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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Monday 18 April 2005**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Lundi 18 avril 2005**

**Standing committee on  
general government**

Places to Grow Act, 2005

**Comité permanent des  
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2005 sur  
les zones de croissance

Chair: Linda Jeffrey  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Présidente : Linda Jeffrey  
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GENERAL GOVERNMENTCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Monday 18 April 2005

Lundi 18 avril 2005

*The committee met at 1602 in room 151.*

**The Chair (Mrs. Linda Jeffrey):** Good afternoon. The standing committee on general government is called to order. We're considering Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans. We're here today for the purpose of commencing public hearings on Bill 136.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

**The Chair:** The first item of business on our agenda is the report of the subcommittee on committee business. Mr. Rinaldi, would you move the report of the subcommittee and read it into the record, please.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** Your subcommittee met on Thursday, April 7, 2005, to consider the method of proceeding on Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans and recommends the following:

(1) That the committee meet for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 136 in Toronto at Queen's Park;

(2) That, if required, the committee meet on April 27, 2005, for the purpose of public hearings;

(3) That an advertisement be placed in the English dailies and the one French daily for one during the week of April 11, 2005, and that an advertisement also be placed on the Ontario parliamentary channel and the Legislative Assembly Web site;

(4) That the deadline for those who wish to make an oral presentations on Bill 136 be 5 p.m. on April 14, 2005;

(5) That the clerk, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized to schedule all witnesses;

(6) That if all witnesses cannot be accommodated, the clerk provide the subcommittee members with the list of witnesses who have requested to appear, by 6 p.m. on April 14, 2005, and that the caucuses provide the clerk with a prioritized list of witnesses to be scheduled, by 10 a.m. on April 15, 2005;

(7) That individuals be offered either 10 minutes or 15 minutes in which to make their presentations and organizations be offered either 15 minutes or 20 minutes in which to make their presentations, depending on the number of requests to appear;

(8) That the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal be invited to make a 15-minute presentation before the committee on April 18, 2005, followed by a 15-minute

question/comment period from the members of the committee, followed by a 15-minute technical briefing by ministry staff;

(9) That the deadline for written submissions on Bill 136 be 5 p.m. on April 25, 2005;

(10) That amendments to Bill 136 should be received by the clerk of the committee by 2 p.m. on April 28, 2005;

(11) That the committee meet for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 136 on May 2, 2005, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Toronto at Queen's Park;

(12) That the research officer provide the committee with background information on Bill 136 prior to the start of public hearings, and that the research officer also provide the committee with a summary of witness presentations, prior to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 136;

(13) That the clerk of the committee, in consultation with the Chair, be authorized, prior to the passage of the report of the subcommittee, to commence making any preliminary arrangements necessary to facilitate the committee's proceedings.

That's the report of the subcommittee, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions or comments on the report of the subcommittee?

**Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** Madam Chair, through you to the clerk, how did we do in terms of the groups that had requested to come on, by the time you contacted everybody, in getting a slot?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Everybody who requested to appear has been accommodated.

**Mr. Hudak:** Perfect. Thank you. Good work.

**The Chair:** All in favour of the subcommittee minutes? All those opposed? The report of the subcommittee is carried.

## PLACES TO GROW ACT, 2005

LOI DE 2005 SUR  
LES ZONES DE CROISSANCE

Consideration of Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans / Projet de loi 136, Loi sur l'établissement de zones de croissance planifiée et de plans de croissance.

**The Chair:** As requested, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal has been invited and has appeared

early. He was eager to talk to us today. Welcome, Minister Caplan. You have 15 minutes.

**Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal):** Madam Chair and my esteemed colleagues, I truly do appreciate this opportunity to appear before you and introduce committee members to Bill 136, the proposed Places to Grow Act. This is important and very necessary proposed legislation and, in my view, we need to approach it with a real sense of urgency. I believe that Bill 136 will give us what may well be our last chance to plan Ontario's future growth effectively and secure the kind of future that we want.

Ontario will undergo a tremendous growth spurt over the next quarter century, and as we grow, communities all across our province will be making thousands of decisions about land use and development. It doesn't take long to make one of these decisions, but when it's made, it's permanent and there is no turning back. Our children and our grandchildren will live with the consequences of such decisions, whether they are good decisions or not.

I would say quite frankly and directly to the committee members that some poor decisions have been made in our province's past. Too often, decisions about land use have been made on an ad hoc basis. In effect, there has been a tendency for all levels of government to rush ahead into the future without stopping to think about where we want to end up.

Over the years, one-off decisions have been instrumental in shaping our communities so that unplanned, uncoordinated decisions determined where we put our services and where we put our schools, where we built our hospitals and highways and other vital public facilities. Collectively, we have adopted a passive approach for growth, for the most part simply sitting back and letting it happen.

In effect, we have allowed chance, not choice, to shape our communities. This has left us with a legacy that is somewhat tainted. In some parts of the province the legacy is urban sprawl, air pollution, inadequate public services, gridlock and a rapid disappearance of valuable farmland and green spaces. Yet, in other areas of the province, the tainted legacy is economic stagnation and the out-migration of young people.

