



**Planning &
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February 26, 2019

Charles O'Hara, Director, Growth Policy
Ontario Growth Secretariat
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, Floor 17
C/o Business Management Division
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Submitted via email to: growthplanning@ontario.ca

Re: EBR Registry Numbers: 013-4504 – Proposed Amendment to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017; 013-4505 – Proposed Modifications to O. Reg. 311/06 (Transitional Matters – Growth Plans); 013-4506 – Proposed Framework for Provincially Significant Employment Zones; 013-4507 – Proposed Modification to O. Reg. 525/97 (Exemption from Approval – Official Plan Amendments)

Dear Mr. O'Hara:

EBR Registry Numbers 013-4504, 013-4505, 013-4506, and 013-4507 were posted on January 15, 2019 and requested comments on a proposed amendment to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 ("Growth Plan, 2017"), a proposed framework for Provincially Significant Employment Areas, and modifications to Ontario Regulations 311/06 and 525/97.

Staff attended the municipal stakeholder working group sessions organized by the Ontario Growth Secretariat held in the Fall of 2018. The following comments are on Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, 2017 and proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones; and also reiterate some of staff's comments presented during the municipal stakeholder working group sessions.

These comments have been prepared by Town staff, and are accompanied by a resolution from Council. A copy of the February 19, 2019 staff report presented to Council has also been included for reference.

Town of Ajax Comments

In October 2016, the Town submitted a staff report entitled "Comments on the Province's Proposed Amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan" during the Coordinated Provincial Plans Review process. The Town is happy to see that some of the Town's recommendations from October 2016, that were not reflected in the Growth Plan, 2017, have been incorporated into Proposed Amendment 1. Including flexibility in the size of an MTSA buffer and the way employment lands are designated.

However as outlined in the following comments, the Town does not agree with a reversal on other comments the Town made that were successfully included in the Growth Plan, 2017.

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, 2017 (EBR No. 013-4504)

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

In October 2016, the Town requested that the Province provide additional flexibility to the 500 metre walking distance for intensification around MTSAs so as to respond to local conditions including extensive surface parking within the vicinity of these stations.

Comments: The Town is supportive of the proposed amendment to provide clarification that MTSAs may range in size between 500 metres and 800 metres. This helps provide flexibility to municipalities to achieve desired growth targets within MTSAs while accounting for local constraints.

Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Targets

In October 2016, the Town advised the Province that it supports the principle of increased levels of intensification within the Proposed Growth Plan, subject to the provision of the required funding from senior levels of government for infrastructure investments to support increases in intensification.

The current intensification target for Ajax is 54%, which contributes to Durham's ability to achieve an overall target of 40% region-wide. An increase in the intensification target to 50%, as opposed to 60%, will result in a more modest increase in intensification targets for Durham's Lake Ontario shoreline municipalities, including Ajax. Ajax is well positioned to accommodate additional growth within planned intensification areas, such as Downtown Ajax and Uptown Ajax, as well as modest intensification along Regional and Local Corridors and through neighbourhood infill.

Comments: The Town continues to support the principle of increased intensification. A key goal of the Growth Plan is to direct development to existing settlement areas in order to take advantage of existing infrastructure and to create complete communities with a wide range of housing options. To continue to create transit supportive and complete communities, and avoid unnecessary development of the 'whitebelt', the Town supports the higher intensification and designated greenfield area targets in the Growth Plan, 2017.

The Town also encourages the Province to support intensification by prioritizing the enhancement of existing servicing infrastructure (water and sanitary) within planned intensification areas. Further, to help municipalities achieve their intensification targets, the Town continues to encourage the Province and other senior levels of government to provide financial support to municipalities to make improvements to existing infrastructure in intensification areas.

Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

The proposed amendments would allow Settlement Area Boundary expansions to occur in advance of a municipal comprehensive review, provided that the expansion is no larger than 40 hectares. During municipal stakeholder sessions held in the Fall of 2018, the need for this policy was described to accommodate settlement areas expansions in 'logical' locations adjacent to existing settlement areas.

Comments: The Town recommends that additional criteria be introduced to policy 2.2.8.5 to require minor settlement area boundary expansions to be contiguous and comprehensively planned with existing settlement areas. This would ensure that new settlement area boundary expansions do not become 40 hectare 'islands' separated from existing settlement areas.

Additionally, the Town supports policy 2.2.8.5 c) which does not allow Settlement Area Boundaries to expand into the Greenbelt Area.

The proposed amendment softens requirements to complete watershed plans, stormwater master plans and agricultural impact assessment to justify the location of proposed settlement area boundary expansions. The proposed amendment also removes the requirement to conduct asset management planning and revenue generating analysis for public infrastructure required to support new settlement area boundary expansions.

Comments: The draft Watershed Planning Guidelines prepared by the Province helped to create a more consistent framework to be followed by conservation authorities and municipalities when preparing watershed plans. Although some analysis would still be required to be completed, removal of the requirement to prepare a watershed plan to inform settlement area boundary expansions returns to an inconsistent approach to evaluating watersheds. It is recommended that the requirement to complete a watershed plan be added. It is also recommended that the Province continue to develop the watershed planning guidelines to help guide the preparation of these studies.

The proposed amendment removes the requirement for an Agricultural Impact Assessment previously required to be completed in section 2.2.8.3 h) to justify the location of Settlement Area boundary expansions. The Town continues to recommend that Agricultural Impact Assessments be completed to properly evaluate the impacts on existing agricultural operations and help justify the location of new settlement areas that will be the least impactful on viable agricultural operations and/or detail appropriate mitigation measures.

The removal of examples of financial tools that can be used to evaluate the financial life cycle of public infrastructure lessens the importance of evaluating the full cost of extending servicing to support housing on the outer limits of settlement areas. Municipalities continue to take on liabilities accepting new infrastructure, while experiencing a funding shortfall to upgrade and maintain existing infrastructure. A comprehensive analysis of the full cost of this infrastructure is critical to good decision making, and providing examples of tools available to conduct the analysis may be useful to some municipalities.

Provincially Significant Employment Zones Framework (EBR No. 013-4506)

The Town has an employment target of 1.0 job for every 2.0 Ajax residents in the Official Plan, similar to the Region of Durham's target. To achieve this goal the Town has designated and defended lands for employment uses to the horizon of the previous Growth Plan, and is currently evaluating its needs to 2041. Between 2003 and 2011, the Town of Ajax was involved in multiple lengthy and costly appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board and the Ontario Superior Court to protect employment lands from being converted to permit residential uses.

