

February 4, 2019

UPDATED ATTACHMENTS FEB 26, 2019

**Ontario Growth Secretariat**  
**Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**  
777 Bay Street  
23rd Floor, Suite 2304  
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Sir or Madam:

**Re: Proposed Changes to the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan – ERO# 013-4504**

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OSSGA is a not-for-profit association representing over 280 sand, gravel and crushed stone producers and suppliers of valuable industry products and services. Collectively, our members supply the majority of the 164 million tonnes of aggregate consumed, on average, annually in the province to build and maintain Ontario's infrastructure needs. OSSGA works in partnership with government and the public to promote a safe and competitive aggregate industry contributing to the creation of complete communities in the province.

OSSGA has reviewed the proposed changes to the Growth Plan and note that many of the changes are to assist in increasing housing supply and supporting economic growth. As the Province is aware, over the next 25 years the growth in the GGH requires over 2.5 billion tonnes of aggregate in the GGH, of which 1.5 billion tonnes is needed in the GTA.

While the changes to the Growth Plan will facilitate growth, the Province will not be able to access new high quality aggregate resources located in proximity to the consumer to support this growth. This is a result of the ill-advised policies of 4.2.8.2 of the Growth Plan that prohibit new mineral aggregate operations within endangered or threatened species habitat and significant woodlands within the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System.

As the Province is aware, almost all new aggregate sites in the GGH contain habitat of endangered and threatened species as a result of the 171 species listed by the Province and how habitat is defined which results in large areas being mapped. This policy undermines the Province's Endangered Species Act which allows for development subject to providing an overall net benefit to the species.

As the Province is also aware, some woodlands as small as 0.5 ha are deemed "*significant woodlands*" and some woodlands that have limited to no ecological function are deemed "*significant*" based on the size of the woodland alone. Again, these types of features should not prohibit access to the highest quality aggregate resources in the GGH.

See attached excerpts from OSSGA submission to the Province "*Securing Access to Stone, Sand & Gravel – Ensuring Economic Growth and Future Greenspace in the Greater Golden Horseshoe*" to illustrate the issue related to endangered and threatened species habitat and significant woodlands.

One of the proposed revisions to the Growth Plan will exacerbate this problem. The proposed amendment to the Growth Plan includes the following new policy (4.2.2.4):

*“Provincial mapping of the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan does not apply until it has been implemented in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan. Until that time, the policies in this Plan that refer to the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan will apply outside settlement areas to the natural heritage systems identified in official plans that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017.”*

This policy essentially provides municipalities the ability to use existing and future Natural Heritage System mapping to prohibit new mineral aggregate operations and this will undermine the provincial interest in protecting the resource and ensuring it is available close to market.

In addition, OSSGA has reviewed the Natural Heritage System mapping that is found in existing Official Plans and now the prohibitory policies of 4.2.8.2 will apply to areas outside of the Province’s Natural Heritage System. This is a problem for the following reasons:

- Areas outside of the Province’s Natural Heritage System are where some aggregate producers have invested in property acquisitions/licensing projects to avoid the prohibition policies and now they could apply again;
- Undermines years of litigation between OSSGA/aggregate producers and municipalities to ensure that new mineral aggregate operations are not prohibited in endangered and threatened species habitat or significant woodlands within their Official Plans. Now the Growth Plan will override these Official Plan policies and introduce prohibitions that do not currently exist; and
- Provincial natural heritage system mapping is quite different than a County natural heritage system map. The Provincial natural heritage system did not include all natural heritage features including lower quality features. In contrast, County Official Plans typically map all environmental features within their natural heritage system including lower quality features.

We are at a critical point and strong provincial leadership is required to ensure that the aggregate resources are available to meet provincial infrastructure and growth requirements. Municipal approaches that restricted access to mineral aggregate resources is the very reason the Province declared mineral aggregates a matter of provincial interest and represented the first Provincial Policy Statement in 1979 (see attached). We have come full circle and provincial leadership is required on this important issue once again.

To ensure the protection and future availability of mineral aggregate resources, OSSGA has provided suggested policy revisions to Section 4.2.8 of the Growth Plan (see attached).

These changes are more important than ever since the Province is handing over the mapping requirements of the future Natural Heritage System to upper tier municipalities. Instead of a scenario

where OSSGA and its members and provincial resources are required to fight with 21 upper tier municipalities regarding the extent of the Natural Heritage System that overlay aggregate areas, OSSGA recommends that the Province correct the underlying policies that will apply within these Natural Heritage Systems.

Without these changes, the new aggregate resources will not be available to supply the Province's infrastructure and growth requirements close to the consumer which ultimately reduces the cost of construction and infrastructure projects. The current ill-advised policies in the Growth Plan are discouraging investment and the revisions to allow municipalities to map natural heritage system over these aggregate areas will make it worse. Without changes to Section 4.2.8 the Province will not be open for business in a manner which promotes a health economy and natural environment. Our recommended policy changes will ensure extraction results in an overall net benefit/gain to the natural environment while restoring confidence in the aggregate industry's ability to invest in the application process to make this resource available.