This is not the legacy we want, nor need, from growth. So, clearly, we need to start doing things better. The proposed Places to Grow legislation would allow the province to develop and issue growth plans reflecting the differing growth challenges and opportunities right across this province. If we fail to act decisively and effectively today, new growth will simply continue to roll over us and, once again, we will be in the position of playing catch-up as we struggle to mitigate the harmful consequences of short-sighted decisions.

**1610**

Studies by my ministry indicate that if we take a business-as-usual approach to growth and development, this area that we call the greater Golden Horseshoe will lose another 1,000 square kilometres of farmland by the year 2031. In effect, we would be allowing urban sprawl

to overtake an area the size of the current city of Toronto. In this scenario, commuting times in the greater Toronto area will increase by 45%, on top of the gridlock that we have now. Auto emissions would rise by 42%, on top of the levels that the Ontario Medical Association is telling us are being harmful to our population. We know that this pattern of growth is harmful to our economy, our health and our quality of life. We also know that it is unsustainable.

The proposed Places to Grow Act offers us a new paradigm for land use planning. In effect, this proposed legislation would, if passed, present us with the opportunity to draw a line under past mistakes and make a fresh start on the future. If passed, Bill 136 would allow us to work with municipalities to develop more compact and sustainable communities, more complete communities, places less dependent on the car, more respectful of the natural environment and, I think, indeed more fun to live in.

The proposed legislation would do this by empowering the provincial government to develop growth plans for different super-regions of the province. The plans will help us coordinate land use and infrastructure planning decisions to ensure that they contribute to a broader vision and give us the kind of communities and the kind of society we want. This represents a dramatic change from the approach that we've used in the past for planning for growth. As I said, I truly believe that it's our last, best chance to make a fresh start.

As committee members are aware, if the bill is passed, it is intended that the first growth plan to be developed under Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act, would cover the area called the greater Golden Horseshoe. This area is the economic engine of Ontario and the economic engine of Canada. Indeed, it's one of the fastest-growing urban regions in North America. The key idea is to start planning for economic and population growth in a rational way, instead of trying to catch up to it after the fact. Frankly, it is absolutely vital that we continue to offer a high quality of life to attract the skilled workers, to attract the new investment that will keep us economically competitive.

Ontario is a leader and can continue to be a leader in this regard when we learn from the experiences of other urban centres in North America. I'd like to cite some examples for you. In 1998, Hewlett Packard delayed its plan to build a second 20-storey office tower in Atlanta, which would have accommodated some 1,700 workers. The reason: Atlanta's traffic situation was cited as the main culprit. Workers were travelling 34 miles a day, on average, and facing long commuting times. So instead of building a new tower in Atlanta, Hewlett Packard moved the operation to Portland, Oregon, where the city has been practising growth planning for some 30 years.

There are other examples. Adobe Systems Inc. moved thousands of jobs from Silicon Valley to downtown San José, because they felt that the city's amenities would help them attract and retain workers. Where have we heard that before?

Examples such as these teach us that regions with growth management plans also tend to have stronger, more productive and more competitive economies. At the same time, experience also shows that effective growth plans can help sustain regional economies during good times as well as downturns in the economic cycles. By contrast, we also know that unplanned growth—and the traffic congestion, air pollution and urban sprawl that come with it—works as a disincentive to investment by companies when they are looking to either grow or expand. By compromising the quality of life for everyone, growth-related problems make it difficult to attract and retain a good supply of skilled, well-educated workers.

It's time that we started planning for growth in smarter, more effective ways. The proposed Places to Grow Act would allow us to begin doing that right away. It would allow us to develop a rational, coherent plan for public infrastructure investments and to link those public investments to strategic growth planning. As a result, the bill would allow us to provide what Ontarians have told us they want: stronger, more livable communities, a prosperous economy and protection of our natural environment.

Members of this committee should also be aware that there was strong stakeholder support for the draft growth plan my ministry released in February. Our stakeholders want a plan that has teeth. At this point, everyone, including developers, is applauding the government for providing the strong leadership and planning they have been asking for.

This comment from Barrie Mayor Rob Hamilton is typical of the letters we have received: "Your leadership and enthusiasm for addressing the urgent growth issues faced throughout the greater Golden Horseshoe is commendable, and I look forward to working with you."

In general, any concerns raised about the draft plan involved specific implementation questions and cost. If the bill is passed, these issues will be addressed as we review and finalize the plan, but overall, the feedback we have received from the general public strongly supports our goal of ensuring a strong economy and a healthier environment.

Finally, I wish to give credit where credit is due. I would also point out that much of the work that made the draft growth plan possible came out of the Smart Growth process that was started by the previous government. While I would be the first in line, and often was, to criticize so many of the initiatives undertaken by our predecessors, I have to say that the work of the Smart Growth panels made an important contribution to the draft legislation before you today.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee once again for the opportunity to introduce Bill 136 today and to recommend that you deal with it as expeditiously as possible. If we get the planning process right, and if that helps us make better decisions about what we build, and where and when and how we build it, many of the important economic and social goals we hope to accomplish will begin to fall into place.