The Town supports the preservation of employment lands for their intended purpose, and the protection from appeals as outlined in the *Planning Act*. The following comments are made with

the assumption that the protections currently provided to employment lands under the *Planning Act* will remain.

The Town supports the principle of Provincially Significant Employment Zones (“PSEZ”) as a way to protect key employment areas from land use conversions. The following comments are intended to help refine the policy structure for PSEZ and provide feedback on PSEZ#3 (South Durham), as it relates to Ajax:

In October 2016, the Town commented that the Province should reconsider its approach to designating Prime Employment Areas which compel low employment-generating warehousing and logistics uses along Provincial highways. It is the Town’s objective to maximize the employment generating capacity of its employment lands, particularly in locations well served by transportation infrastructure.

Comments: The Town is pleased to see that the Province has reconsidered its approach to designating employment lands. To continue to support and encourage higher density employment uses, it is recommended that a variety of employment uses be encouraged in PSEZs to continue to allow employment uses the flexibility to grow. Examples throughout the GTA have seen companies concentrate uses in a single ‘campus’ style development to include offices, training, research and development, and warehouse/distribution centres all integrated together (eg. Honda Canada in Markham, Mazda Canada in Richmond Hill). Staff recognize the importance of encouraging office uses to locate in strategic growth centres and MTSA, however a variety of uses such as office and research and development facilities, together with manufacturing and warehouse/distribution, should continue to be encouraged in Provincially Significant Employment Zones. This allows flexibility to the fluctuating employment landscape and encourages higher employment densities.

The Town’s existing GO Station Mixed Use designation is one of the many MTSA located entirely within a PSEZ. The GO Station Mixed Use designation is a mixed use designation that requires a minimum job density threshold of 50 permanent jobs per hectare to be achieved prior to permitting high density residential uses. This target exceeds the Town’s employment area target of 37 jobs per hectare. Therefore, staff are supportive of reasonable conversions of employment areas to permit MTSA provided that jobs are maintained.

Comment: The Town recommends that PSEZ designations be removed where MTSA are designated in municipal official plans, and that flexibility, by way of a policy, be provided to allow municipalities to alter a PSEZ boundary to establish or expand an MTSA in advance of the municipal comprehensive review.

Mapping of Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zone #3 (Durham South – Pickering and Ajax)

Proposed PSEZ #3 provides protections for existing employment areas in south Ajax. The proposed PSEZ to be designated in Ajax is generally bounded by Highway 401 to the north, Westney Road to the south, Duffins Creek to the west (with some exceptions) and generally Monarch Avenue to the east. Bayly Street divides this area across the middle, creating a northern area and southern area (See ATT 1 – Proposed PSEZ #3 South Ajax).

Currently, the employment area located north of Bayly Street West (south of the 401) is located between the Ajax GO Station and the Downtown Ajax Regional Centre. A portion of the proposed PSEZ is designated GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area in the Ajax Official Plan, and

the Town is currently engaged in discussions with the Region of Durham to examine expanding the Ajax GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area through the Region's review of MTSA's during their MCR.

To protect for the possible future expansion of the Town's Downtown Regional Centre and the GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area, both strategic intensification areas, the Town has Area Specific Policy 6.19 in its Official Plan which reads:

"The nature and design of development in the Area Specific Policy shall be sensitive to the potential for residential development forms within the Downtown Centre and the vicinity of the GO station lands (s. 6.19c ii)".

Additionally, the Town is initiating a land-use and infrastructure study in 2019 to examine development potential and maximum densities in the Downtown Regional Centre, GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area, the employment lands between, and lands known as Annandale Golf Course located to the west of Duffins Creek. The purpose of the study is to examine the existing area, infrastructure capacity and expansion opportunities and constraints, road network improvements to support existing and future residents in this area. The Town is also updating its Commercial and Employment Land Needs Strategy and Economic Development Strategy which will help evaluate the employment land needs and focus on intensifying employment density; and the Recreation Master Plan which will examine the recreational needs of future residents in this area. These studies are intended to support the Town's comments through the Region's MCR process and the Town's upcoming Official Plan Review.

Comments: The Town supports the designation of the PSEZ in the area located south of Bayly Street as this area contains large well-established industry.

However, as the Downtown Regional Centre and the GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area begin to experience more residential growth, the viability of industrial uses in the employment area north of Bayly Street may be diminished. As a result, the Town would like to have the proposed PSEZ designation north of Bayly Street (south of the 401) removed. This would allow for consideration of expansions to the GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area and the Downtown Region Centre in the future. It also allows the Town to examine this area in a comprehensive manner through the Town's upcoming Downtown and GO Station land-use and infrastructure study, which for the purposes of the study includes lands as far west as Annandale Golf Course.

It may be appropriate to include criteria that is applied when considering adjustments to a PSEZ during an MCR. For example, it may only be appropriate to consider adjustments to the PSEZ to permit the delineation of an MTSA or adjusting strategic growth areas. In the case of amendments to delineate an MTSA, it may be appropriate to continue to require a minimum job density threshold.

Additionally, to better reflect the existing land use designations within the Town, some other minor additions and removals have been proposed. Specifically the following:

- Additional lands along Bayly Street, west of Duffins Creek, to be added where a new employment use was recently constructed

- Lands on Westney Road South which are primarily designated environmental protection and contain a town owned park are requested to be removed

See Attachment 1 for an illustration of the areas requested to be added and removed from the Provincially Significant Employment Zone #3.

To maintain the Town's commitment to protecting employment lands, the Town is requesting to add other employment areas in north and east Ajax to Provincially Significant Employment Area #3. The lands proposed to be added consist of large vacant parcels pre-zoned for employment uses with existing infrastructure available; or have existing employment uses such as Loblaws distribution centre and the future Gordon Food Services distribution centre. Some of the lands have exposure to Highway 401 and have access to interchanges along Highways 401 and 412.

See Attachment 2 for an illustration of employment lands proposed to be added to list of Provincially Significant Employment Zones.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Should you have any questions please contact Sean McCullough, Senior Planner at Sean.mccullough@ajax.ca or (905) 619-2529 ext. 3234.