Yours truly,



Norm Cheesman

cc. Jae Truesdell, Policy Advisor, Planning, Zoning and Development, Minister's Office, MMAH  
Cordelia Clarke Julien, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ontario Growth Secretariat, MMAH  
Ala Boyd, Director, Natural Resources Conservation Policy Branch, MNRF  
Jake Sikora, Senior Policy Advisor and Stakeholder Relations, MNRF

## **4.2.8 Mineral Aggregate Resources**

1. Municipalities will develop and implement official plan policies and other strategies to conserve *mineral aggregate resources*, including:
  - a) the recovery and recycling of manufactured materials derived from *mineral aggregate resources* for reuse in construction, manufacturing, industrial, or maintenance projects as a substitute for new *mineral aggregate resources*; and
  - b) the wise use of *mineral aggregate resources*, including utilization or extraction of on-site *mineral aggregate resources* prior to development occurring.
2. Notwithstanding the policies in subsections 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, within the *Natural Heritage System*, *mineral aggregate operations* and wayside pits and quarries are subject to the following:
  - a) no new *mineral aggregate operation* and no new wayside pits and quarries, or any ancillary or accessory use thereto, will be permitted in the following *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*:
    - i. *significant wetlands*;
    - ii. *habitat of endangered species and threatened species* unless there is an overall benefit to the species in accordance with provincial and federal requirements; and
    - iii. *significant woodlands* unless ~~the woodland is occupied by young plantation or early successional habitat, as defined by the Province~~ there is an overall net increase in woodlands, in which case, the application must demonstrate that policies 4.2.8.4 b) and c) and 4.2.8.5 c) have been addressed and that they will be met by the operation;
  - b) any application for a new *mineral aggregate operation* will be required to demonstrate:

- i. how the connectivity between adjacent *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* will be maintained before, during, and after the extraction of *mineral aggregate resources*;
    - ii. how the operator could replace *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* that would be lost from the site with equivalent features or features that provide increased ecological diversity on another part of the site or on adjacent lands;
    - iii. how the *water resource system* will be protected or enhanced; and
    - iv. how any *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and their associated *vegetation protection zones* not identified in policy 4.2.2.3 a) will be addressed in accordance with policies 4.2.8.4 b) and c) and 4.2.8.5 c); and
  - c) an application requiring a new approval under the Aggregate Resources Act to expand an existing *mineral aggregate operation* may be permitted in the *Natural Heritage System*, including in *key natural heritage features*, *key hydrologic features* and any associated *vegetation protection zones*, only if the related decision is consistent with the PPS and satisfies the rehabilitation requirements of the policies in this subsection.
3. In *prime agricultural areas*, applications for new or expanded *mineral aggregate operations* will be supported by an *agricultural impact assessment* consistent with the policy requirements of the PPS and, where possible, will seek to maintain or improve connectivity of the *Agricultural System*.
4. For rehabilitation of new or expanded *mineral aggregate operation* sites, the following apply
  - a) the disturbed area of a site will be rehabilitated to a state of equal or greater *ecological value* and, for the entire site, long-term *ecological integrity* will be maintained or enhanced;
  - ~~b) if there are *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* on the site, or if such features existed on the site at the time of the application:~~
    - ~~i. the health, diversity, and size of these *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* will be maintained or enhanced; and~~
    - ~~ii. any permitted extraction of *mineral aggregate resources* that occurs in a feature will be completed, and the area will be rehabilitated, as early as possible in the life of the~~

~~operation;~~

- ~~b~~e) aquatic areas remaining after extraction are to be rehabilitated to aquatic enhancement, which will be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict, and the combined terrestrial and aquatic rehabilitation will meet the intent of policy 4.2.8.4 b); and
  - ~~c~~d) outside the *Natural Heritage System*, and except as provided in policies 4.2.8.4 a), b) and c), final rehabilitation will appropriately reflect the long-term land use of the general area, taking into account applicable policies of this Plan and, to the extent permitted under this Plan, existing municipal and provincial policies. In *prime agricultural areas*, the site will be rehabilitated in accordance with policy 2.5.4 of the PPS, 2014.
5. Final rehabilitation for new or expanded *mineral aggregate operations* in the *Natural Heritage System* will meet these additional criteria:
- a) where there is no extraction below the water table, an amount of land equal to that under natural vegetated cover prior to extraction, and no less than 35 per cent of the land subject to each license in the *Natural Heritage System*, is to be rehabilitated to forest cover, which will be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict. If the site is also in a *prime agricultural area*, the remainder of the land subject to the license is to be rehabilitated back to an *agricultural condition*;
  - b) where there is extraction below the water table, no less than 35 per cent of the non-aquatic portion of the land subject to each license in the *Natural Heritage System* is to be rehabilitated to forest cover, which will be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict. If the site is also in a *prime agricultural area*, the remainder of the land subject to the license is to be rehabilitated in accordance with policy 2.5.4 of the PPS, 2014; and
  - c) rehabilitation will be implemented so that the connectivity of the *key natural heritage features* and the *key hydrologic features* on the site and on adjacent lands will be maintained or enhanced.
6. Operators are encouraged to consider and provide for public access to former aggregate sites upon final rehabilitation, where appropriate.
7. Except as provided by the policies of this subsection, decisions on planning matters must be consistent with the policies in the PPS that pertain to the management of *mineral aggregate resources*. In addition, Municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws shall not contain provisions that are more restrictive than the policies of 4.2.8.

8. Where an application under the Aggregate Resources Act has been received and deemed complete by the Province as of July 1, 2017, any applications under the Planning Act to permit the making, establishment or operation of the pit or quarry to which the Aggregate Resources Act application relates, ~~if approved,~~ will not be subject to the policies of this Plan.