As I said earlier, we have an exciting opportunity for a new beginning, to make a fresh start and approach to planning for growth. The time to take advantage of that opportunity is now, and our proposed legislation that can make it all happen is before you today. I ask this committee to give your urgent attention to Bill 136.

Madam Chair, thank you very much for the opportunity to offer some opening comments. I look forward to answering any questions or hearing any comments from committee members.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

As agreed to by the subcommittee, this time has been allotted for questions by members of the committee. We gave ourselves 15 minutes total. I presume there would be an equal distribution. Unless I see any other comments, we will give you your five minutes each. Mr. Hudak, would you like to begin?

**Mr. Hudak:** Minister, thank you very much, and thanks also to you and your staff for the briefings you provided to the Conservative caucus on Bill 136. I know they're in the audience here today, and it's much appreciated. And thanks for being early, which is too rare an occurrence, I think, for folks coming before the committee. It's probably not the case just in the last couple of years; it's probably a bit of a pattern, so thanks for being here, and for the presentation.

The main criticism we've brought forward to date on this—we'll look forward to exploring it through the presentations—is, where is the beef? It's important to have the plans. I commend you for the work you've done with the plans. You're a strong spokesperson for the work you have done, but you need the investments to go along with it. If you want to support intensification, you would make those infrastructure investments, or have the tax plans to support them.

Minister, where is the beef? When will we see actual investments rolling out, and who makes those decisions?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** Thank you, Mr. Hudak, for the question and for your opening comments. Of course, the reason I was early is that I'm very enthusiastic to talk about Bill 136.

I would make a couple of comments. First of all, you've already seen some of the investments, whether it's a billion dollars to go into the TTC for state of good repair and also to help with some limited expansion, whether it's a billion-dollar contribution for the expansion and improvement of GO Transit services across this entire region; for example, expanding service up to Barrie, and full-day, two-way service to Hamilton. So you've seen some of those. You've seen us support the environmental assessment work for the Waterloo region LRT. I hope to be in a position, after that work is completed to be able to support some of that work.

I believe, as well, that you're seeing additional work in investment, as my ministry is working on, in longer-term capital plans, which should be in place in the weeks and months ahead.

1620

**Mr. Hudak:** I appreciate it, Minister. We haven't seen the interregional transit systems you talk about advance

enough, and I think we owe that to those who come before the committee. Transportation projects—I know it's not your decision; it's Minister Takhar's—have totally fallen off the board. The mid-peninsula corridor, other transportation highway expansions and the GTTA are nowhere to be seen. We get promises that they will appear someday, but they remain a bit of a mystery.

The other question I wanted to ask, because I know our time is short, is on intensification. There have already been a number of high-profile projects that have been sent off to the OMB that councils have rejected: Sherway Gardens here in Toronto—I think 1,000 units of intensification is going to the OMB; Oakville has rejected a couple of proposals—Sharkey's and Palm Place, if I have the names correct. So if you try to hit the intensification goals in municipalities and councils reject them because local citizens don't like them, how do you square that circle? How are you going to ensure that you actually hit your intensification targets, or are you going to strengthen the OMB to force these decisions on local councils?

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'd like to answer the question, but first to your early remarks about the mid-pen: You would be quite aware that the Ministry of Transportation issued the terms of reference for the environmental assessment. As we had promised, it will be a full environmental assessment, as we think that's very important for that route to move ahead, but there should be full opportunity for the public as well in the routing of the highway. As far as the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority is concerned, that is moving ahead quite well. We've engaged a number of stakeholders. I hope that you similarly, Mr. Hudak, will be engaged as that body comes forward.

As far as intensification is concerned, it's fully our intention—I hope what you're going to hear from municipal leadership who come to speak to Bill 136, and also who have talked about our draft plan, is that this area that has presented a challenge in the past, certainly to municipal councils. Certainly there has been a complete absence of provincial leadership to make sure we grow in a way that has sustainability and that there is not only the legislative and regulatory framework, but the provincial area of investment strategy.

We think we can help things along. Our first step was to ask our urban strategists to work with us to help begin to develop a plan and a methodology that will detail whether a 40% intensification target, first of all, is even realistic. The answer to that was a very emphatic yes. I think there will be some criticism of the government by some that we haven't chosen an aggressive enough intensification target. There will be others who will argue that we've taken too aggressive an approach. I fully acknowledge that for some community residents, issues of new growth, of infill, of redevelopment will be issues. But by having official plans as part of the sub-area strategy, and the sub-area strategy as part of a larger growth kind of concept, along with Ontario Municipal Board reform, I believe we will be in an excellent

position to work with local communities as well as with municipal leaders and industry representatives to meet those targets. We've chosen—

**The Chair:** Minister Caplan, thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I hope to have an opportunity to continue this discussion with Mr. Hudak, because I think it's an excellent question.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister Caplan. Ms. Churley, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** Thank you, Minister. Because I only have five minutes, instead of asking you questions, I'm going to use the opportunity to give you a short critique of the bill as I see it. You will therefore have some sense, as you already know, of where I'm going to be coming from with this in terms of amendments.