ATT 1: Proposed Adjustment to PSEZ #3 in South Ajax

ATT 2: Lands Proposed to be added to PSEZ #3

ATT 3: Town of Ajax Staff Report, General Government Committee: Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 and Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones

ATT 4: Town of Ajax extract of Council minutes

Regards,



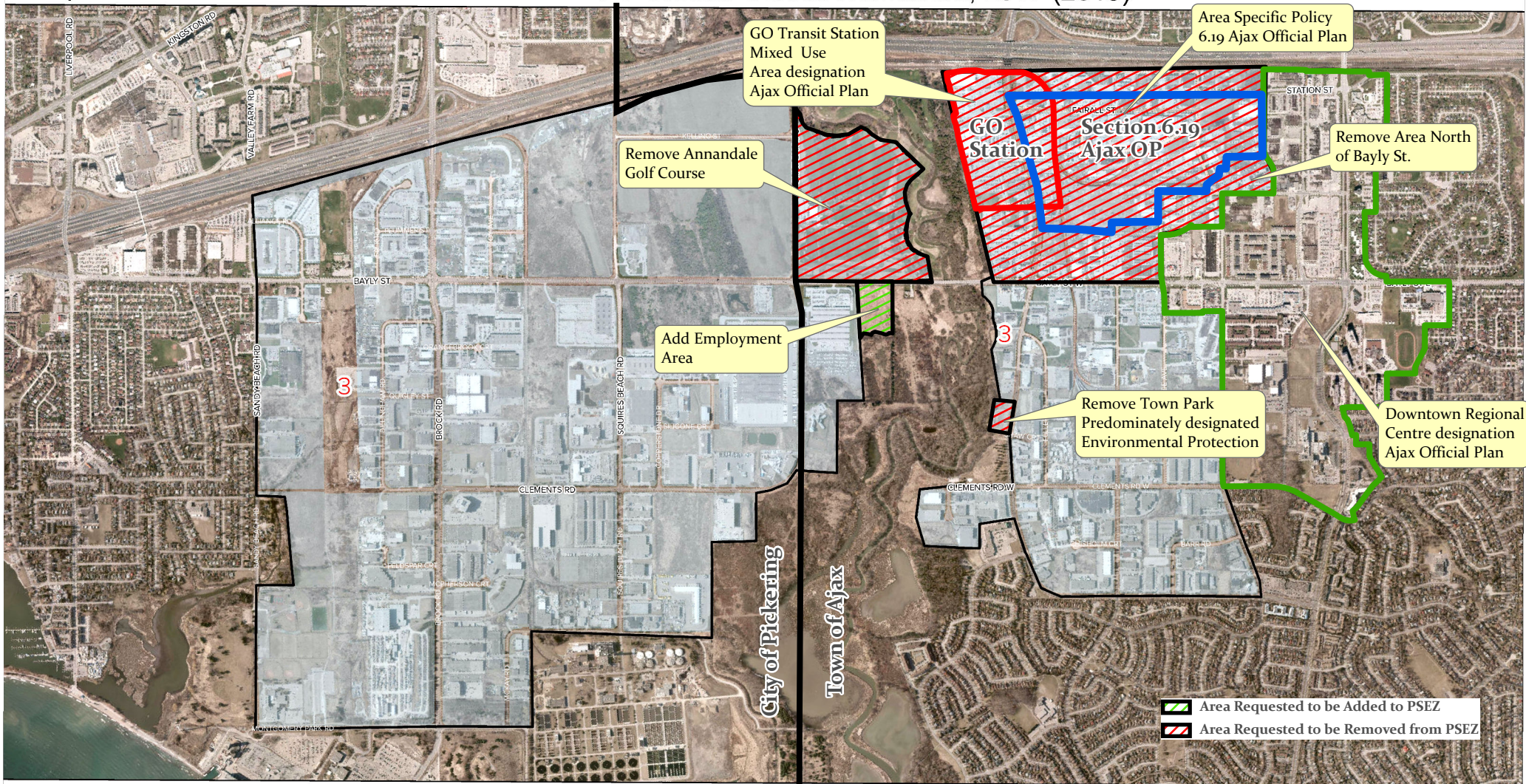
Geoff Romanowski, MCIP, RPP, CPT
Manager of Planning
Planning and Development Services
Town of Ajax

Copies:

Dave Meredith, Acting Director of Planning and Development Services
Stev Andis, Supervisor of Planning Policy and Research, Town of Ajax
Region of Durham

Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones for Consultation

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (2019)



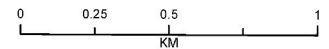
- Proposed PSEZ
- Municipally Designated Employment Area (2013)
- Municipal Boundary

Zone Name: Durham South (Pickering and Ajax)

