

Proposed Approach to Implementation of the proposed Provincial Planning Statement

This document outlines the proposed approach to implementation of the new policy document, if approved. These include the proposed approach to the following:

- Effective date and transition
- Timing for official plan updates
- Employment area changes
- Various matters specific to the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including:
 - Continued implementation of forecasts to 2051
 - Timing for changes to upper-tier planning responsibilities
 - Go-forward approach to Provincially Significant Employment Zones
 - Approach to maintain existing Greenbelt policies

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing welcomes your feedback on the following proposed approach to key aspects of implementation.

Land use planning is only one of the tools for implementing provincial interests. A wide range of legislation, regulations, policies and programs (such as Building Code Act, Endangered Species Act, Ontario Heritage Act, Clean Water Act, etc.) may apply to decisions with respect to Planning Act applications and affect planning matters, and assist in implementing these interests.

Effective Date and Transition

The effective date would be the date specified through an order in council approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council pursuant to section 3 of the Planning Act. To provide municipalities and other planning authorities an opportunity to understand and adapt to the policy changes, the Ministry is proposing to release the final policies for a short period of time before they take effect (targeting fall 2023).

Any decision on a planning matter made on or after the effective date of the new policy document would be subject to the new policies. The only exception would be if a transition regulation were made under a new authority proposed in the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* (if passed). The government is seeking feedback on any specific transition issues anticipated to be associated with these proposed new policies that could be mitigated through the use of this proposed new regulation-making authority (including any potential issues associated with the repeal of the existing Growth Plan transition regulation O. Reg. 311/06).

Timing for Official Plan Updates

The Planning Act requires official plans to be revised every five years (or every ten years after a new official plan). The intention is that official plans would be updated as necessary to implement these new policies at the time of their ordinary review cycle.

Official Plan Updates related to Change to the Definition of “Area of Employment”

The *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023* will, if passed, change the definition in the *Planning Act* of “area of employment” to scope them to only those uses that cannot locate in mixed-use areas and require protection against conversion (e.g., heavy industry, manufacturing, large-scale warehousing, etc.). This change is proposed to take effect on proclamation, to facilitate alignment with the new policy document.

As many municipalities’ existing employment areas currently allow a range of uses, including a mix of office, retail, industrial, warehousing, and other uses, time-sensitive official plan updates will be needed to align with the new definition. Once the proposed legislative and policy changes (if approved) take effect, areas that do not meet the definition would no longer be subject to policy requirements for “conversions” to non-employment uses.

To maintain the integrity of employment areas that are intended to remain protected over the long-term, municipalities should update their official plans to explicitly authorize the site-specific permission of any existing uses that do not align with the new definition.

Continued Implementation of 2051 Forecasts (at minimum)

A Place to Grow currently requires municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to plan for specific population and employment forecasts to 2051. These have been implemented in many, but not all, municipal official plans throughout the region.

Where an upper- or single-tier municipality’s official plan is still in progress, it is expected that the municipality would continue to use the 2051 forecasts provided by the province (at a minimum) or a higher forecast as determined by the municipality. Lower-tier municipalities would be expected to meet or exceed the growth forecasts allocated to them by the upper-tier.

As time passes and it becomes necessary to update the forecasts and extend their horizon beyond 2051, it is expected that municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe would move towards doing their own forecasting of population and employment growth (as is the approach for all other municipalities in the province).

Timing for Changes to Upper-tier Planning Responsibilities

Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 made changes to the *Planning Act* that, upon proclamation, will remove statutory approval authorities under the *Planning Act* from 7 upper-tier municipalities. The timing for proclamation of these changes is a government decision. It is anticipated that the changes would not take effect until winter 2024 at the earliest.

Go-Forward Approach to Provincially Significant Employment Zones

In 2019, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in consultation with municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, established [31 Provincially Significant Employment](#)

[Zones \(PSEZs\)](#), pursuant to A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe for the purpose of long-term planning for job creation and economic development.

Notwithstanding the proposal to revoke A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe pursuant to section 7(7) of the Places to Grow Act, 2005, including PSEZs, the government is seeking feedback on the need to identify select PSEZs or portions of PSEZs for the sole purpose of protecting lands exclusively for employment uses through an alternative approach (e.g., section 47 of the Planning Act).

Protections would be consistent with the proposed definition of areas of employment under the Planning Act and would ensure the highest priority locations, such as sites for heavy industry and other uses that cannot be located near sensitive uses (e.g., the Ontario Food Terminal: PSEZ 30, Sanofi Canada's Toronto biopharmaceutical facility: PSEZ 9, Stelco's Hamilton Works: PSEZ 25 and Lake Erie Works: PSEZ 28) would receive elevated levels of protection from conversion to non-employment uses.

Approach to maintain existing Greenbelt policies

Should the proposed Provincial Planning Statement come into effect, there is the potential for the revocation of A Place to Grow and the changes made to the Provincial Policy Statement policies to affect the implementation of the policies in the Greenbelt Plan. To address this issue, an amendment is being proposed to the Greenbelt Plan that would indicate that the previous policies in A Place to Grow and the Provincial Policy Statement would continue to apply in those cases where the Greenbelt Plan refers to them. This would ensure that there would be no change to how the Greenbelt Plan policies are implemented if the proposed Provincial Planning Statement comes into effect.