To me, this is déjà-vu all over again with the greenbelt. For instance, this bill contains no provisions requiring provincial works or undertakings—i.e. highways and infrastructure—to conform to growth plans. I'm going to give you an example. As noted in the draft plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe, there are numerous highways or extensions. You call them economic transport corridors, but we're talking about new highways. Some of them are cutting through the greenbelt, which I wasn't able to do anything about during that debate, and I'm hoping to in this one.

Let me give you an example: One such corridor links Kitchener-Waterloo and Guelph to the GTA. Of course, an alternative we should be looking at, with the Kyoto CO<sub>2</sub> and smog problems, would be rail to move goods and people around, extending the GO train into these areas. That's an example. I think it's really short-sighted in terms of what you say you want to achieve through this. It sounds very much like the greenbelt. What you want to achieve is not going to be achieved unless these amendments are made.

I want to tell you of a few other areas where I have great concern. The 40% intensification target by 2014, in my view, is uninspired. Research conducted for your own ministry suggested that an even higher target might be feasible, as in the greater regional district of Vancouver. They've got 70% by 2021. England has targeted 60% by 2007.

As I've already mentioned, it is extremely counter-productive to include three new highway corridors beyond those in the initial discussion document. You know which ones they are, and they remain part of the plan. I really want to emphasize how important this is strategically within the greenbelt. Some of these are running right through the greenbelt. They undermine the plan's goal, as you put it, regarding the containment of sprawl and the promotion of more sustainable development patterns. If this weren't enough, as I've said, you've added the two new corridors to the mix. Some might say, "You're never going to see the money for those anyway," which is another way to look at it. But I believe this is really short-sighted.

I understand the political pressure, but we really have to take this opportunity to achieve these goals now. In my

view, of the highways, the extension of 404 is particularly problematic because it's key to the Queensville development. It means sprawl all the way to Lake Simcoe. As I said, when we debated the greenbelt in this committee, because of that, the greenbelt doesn't achieve its purpose, that is, stopping urban sprawl. This just adds to that.

The 404 extension will put pressure on the northern greenbelt boundary, and the 427 extension will put pressure on the southern boundary. So much for the government's greenbelt as a cornerstone of the strategy for sprawl; it's not going to happen.

In other areas, the plan takes an extremely weak approach to the issue of settlement area boundary extensions. There are no clear tests set for extensions except in the short term until the sub-area plans are developed, and then they are only factors to be considered as opposed to hard tests.

I don't think I have much time left, but I want to try to get a couple more points in.

**The Chair:** Fifty seconds, actually.

**Ms. Churley:** The plan takes a fairly blunt approach to the intensification areas.

I have some more issues as well, which the committee probably will hear about from some of the people who will come before the committee, but these are some of the areas where I have great concern, and I hope we can strengthen the act so it does what you hope to achieve.

Thank you for this opportunity.

**The Chair:** Minister, you have 30 seconds if you want to say anything.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I would say that in two of your comments you focused a great deal, Ms. Churley, on highways. You would note—I would hope, with some delight—the transit expansion plans out to Waterloo region, as we've shown them on one of the maps in the appendix of the plan. I would hope you would comment favourably on that.

The second one I would mention, in regard especially to Highway 427 but to others, is that we want to have a large enough inventory of employment lands. We believe that is critical. We hope to support the creation of two million new jobs in the area, so we obviously need land available to be able to support those jobs. In fact, that's precisely why we're moving in this direction.

**The Chair:** Is there anybody from the government side who would like to take their five minutes?

**Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre):** Minister, I'm not going to ask you where you bought your tie today. I will ask you that some other time.

Thank you, Minister, for being here today and for the leadership you've shown. This is a very important file. In particular, members from ridings in the greater Golden Horseshoe are experiencing every day the increase in gridlock. There were some very disturbing facts you brought forward, with the potential for commuting time to go up 45%. I'd see that as an absolute nightmare for our economy; I'd see it as a nightmare for our quality of life. Auto emissions going up 42%: Obviously that would

have major health repercussions in the greater Golden Horseshoe area.

This isn't all about the greater Golden Horseshoe. I recognize that. But to me, it is. That's where I'm from, that's where I was elected and, frankly, that's where I think we have some very, very serious problems.

**1630**

It's not all about just quality of life either; it's about the economy. My read of this is that it would bring some certainty to our building sector in terms of where they could and could not develop; it would bring some certainty as to where development should take place, to encourage it to take place where the infrastructure is, which is better for everybody; and it would ensure that intensification is something that would be greatly encouraged, which I think is a real benefit to our building sector.

My question to you is, do you believe that the establishment of this growth plan will indeed end up being a benefit to our building sector?

**Interjection:** Careful.

**Mr. Duguid:** It's a tough question.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** Please don't heckle. Let the minister answer.

**Hon. Mr. Caplan:** I want to thank the member for the question. I don't think there's any doubt that we have a long legacy of a lack of leadership and a lack of planning to overcome.