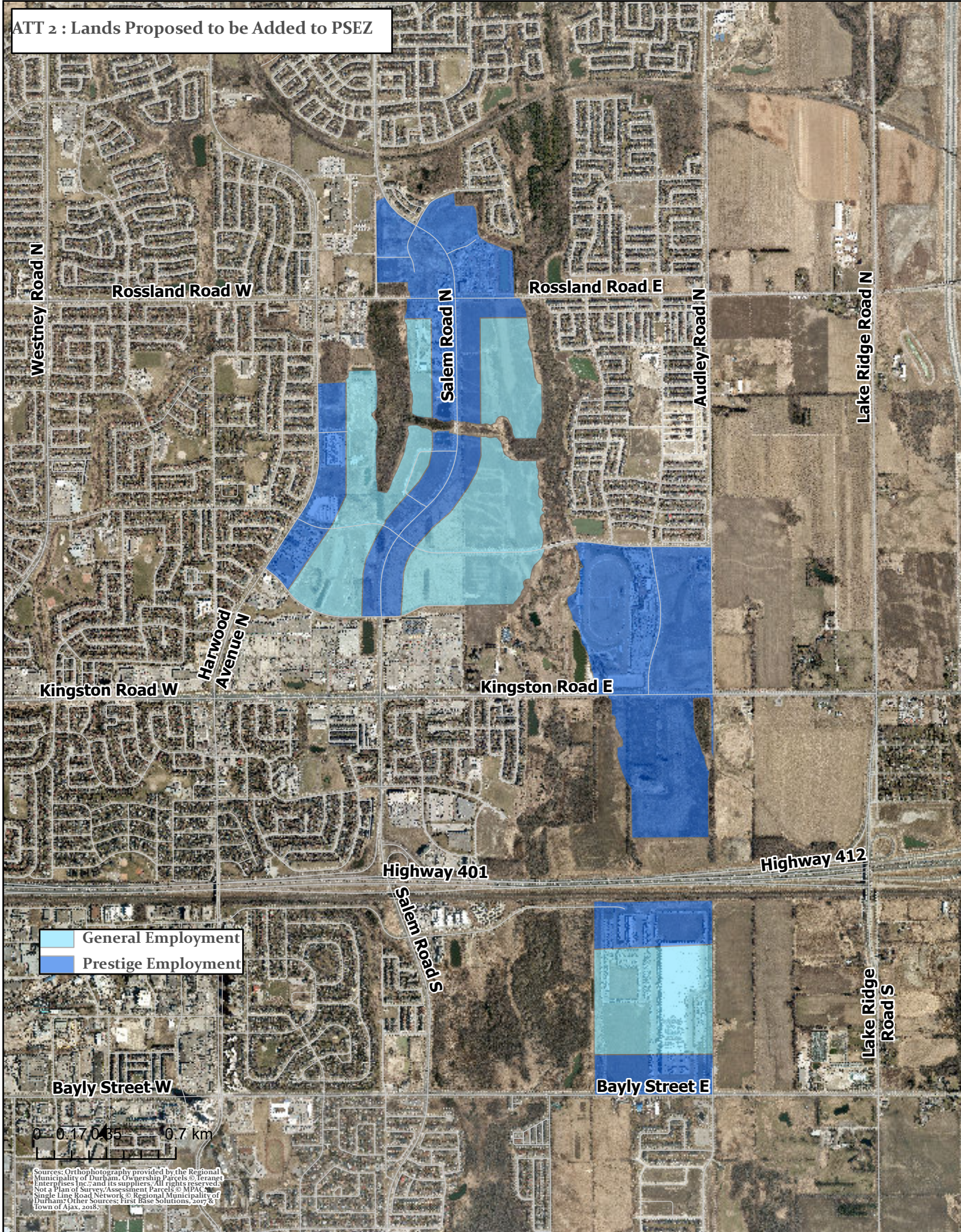
Zone Number: **3**

Upper- or Single-Tier Municipality: DURHAM

Data Sources: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.



ATT 2 : Lands Proposed to be Added to PSEZ



Westney Road N

Rossland Road W

Rossland Road E

Salem Road N

Audley Road N

Lake Ridge Road N

Harwood Avenue N

Kingston Road W

Kingston Road E

Highway 401

Highway 412

Salem Road S

Lake Ridge Road S

Bayly Street W

Bayly Street E

General Employment
Prestige Employment

0 0.17 0.35 0.7 km

Sources: Orthophotography provided by the Regional Municipality of Durham, Ownership Parcels © Teranet Enterprises Inc., and its suppliers. All rights reserved. Not a Plan of Survey, Assessment Parcels © MPAC, Single Line Road Network © Regional Municipality of Durham, Other Sources: First Base Solutions, 2007 & Town of Ajax, 2018.

Town of Ajax Report



Report To: General Government Committee

Prepared By: Sean McCullough, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner

Subject: **Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 and Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones**

Ward(s): All

Date of Meeting: February 19, 2019

Reference: May 21, 2015 General Government Committee;
October 3, 2016 Community Affairs and Planning Committee;
November 13, 2017 General Government Committee;
Community Action Plan: Strategic Development and Economic Prosperity; Environmental Leadership

Recommendations:

1. That the Report entitled “Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 and Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones” be received for information.
2. That staff’s comments included as Attachment 1 to this Report be endorsed and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the Town’s comments to Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (EBR Registry No. 013-4504); the Proposed Framework for Provincially Significant Employment Zones (EBR Registry No. 013-4506); Proposed Modifications to O.Reg. 311/06 (EBR Registry No. 013-4505); and Proposed Modifications to O.Reg. 525/97 (EBR Registry No. 013-4507).
3. That this Report, Attachment 1, and a copy of Council’s Resolution be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in advance of the February 28, 2019 comment deadline.
4. That a copy of this Report be distributed to the Region of Durham, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority.

1.0 Context:

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the “Growth Plan”) is a long term Provincial Plan that provides a framework to manage growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Its objectives are to reduce urban sprawl; make better use of existing infrastructure; encourage the development of more complete communities for people in all stages of their life, and provide for development that reduces the reliance on single occupant vehicles; support transit and

active transportation; and encourage economic growth. The Growth Plan first came into effect on June 16, 2006.

In 2015, the Province began a coordinated review of four Provincial Plans (the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan). Following several years of consultation, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (Growth Plan, 2017) came into effect on July 1, 2017. The Town provided comments during the consultation process in October 2016.

Currently, single-tier and upper-tier municipalities are working on Municipal Comprehensive Reviews (MCR)¹ of their Official Plans to bring them into conformity with the Growth Plan, 2017. The Region of Durham started their MCR, known as “Envision Durham”, on May 8, 2018 and has been completing studies to support their MCR process, such as the Update of the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan.

2.0 Background

In the Fall of 2018, the Ontario Growth Secretariat held municipal and stakeholder working group sessions organized to discuss workable solutions to challenges implementing the policies of the Growth Plan, 2017. Staff attended 5 sessions organized into the following categories: Employment Lands, Settlement Area Boundary Expansions, Major Transit Station Areas, Natural Heritage and Agricultural Systems, and Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets.

On January 15th, 2019, the Province released 4 proposals on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) Registry proposing: amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017; a new framework for Provincially Significant Employment Areas; and amendments to associated transition regulations. The Province has requested comments on the following 4 proposals by February 28, 2019:

EBR Registry No. 013-4504 ²	Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017
EBR Registry No. 013-4505 ³	Proposed Modifications to O. Reg. 311/06 (Transitional Matters – Growth Plans) made under the Places to Grow Act, 2005 to implement the Proposed Amendment to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017
EBR Registry No. 013-4506 ⁴	Proposed Framework for Provincially Significant Employment Areas
EBR Registry No. 013-4507 ⁵	Proposed Modifications to O. Reg. 525/97 (Exemption from Approval – Official Plan Amendments) made under the Planning Act to Implement Proposed Amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017

Attachment 1 provides staff comments to the Ontario Growth Secretariat on Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (EBR Registry No.

