increase in land within settlement areas, subject to criteria
 - A new policy that allows municipalities to undertake settlement area boundary expansions that are no larger than 40 hectares outside the municipal comprehensive review, subject to criteria
 - Removal of requirement to de-designate excess lands when undertaking settlement area boundary expansions
- **Small Rural Settlements:** A system that recognizes small rural settlements as areas that are not expected to face significant growth pressures. The proposed amendment includes:
 - Introduction of a new defined term “rural settlement” as a subset of “settlement areas” and removal of “undelineated built-up areas”
 - Specification that rural settlements are not part of the designated greenfield area
 - A new policy that allows minor rounding out of rural settlements in keeping with the rural character of the area, and subject to other criteria

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- **Agricultural and Natural Heritage Systems:** Greater Golden Horseshoe regional mapping systems that are factual and reflect the local mapping realities, while providing for the appropriate level of protections for our natural resources and continuing to build the economic viability of our agri-food industry. The proposed amendment includes:
- Specification that the provincial mapping of the agricultural land base and the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan does not apply until it has been implemented in upper- and single-tier official plans
- During the period before provincial mapping is implemented in upper- and single-tier official plans, the Growth Plan policies for protecting prime agricultural areas and natural heritage systems and features will apply to municipal mapping
- Specification that municipalities can refine and implement provincial mapping in advance of the municipal comprehensive review
- Specification that once provincial mapping of the agricultural land base has been implemented in official plans, further refinements may only occur through a municipal comprehensive review

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- **Intensification and Density Targets:** A simplified approach to minimum intensification and density targets that reflects the objective of supporting provincial transit investments, the planned growth rates and local realities of different communities in the region, including market demand for housing. The application of the different levels of targets recognizes that "one-size does not fit all" and makes it easier to understand and measure the impacts of growth in the region. The proposed amendment includes:
- Revised policy that establishes different minimum intensification targets for municipalities. The following targets would take effect at the next municipal comprehensive review with no further increase in 2031:
 - The City of Hamilton and the Regions of Peel, Waterloo and York will have a minimum intensification target of 60 per cent
 - The Cities of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Orillia and Peterborough and the Regions of Durham, Halton and Niagara will have a minimum intensification target of 50 per cent
 - The City of Kawartha Lakes and the Counties of Brant, Dufferin, Haldimand, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Wellington will establish a minimum intensification target based on maintaining or improving upon their current minimum intensification target

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017

- Revised policy that establishes different minimum designated greenfield area density targets for municipalities. The following targets would take effect at the next municipal comprehensive review and apply to the entire designated greenfield area (with the exception of net-outs):
 - The City of Hamilton and the Regions of Peel, Waterloo and York will have a minimum designated greenfield area density target of 60 residents and jobs per hectare
 - The Cities of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Orillia and Peterborough and the Regions of Durham, Halton and Niagara will have a minimum designated greenfield area density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare
 - The City of Kawartha Lakes and the Counties of Brant, Dufferin, Haldimand, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Wellington will have a minimum designated greenfield area density target of 40 residents and jobs per hectare
- New policies that permit all municipalities to apply for alternative intensification and designated greenfield area density targets, with simplified criteria
- Clarification that intensification should be prioritized around strategic growth areas while also being encouraged generally throughout the delineated built-up area