I do believe that not only will the growth plan certainly help deal with some of the growth pressures, say in the greater Golden Horseshoe, but I believe that in northern Ontario, for example, we can work on and develop a growth plan to help with some of the serious problems of economic stagnation, of youth out-migration, that have persistently plagued northern Ontario. In fact, it's the belief of our government that all areas of this province deserve to have growth, can support growth, can support our overall provincial economy.

I'd like to pick up on one of the points that you made earlier, Mr. Duguid, when you talked about gridlock and the potential for its increase. Already today, the Toronto Board of Trade estimates that gridlock costs our city some \$2 billion in lost investment and productivity annually. I believe that the people of Ontario, the people of the city of Toronto, the people of the greater Golden Horseshoe are ready for provincial leadership, they're ready for someone to take action on issues such as poor air quality, on issues such as gridlock, on issues such as sprawl. In fact, with this plan I think our government is showing the leadership which is going to make a real difference in some of those problems.

**Mr. Duguid:** I was thinking about a supplementary, but I'm satisfied with that answer.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister, for your time here today. We appreciate your being here, being early, being enthusiastic.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC  
INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

**The Chair:** We're at the point in our meeting where we're going to go to our technical briefing. We allotted 15 minutes for the technical briefing, so if the technical briefing goes to 15 minutes, there will be no opportunity for questions. I'm going to leave it in the hands of the staff to come forward and know that if you fill your 15 minutes, there will be no opportunity for questions afterward. We are trying to stay to a strict schedule so that we get to the delegations that have requested to appear before us.

Before you speak, could the individuals who are at the table and who will be speaking today identify themselves for Hansard. When you begin, you'll have 15 minutes.

**Mr. Brad Graham:** Thank you, Chair. My name is Brad Graham. I'm the assistant deputy minister of the Ontario Growth Secretariat with public infrastructure renewal.

**Ms. Jacqueline Wigle:** My name is Jacqueline Wigle. I'm legal counsel.

**Ms. Tija Dirks:** My name is Tija Dirks. I'm the policy manager with the Ontario Growth Secretariat.

**Ms. Alison Mackenzie:** My name is Alison Mackenzie. I'm legal counsel.

**Mr. Graham:** Thank you, Chair and members of the committee. I'll try to be as efficient as possible going through the slide deck, which I believe you received prior to this meeting. I'd like to spend some time talking about the main components of the bill, including its purpose and the growth plan process, which would include growth plan areas, the contents of growth plans and the process of making and approving growth plans, as well as a process for amending growth plans and the 10-year review, as well as spend some time on the conformity provisions in sections 12 and 14 and the regulations sections.

I think it's important to point out, though, at the outset that the proposed bill is not a growth plan, nor does it contain a growth plan. It does, however, establish the statutory framework for developing and implementing growth plans across the province. For example, the committee has already alluded to the fact that we have a draft growth plan in consultation for the greater Golden Horseshoe. However, the proposed bill contemplates growth plans being developed across Ontario.

In terms of background, that growth plan was the evolution, if you will, of a discussion paper we had in the summer. We released the draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe in February. We've also released companion technical papers on population and employment forecasts, land use intensification targets, current assessment of land supply and urban growth centre delineation. They were released in January and February. A public comment period on the EBR for the draft plan is actually ending today.

In terms of the purpose of the bill, section 1, basically the bill would enable decisions on growth to sustain a

strong economy and strong communities, and promote healthy environments. It would provide and promote a rational and balanced approach to growth planning that builds on community priorities, as well as an efficient use of infrastructure. It will reflect broad geographic perspectives, as well as integrating policies across natural and municipal boundaries, and ensures a long-term vision and goals to guide decisions about growth.

In terms of the main components of the bill, sections 3 and 4 outline the process for designating a growth plan area by regulation. Once a land or area had been identified, a proposed growth plan would be prepared.

Section 6 of the bill outlines the possible components of a growth plan. As you know, growth planning is prevalent around mature economies. We've tracked some 200 jurisdictions worldwide that have similar approaches to growth planning, and the components included in the proposed bill for our growth plan are very similar to what you would find in other jurisdictions. They are broad and flexible, and again that is to allow for the varying circumstances one would find across the province and would include things like population projections and allocations, assessment of future growth areas, potential growth strategies for sub-areas within a growth planning area, as well as policies, goals and criteria in relation to things like intensification and density, land supply, infrastructure development and location of that infrastructure, transportation planning and community design, as well as other policies that may be considered advisable.

Section 7 of the bill outlines the process for making and approving a growth plan, and that would involve preparing a proposed plan. After an area has been identified, there is a consultation process outlined in the bill, including the posting of a proposed plan on the Environmental Bill of Rights. There are options for further consultation, and if throughout that consultation modifications are required to the proposed plan, the bill outlines the process there.

Section 5 deals with the ability to appoint advisory persons or committees. These persons or committees could carry out such consultation as the minister directs and provide advice and recommendations on things like the preparation and implementation of growth plans, amendments and revisions, as well as the facilitation of issues that need resolution. It also provides for the fact that the Minister of PIR would be authorized to confer with any person or public body regarding a proposed growth plan.