¹ Under the Growth Plan, a Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) is an exercise that is undertaken by a single-tier, or upper-tier municipality (not a lower-tier municipality).

² Link to EBR Posting No. 013-4504: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4504>

³ Link to EBR Posting No. 013-4505: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4505>

⁴ Link to EBR Posting No. 013-4506: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4506>

⁵ Link to EBR Posting No. 013-4507: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4507>

013-4504) and Proposed Framework for Provincially Significant Employment Areas (EBR Registry No. 013-4506).

3.0 Discussion

A number of changes to the Growth Plan, 2017 have been proposed. The proposed changes occur across broad categories which follow the same themes of the stakeholder working sessions held in the Fall of 2018.

The following is an overview of the key proposed changes to the Growth Plan, 2017. Staff's detailed comments to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in response to the EBR postings has been included in Attachment 1.

3.1 Employment Planning

Proposed changes as they relate to planning for employment include:

- Providing upper-tier and single-tier municipalities with a one-time window to undertake employment land conversions in advance of the next MCR to permit residential and commercial development that would otherwise be prohibited on employment lands
- Removing the 'prime employment area designation'
- Introducing a 'Provincially Significant Employment Zone' designation that would require the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses in such zones to only be considered during a MCR and would require provincial approval
- Removing the requirement for an Employment Strategy
- Modifying language that allows single-tier and upper-tier municipalities to set multiple employment land density targets rather than a single employment area density target (for example Durham Region can set a different employment density targets for each lower-tier municipality)

Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan, 2017 would allow conversions of employment areas to permit residential and commercial uses, subject to criteria, before the next MCR is undertaken by the Region of Durham. To qualify for a conversion it would need to be demonstrated that there is a need for the conversion, that sufficient employment lands would be available to meet the forecasted employment growth to the horizon of the plan, and that there is existing or planned infrastructure.

Any landowner request for a conversion of employment lands would be directed to the Region as the employment land designation would need to be changed in the Regional Official Plan first.

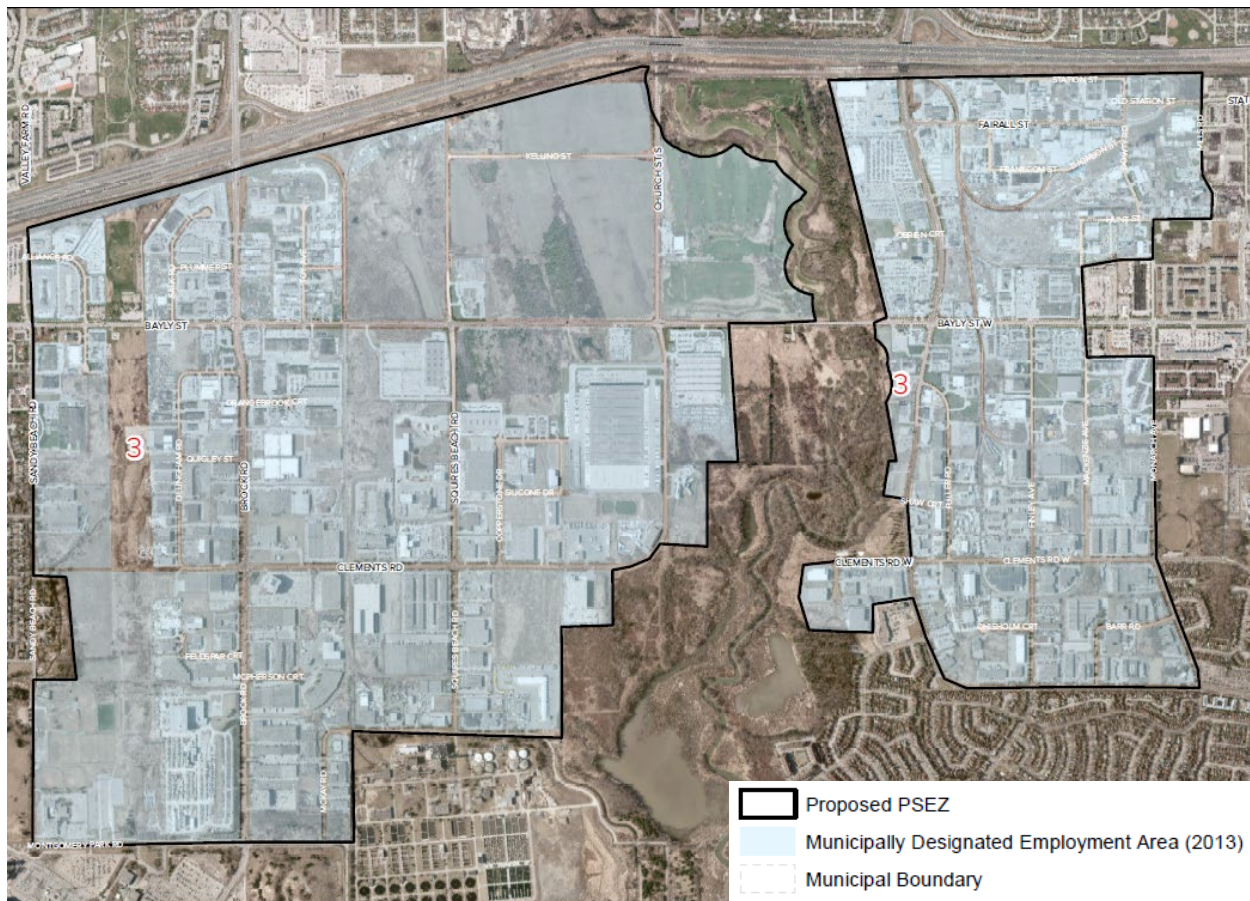
Between 2003 and 2011, the Town of Ajax was involved in multiple lengthy and costly appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board and the Ontario Superior Court to protect employment lands from being converted to permit residential and commercial uses. Currently the *Planning Act* does not allow an appeal to a municipality's refusal of an application to convert employment lands. The Town supports the preservation of employment lands for their intended purpose, and the protection from appeals as outlined in the *Planning Act*. No amendments have been proposed to the *Planning Act*, and Ministry staff have confirmed that protections from appeals to convert employment lands will remain.

To ensure that employment areas that are crucial to the Province's economy are not converted without a more comprehensive assessment of employment needs, the Province is proposing the creation of Provincially Significant Employment Zones. The conversion of employment lands to

non-employment uses in these zones could only be considered during a MCR and would require provincial approval.

