

Province Releases Proposals to Change Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe

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By Hon. Peter Van Loan

On January 15, 2019, the Minister of Municipal Affairs posted proposed changes to the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry. The province is now receiving comments on the proposed changes for 45 days.

Highlights of the changes include:

- Permitting small additions to settlement areas (up to 40 hectares) on municipal initiative outside the context of a Municipal Comprehensive Review
- Removing the obligation of municipalities to de-designate “excess lands” in settlement areas
- Streamlining study requirements for expansions of settlement areas
- Establishing new, more practical, intensification and density targets

In Hamilton, Peel, York and Waterloo, 60% of growth should be through intensification. Greenfield densities are now 60 jobs/people per hectare (down from 80).

In Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Orillia, Peterborough and the Durham, Halton and Niagara regions, 50% of growth should be through intensification (down from 60%). Greenfield densities are now 50 jobs/people per hectare (down from 80).

For the city of Kawartha Lakes and the counties of Brant, Dufferin, Haldimand, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Wellington, intensification should maintain or improve on targets in existing Official Plans. Greenfield densities are now 40 jobs/people per hectare.

- Conversions to residential uses will be permitted in employment areas outside of a Municipal Comprehensive Review where there is a need, and where it will “maintain a significant number of jobs” on the lands.
- Conversions will not be permitted in 29 designated “provincially significant employment areas.”
- The provincial mapping of the Natural Heritage System is put on hold, to be implemented through refined mapping by single and upper-tier municipalities.

For further details on the proposed changes, how they may affect you, how to comment, or how to pursue opportunities created by these new policies, please contact a member of our Municipal & Land Use Planning Group.

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