In terms of the process for amending a growth plan, first you would have a proposed growth plan for an area, there would be a process of consultation and then a final approved plan. Once that occurs, there is the potential for amendments, which is outlined in section 10. That contains provision for the minister to amend the plan and contains procedural requirements similar to those that would apply to the first making of a growth plan. For example, a more detailed sub-area analysis or direction could be added by amendment to a plan, which is in fact suggested by the current draft growth plan for the greater

Golden Horseshoe. Those amendments would require LGIC approval.

There is an exception for the proposed amendments: If, in the opinion of the minister, amendments would not have a significant effect on the general application of the growth plan, the minister would be permitted to approve such amendments. Again, decisions to approve an amendment by LGIC, or the minister for those non-significant amendments, would be final and not subject to appeal.

Section 9 speaks to the fact that growth plans should undergo a review after 10 years. Again, there is a public consultation process for those reviews.

Sections 7 and 11 refer to the potential of appointment of a hearing officer. Once appointed, the hearing officer could fix a time and place for a hearing and procedures, and give notice to affected persons or bodies. After the hearing, the hearing officer would make written recommendations, not decisions, with reasons for those recommendations to the minister within 30 days. However, that could be extended, with reason. After the minister considers the recommendations, if the minister makes a modification to a proposed plan or amendment, the minister would include a summary of the submissions and comments when submitting the proposed growth plan or a proposed amendment to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

**1640**

Sections 12 and 14 relate to the conformity with a growth plan, and the proposed bill states that municipalities or municipal planning authorities in areas to which a growth plan applies would be required to bring their OP into conformity with the applicable growth plan. In terms of timing, this would be required no later than the next OP review as delineated in the Planning Act.

In the circumstance of non-conformity, if, in the minister's opinion, a municipal OP does not conform with the growth plan or is not brought into conformity by the date required, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal could advise the municipality of the particulars of nonconformity and invite proposals for resolution within a specified period of time. If the council or municipality fails to submit proposals to resolve the non-conformity issue within that time frame, or if the proposals as submitted do not meet the conformity opinion of the minister, then Bill 136, if passed, would permit the Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Municipal Affairs and Housing to issue a joint order to amend an OP to bring it into conformity.

In terms of scope of conformity, Bill 136 would, if passed, require all decisions by decision-makers under the Planning Act, the Condominium Act or other acts to be prescribed to conform to the OP. If there's a conflict between a growth plan and an OP, a zoning bylaw or the provincial policy statement, then the growth plan would prevail. However, there is an exception to that conflict. In cases where there's a conflict between a direction in the growth plan and a direction in the provincial policy statement, Niagara Escarpment plan or Oak Ridges moraine

plan that relates to the natural environment or human health, then the direction that would provide the greater protection would prevail.

Sections 17 and 18 speak to regulation and regulation-making authority. The bill, if passed, would authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations that could specify other acts which would have to conform to a growth plan and the ability to clarify or address issues regarding the application of the environmental and human health conflict provision of the bill which I just elaborated.

Finally, the bill also includes regulation-making authority for the minister. That would be in terms of things like changing the designation of area of settlement, changing the notice provisions of proposed amendments to GPs and prescribing additional persons or bodies to whom notice must be given. There's regulatory authority to provide for transitional matters to facilitate the implementation of the growth plan.

I'm not sure how much time I have left over to entertain questions by the committee.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Graham. We have about a minute and a half. Ms. Churley, did you have any questions on the technical briefing?

**Ms. Churley:** There's so little time that I can't really get into it; I have a lot. On page 14, you talk about "the direction that would provide the greater protection would prevail." Let me give you an example: aggregates, which are allowed within the greenbelt and within this act. How would that work if there's proof that aggregate expansion would be detrimental? How would this new act help with that, or would it?

**Mr. Graham:** In that instance, unless there was a specific direction in the growth plan under that hypothetical to stop that extraction for the reasons you mentioned, it would defer to the PPS. Whatever plan offered the higher level of protection for the natural environment would prevail.

**Ms. Churley:** So there's no protection anywhere when it comes to aggregate expansion? We're all out of luck, I guess. That's the reality: This plan doesn't deal with it either.

**Mr. Graham:** At minimum, the site would have to follow the directions of the provincial planning statement. The intent behind this provision is that protection of the natural environment wouldn't be in any way eroded from the existence of the growth plan and that in any instances we would not, if you will, offer less protection of the natural environment.

**The Chair:** Are there any questions from the government side?

**Mr. Rinaldi:** No, thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hudak.

**Mr. Hudak:** Thanks very much for the presentation. Just a short, simple question: Which is the lead ministry for land use planning in the McGuinty government?

**Mr. Graham:** In relation to growth management, it's the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal. When it comes to things like the PPS and the Planning Act, it's

the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. But I must say that we work hand in glove and regularly on a day-to-day basis to make sure that the initiatives underway in MMAH are consistent with our growth management plans at PIR. One of the benefits, if you will, of establishing or moving over to PIR, because we were with municipal affairs and housing, is the direct link to the capital planning process.

**Mr. Hudak:** Is it a reasonable expectation that MPIR will be making the capital decisions through a line item in the budget?