A list and mapping of proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones has been included in EBR Posting No. 013-4506. As shown in Figure 1, Provincially Significant Employment Zone #3 (South Durham – Pickering and Ajax) proposes to designate employment lands in south Ajax as Provincially Significant.

Figure 1: Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zone #3



Zone Name: Durham South (Pickering and Ajax)

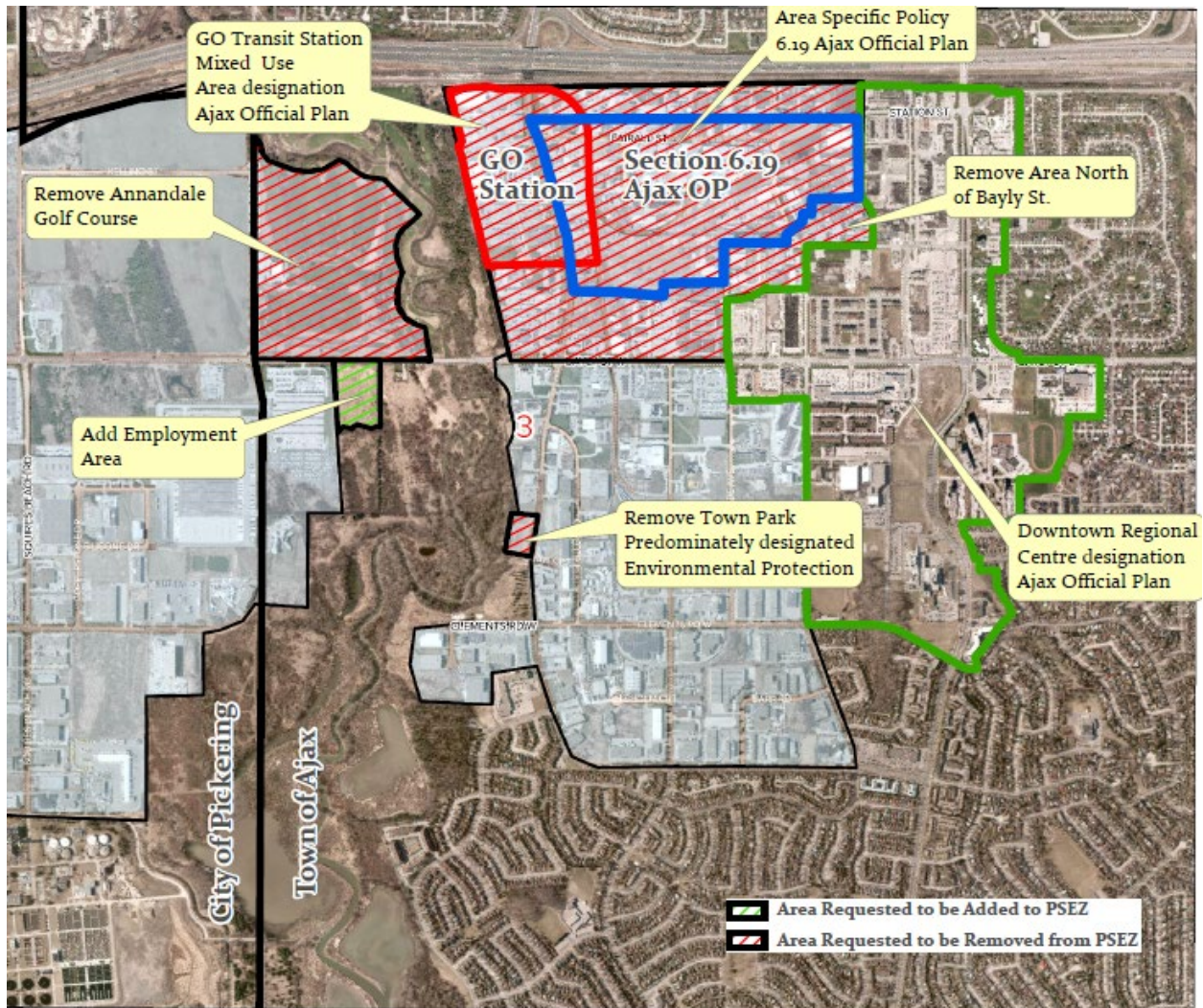
The Ajax Official Plan designates lands in the vicinity of the Ajax GO Station as GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area (See Figure 2), which permits a mix of uses including residential. The Region has also started to consult with local municipalities to discuss the delineation of Major Transit Station Areas, including the possible expansion of the Ajax GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area.

The employment lands generally located north of Bayly Street West, south of Highway 401, between the Ajax GO Station and the Downtown Regional Centre are within Area Specific Policy 6.19 in the Ajax Official Plan. As Downtown Ajax and the GO Station begin to experience residential and mixed-use growth, the viability of industrial uses in this specific employment area may be diminished. To protect for the possible future expansion of the Downtown Ajax Regional Centre and the Ajax GO Station Mixed Use Area, both strategic intensification areas, Area Specific Policy 6.19 reads:

“The nature and design of development in the Area Specific Policy shall be sensitive to the potential for residential development forms within the Downtown Centre and the vicinity of the GO station lands (s. 6.19c ii)”.

As a result, staff are recommending that the Provincially Significant Employment Zone designation north of Bayly St be removed. Staff are also recommending minor additions and removals to better reflect the existing Prestige Employment and General Employment designations identified in the Ajax Official Plan (See Figure 2).