**Mr. Graham:** Pardon me?

**Mr. Hudak:** Will public infrastructure renewal be making capital decisions through a line item from the provincial budget?

**Mr. Graham:** Yes. Through the normal capital process, PIR is the lead ministry when it comes to developing the capital plan. So we are working with colleagues in my ministry to determine that capital envelope and its priorities. As I said, we link regularly with MMAH from day to day.

**Mr. Hudak:** So if I'm the city of Oshawa, which is coming before us shortly, and I'm renewing my official plan, which ministry do I interact with, or do I interact with all? Are there going to be any issues with confusion, and will you remedy that?

**Mr. Graham:** We're working out the administrative details, but we don't want to invent any new process. Certainly, the one-window approach by MMAH and their primary relationship with municipalities will continue. We're not going to establish a new process for that. So they would continue to deal with MMAH for day-to-day matters.

**The Chair:** Thank you, staff, for the technical briefing. We appreciate your being here today.

#### CITY OF OSHAWA

**The Chair:** Our first delegation this afternoon is John Gray, mayor of the city of Oshawa.

**Ms. Churley:** On a point of order, Madam Chair: I just wanted to point out to people that I have a slight eye problem which light bothers. So if I put on my sunglasses here, it's not to be pretentious, it's to shut out the light.

**The Chair:** To protect you, good.

Just before we begin, I want to bring attention to the subcommittee—there was a change in our meeting schedule. There was an additional day, based on the number of delegates we have. So we are meeting for that fourth day, which is Wednesday, April 27. If you weren't aware of that, I'm going to bring your attention to that now.

Welcome, Mayor Gray. Thank you for coming. Could you identify yourself for Hansard before you begin to speak, and the group that you speak for. You have 15 minutes. I will give you a two-minute warning, should you go long. If you want to have questions asked of you, you need to leave a little bit of time; otherwise, you have the whole 15 minutes.

**Mr. John Gray:** Unless I read slowly, it shouldn't take 15 minutes.

**The Chair:** OK.

**Mr. Gray:** First of all, my name is John Gray. I am the mayor of Oshawa. As mayor of the city of Oshawa, I agree with the intent of Bill 136, that in order to accommodate future population growth, support economic prosperity and achieve a high quality of life, a growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe is needed to guide growth and development in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Accordingly, the passage of Bill 136 is supported in order to provide the legislative authority for the preparation of growth plans by the province. This bill will enable the province to assist municipalities in attracting employment opportunities; assist the province in prioritizing infrastructure investment decisions; ensure that growth is managed and coordinated for the long-term social, economic and environmental health of the greater Golden Horseshoe; and maintain the province's status as the leading economic powerhouse in the country.

As mayor of the city of Oshawa, I support more provincial direction in the areas of allocation of growth, establishing firm urban boundaries, protection of prime agricultural land, water resources and environmental stewardship; ensuring an adequate land supply for urban uses; providing direct provincial financial incentives to stimulate brownfield redevelopment; and direct and indirect incentives to stimulate reinvestment in historical downtowns and affordable housing. Furthermore, a number of key cultural attractions are found in core areas and often need help to make a full contribution to the cultural vitality of our cities and citizens.

#### 1650

When it comes to finalizing the details of the growth plan itself, I trust the province to listen to its partners, the municipalities, and respond to the comments and issues raised. Municipalities can best assess the appropriateness of the proposed implementation approaches. Flexibility and sensitivity to local circumstances are necessary to achieve the best results. Managing growth in the Golden Horseshoe is essential, and it is important that the province and municipalities work together co-operatively to get it right.

The April 14 issue of the Toronto Star reported on a Conference Board of Canada study finding that Oshawa will lead Canada in economic growth next year and through to 2009, fuelled by increased investment and vehicle production at General Motors of Canada Ltd. The headline reads: "Canada's Next Boom Town: Oshawa."

This is good news for the city, for Durham region, for the province and indeed for Canada. A partnership with the province is needed to ensure that this growth forecast is achieved and to build on the economic advantages of the Oshawa area. Much of the previous growth and infrastructure has been directed to areas west of Toronto. The time has come to direct more resources to areas east of Toronto and to focus this growth in locations where there is a substantial employment centre already estab-

lished. Oshawa fits the bill. We need the province's help to reach our potential.

Oshawa has three pillars of growth upon which to build and lead us into a prosperous future. They are the General Motors of Canada manufacturing plant, the new University of Ontario Institute of Technology, and Lakeridge Health Oshawa, including the construction of a new cancer centre.

Continued support of GM, UOIT and Lakeridge Health is fundamental to sustaining growth in this vital urban area east of Toronto. I support the policy foundations of the proposed legislation and the draft growth plan, which encourage compact, efficient growth and the maximization of infrastructure. These policy directions are consistent with the support and expansion of these facilities in Oshawa.

However, there are a number of infrastructure improvements which would support the development of the Oshawa area: extension of the GO train service eastward, construction of long-outstanding Highway 401 widening and interchanges, and the extension of Highway 407.