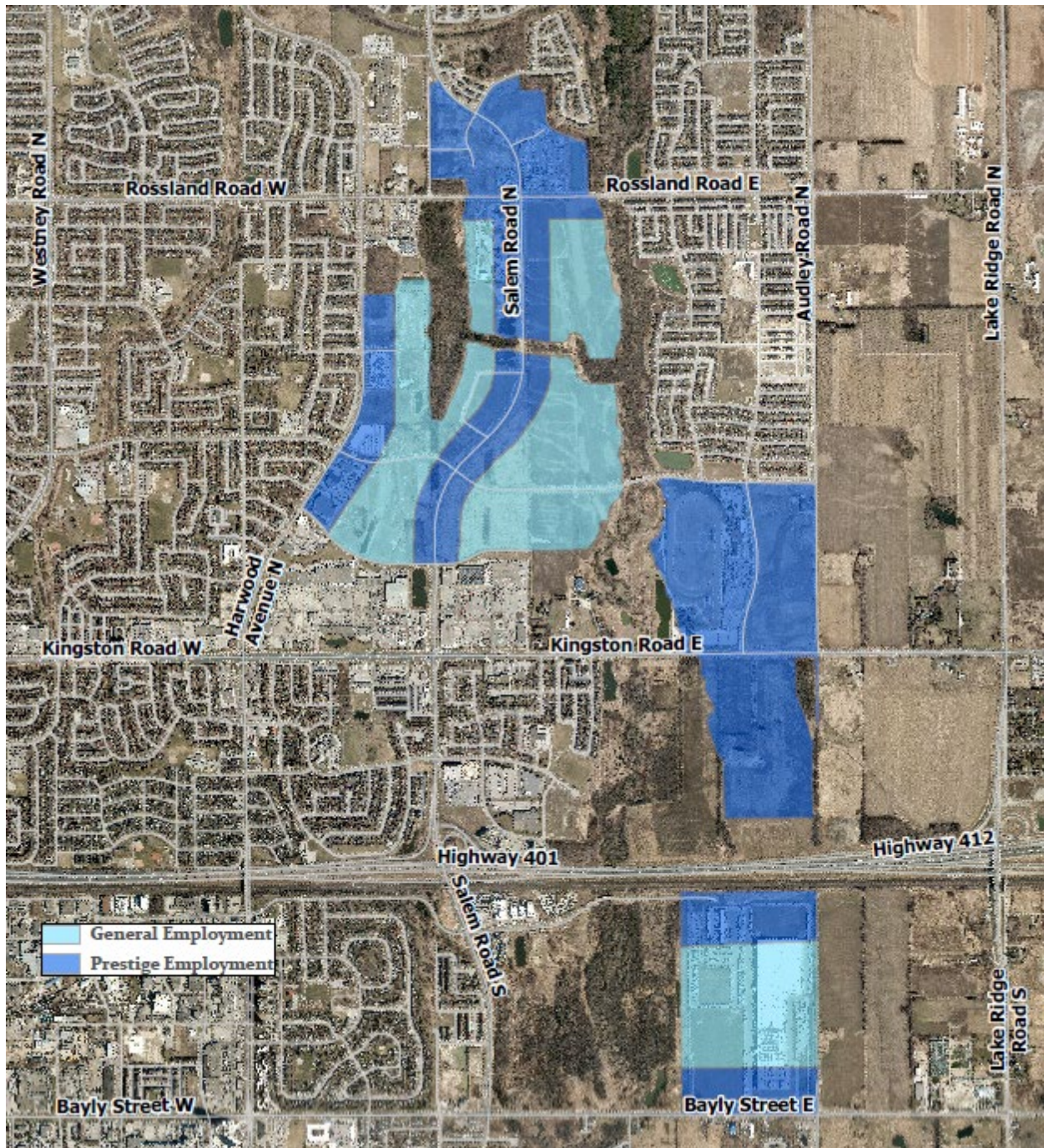
Figure 2: Proposed Amendments to PSEZ #3



To maintain the Town’s commitment to protecting employment lands for employment uses, staff are recommending that other employment areas within the Town be added to the Provincially Significant Employment Zone #3. Employment lands in north and east Ajax provide large vacant employment parcels that have been pre-zoned and serviced to permit employment uses (See Figure 3). The parcels have direct access to Highways 401 and 412, and some have prime exposure to Highway 401. There are also existing major employers within this area, such as but not limited to, Loblaws Distribution Centre, East Penn Canada, and a future Gordon Food Services distribution facility.

The addition of these lands to the PSEZ will protect them from one-off land-use conversions and may be re-examined during the upcoming MCR.

Figure 3: Proposed additions to PSEZ #3



3.2 Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

Proposed changes as they relate to Settlement Area Boundary Expansions include:

- Allowing municipalities to undertake settlement area boundary expansions that are no larger than 40 hectares outside of a MCR, subject to criteria

- Removing requirements to provide specific studies, such as watershed plans, stormwater master plan, agricultural impact assessment, to justify and evaluate the location of settlement area boundary expansions

One of the criteria is that a settlement area boundary cannot be expanded into the Greenbelt Area. All lands within Ajax that are located outside the existing settlement area boundary (i.e. Urban Area Boundary in the Ajax Official Plan) are located within the Greenbelt Area. Therefore, a settlement area boundary expansion could not be considered in Ajax.

Further, to ensure that settlement area boundary expansions permitted in advance of a MCR do not become 40 hectare ‘islands’, staff recommend that criteria be added to only allow settlement area boundary expansions that are contiguous and comprehensively planned with existing settlement areas.

The proposed amendment also removes requirements to complete watershed plans, stormwater master plans and agriculture impact assessments to justify locating proposed settlement area boundary expansions. Although some analysis is still required, staff recommend that these studies continue to be required to ensure a more consistent and comprehensive evaluation is used throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe to justify and locate settlement area boundary expansions.

3.3 Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets

The Growth Plan establishes and distributes population and employment projections to the upper and single-tier municipalities. To manage growth, a percentage of all development in a municipality is to be accommodated through intensification in areas that have already been built up. The remaining growth occurs in designated greenfield areas. Density targets (people and jobs per hectare) are established to ensure designated greenfield areas are developed efficiently and to help support transit.

The proposed changes make adjustments to the intensification targets and designated greenfield area density targets, applying different targets to municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe to reflect local growth. Table 1 compares the intensification targets and designated greenfield area density targets for Durham Region between the original and updated growth plans, and the proposed amendment:

Table 1: Existing and Proposed Intensification and Designated Greenfield Area Density Targets

		Growth Plan, 2006	Growth Plan, 2017	Proposed Amendment 1 to Growth Plan, 2017
Durham Region Targets	Intensification Target	40%	40% (now to MCR) 50% (MCR to 2031) 60% (2031 to 2041)	40% (now to MCR) 50% for Durham Region (MCR to 2041)
	Designated Greenfield Area Density Target	50 people and jobs per hectare	Now to MCR: 50 people and jobs per hectare MCR to 2041: 60 people and jobs per hectare (existing Designated Greenfield Areas) and	Now to 2041: 50 people and jobs per hectare for Durham Region

		Growth Plan, 2006	Growth Plan, 2017	Proposed Amendment 1 to Growth Plan, 2017
			80 people and jobs per hectare (Designated Greenfield Areas approved on or after July 1, 2017)	

The current intensification target for Ajax is 54%, which contributes to Durham’s ability to achieve an overall target of 40% region-wide. An increase in the intensification target to 50%, when compared to the Growth Plan, 2017 overall target of 60%, will result in a more modest increase in intensification for Durham’s Lake Ontario shoreline municipalities, including Ajax.

Greenfield areas are vacant lands within the Settlement Area Boundary that have been designated for future development. As shown in Figure 2, recent development approvals in Ajax have achieved or exceeded the minimum designated greenfield area target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare:

Table 2: Examples of Approved Development in Ajax’s Designated Greenfield Area

Development Name	Location	Density (Residents and Jobs per hectare)
Magnum Opus	East of Shoal Point Road, south of Bayly Street	84.7
Duffins Village (Cougs Investments)	East side of Church Street North, south of Hydro Corridor	57.2
Jizoco	North Side of Rossland Road west adjacent to the Ajax/Pickering border	54.9

The reduction of the existing designated greenfield area target for Durham Region from 60 residents and jobs per hectare to 50 residents and jobs per hectare represents a ‘business-as-usual’ approach.

A key goal of the Growth Plan is to direct development to existing settlement areas in order to take advantage of existing infrastructure and to create complete communities with a wide range of housing options. Lowering the intensification target for Durham Region means that less development (than what is currently required in the Growth Plan, 2017) would have to be directed to already built up areas over the 2041 planning horizon. A reduced intensification target in combination with a lower designated greenfield area target for Durham Region could support a rationale for expanding settlement area boundaries in order to accommodate more lower density housing (e.g. single detached homes), which may result in the unnecessary development of ‘whitebelt’⁶ lands such as the Carruthers Creek headwaters.

To continue to create transit supportive and complete communities, and avoid unnecessary development of the ‘whitebelt’, Planning staff support the higher intensification and designated greenfield area targets in the Growth Plan, 2017.

⁶ The ‘whitebelt’ is land within the Growth Plan Area Boundary that has not been designated for urban growth and as such these lands are not subject to the Growth Plan policies. These lands are also not subject to the Greenbelt Plan. These lands are currently used primarily for agricultural and rural uses.

3.4 Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

MTSAs, such as the Ajax GO Station, are strategic growth areas surrounding higher order transit. The Growth Plan, 2017 requires that MTSAs achieve a minimum of 150 residents and jobs per hectare for those served by a GO Transit rail network. During the previous review of the Ajax Official Plan, the Town pre-emptively designated some lands within 500 metres of the Ajax GO Station as 'GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area'; permitting residential uses, provided that a minimum job threshold is met first.

The proposed changes maintain the existing density targets and create a streamlined approach to allow the delineation of MTSAs to happen more quickly. Proposed changes include:

- Allowing municipalities to delineate MTSAs in advance of the MCR
- Clarification that an MTSA can range in size with a radius between approximately 500 metres and 800 metres
- Revised criteria to request alternative targets surrounding MTSAs to reflect on-the-ground realities

In October 2016, the Town's comments to the Province on the review of the Growth Plan recommended that flexibility be provided when delineating MTSAs, specifically recommending that the walking distance increase to 800 metres from 500 metres. Staff are pleased to see this has been included in the proposed changes.

Staff do not have a concern with MTSA boundaries being delineated in advance of an MCR. Ajax Planning staff are currently in conversations with Regional Planning staff regarding the expansion of the Town's GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area as part of the Region's MCR. Staff do not see the need to review of the GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area outside the Region's MCR process as the Town would need to wait for the Region to delineate Ajax's MTSA (i.e. GO Transit Station Mixed Use Area) in their Official Plan before the Town could proceed with changing the boundary in the Ajax Official Plan.

3.5 Natural Heritage and Agricultural System

The Growth Plan, 2017 introduced new policies indicating that the Province would prepare mapping for a Provincial Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System. The mapping and supporting documentation of the Natural Heritage System and Agricultural Systems was released in February 2018 and supersedes local Official Plan and Zoning By-laws. In Ajax, almost half of the lands in the Greenbelt Area were identified as Prime Agricultural, which removed the ability of some uses such as golf courses and cemeteries from locating in these areas.

Proposed changes to the Growth Plan, 2017 would postpone the implementation of the Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System mapping until it was incorporated into municipal Official Plans. Staff are supportive of this approach as it allows more detailed analysis of the systems.

4.0 Financial Implications:

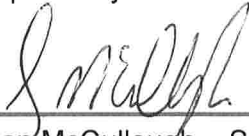
There are no financial implications associated with the endorsement of the recommendations contained within this Report.

5.0 Conclusion:

The Province is proposing amendments to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017, including the introduction of a new Provincially Significant Employment Zone designation to protect certain employment lands from conversion. Staff are recommending that Council receive this report for information and endorse staff's comments to the Ontario Growth Secretariat in Attachment 1 in response to the EBR postings.

ATT 1 – Town of Ajax Comments regarding Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan and Provincially Significant Employment Zones

Prepared by:



Sean McCullough – Senior Planner – ext. 3234

Submitted by:



Dave Meredith – Acting Director of Planning and Development Services

Approved by:



Shane Baker – Chief Administrative Officer



**Extract of the Minutes of Council
February 25, 2019**

The following is a recommendation from the February 19, 2019 General Government Committee meeting ratified by Council of the Town of Ajax at its Meeting of Council held on February 25, 2019.

6.1 Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 and Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones

Moved by: M. Crawford

1. That the Report entitled "Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 and Proposed Provincially Significant Employment Zones" be received for information.
2. That staff's comments included as Attachment 1 to this Report be endorsed and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the Town's comments to Proposed Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (EBR Registry No. 013-4504); the Proposed Framework for Provincially Significant Employment Zones (EBR Registry No. 013-4506); Proposed Modifications to O.Reg. 311/06 (EBR Registry No. 013-4505); and Proposed Modifications to O.Reg. 525/97 (EBR Registry No. 013-4507).
3. That this Report, Attachment 1, and a copy of Council's Resolution be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in advance of the February 28, 2019 comment deadline.
4. That a copy of this Report be distributed to the Region of Durham, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority.

CARRIED

Alexander Harras, D-Clerk