Directing provincial investment to improving the easterly transportation connections and to supporting employment in Oshawa will achieve balanced economic growth across the greater Golden Horseshoe and stable sustainable communities east of Toronto.

Downtown Oshawa is identified as an urban growth centre in the draft growth plan and I strongly support the emphasis that the draft growth plan, and Bill 136 place on reinvestment in Ontario's historical downtown cores such as is found in the city of Oshawa. Our downtown is able, ready and willing to accommodate many of the key objectives of Places to Grow, such as affordable housing, compact urban form, intensification and employment opportunities of provincial and regional significance. There are a number of sites in downtown Oshawa which provide opportunities for significant development and intensification, including some brownfield sites.

Recently, city council has put its best foot forward by approving a new multi-million dollar sports and entertainment complex in the heart of downtown Oshawa as a new home for the Oshawa Generals.

Following the lead of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the city of Oshawa is already preparing an action plan to stimulate residential and commercial investment in Oshawa's downtown, consistent with Bill 136 and the Places to Grow policy directions.

The city has offered to have downtown Oshawa act as a pilot project that can be a showcase for the province's policy objectives and demonstrate to other communities how Places to Grow can work. I am convinced that a partnership initiative with Oshawa as a pilot project can only achieve a win-win outcome for the province and Oshawa.

The passage of enabling legislation for the creation of growth plans demonstrates the province's commitment to managing growth and building strong communities. Oshawa supports the preparation of a long-term strategy for the coordination of growth in the greater Golden

Horseshoe and the identification of urban growth centres as focal points for residential and employment growth. Oshawa is prepared to do its part to help the province realize its goals.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mayor Gray. You've left three minutes for each party to ask you questions or make comments on your presentation. The government side, Mr. Rinaldi.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** Thanks, Your Worship, for your presentation. Just to comment first, it's refreshing that you've taken the lead, that Oshawa has taken the lead, on the pattern we set as a province. It's really encouraging that you're doing that.

A couple of questions maybe you could elaborate on: You have three comments or requests that you put forward in your presentation that could make things better. One is the extension of 407 to your area. I'm particularly interested in that, because obviously that opens up a whole new era for Oshawa and eastern Ontario. Can you elaborate on what that really means to you?

**Mr. Gray:** Certainly. All the areas of Durham region—Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa and Clarington—can benefit from the 407. There are a number of lands that have been set aside in that area for employment purposes, and of course we're jammed as far as transportation corridors are concerned. When it comes to the eastern part of the GTA, we only have the 401, essentially, as the main area to move goods. We all know that the movement of goods is so important to our economy. With the 407, not only can we move people, but it's the movement of goods, and of course that will drive some development opportunities, most especially the employment lands.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hudak, you're next. You have three minutes.

**Mr. Hudak:** Thank you, Your Worship, for the presentation, and congratulations on your ongoing success in Oshawa.

A quick question for you with respect to, I guess, local decision-making: The plan that the legislation allows for is calling for 40% intensification targets in all the municipalities that the plan would include. It was characterized at the launch as sort of taking Yonge and Eglinton from downtown Toronto and transposing it on areas like Oshawa or Milton or Oakville—that sort of thing. Do you think we should set that target for all the municipalities that are part of that growth plan, or should they probably be given a bit of choice, or go further if they so choose?

**Mr. Gray:** First of all, you've hit on one of the areas that's probably going to be the biggest challenge, which is to find ways to meet the intensification targets. There's no question that you have to walk before you can run. You look at Yonge-Eglinton, started 50 years ago as an intensification, I believe.

For us, it's going to take a bit of a shift in attitudes, where up until now the single-family home has been the focus. So getting the intensification along our arterial roads is going to be first and foremost, and then seeing

that denser, tighter form is the second phase. Will it happen overnight? No, it won't. Can we do it within that 10 years, as prescribed? That's probably a little aggressive, and it's probably going to be the biggest challenge, for everybody to meet those targets. I rather suspect that they'll have to be modified. There will probably be some great success stories, and others that are going to linger. They're not going to want to move to that type of intensification, and I understand that.

I know just within Durham region itself there are municipalities that really place the emphasis on the 50-foot lot. That's where their marketing effort is; that's the lifestyle that they're trying to promote for their community. So will they easily adapt to intensification? No, they won't. But then there's the city of Oshawa. I think we've had some intensification over the great many years the city has been in existence. So it's going to be easier for us to shift, to move to that form.

**Mr. Hudak:** The other question I wanted to ask Your Worship was, section 6 is the part of the act that says what a growth plan can cover. A lot of the areas in section 6 are what regions, the upper tiers, currently do in the growth plan area. What would your advice be, having experience at both levels, on what the responsibility should be of the local and the regional, and then what role should the province play so we don't have overlap?

**Mr. Gray:** I think there needs to be, first of all, an overarching plan, trying to make sure that we don't have one continuous urban form from Oshawa down to Niagara Falls. I think we all want to avoid that, so clearly there has to be some overarching provincial initiative, and hence, I believe, this legislation. But there has to be, obviously, a co-operative nature.

Are there going to be disputes where perhaps some municipalities feel that that urban line has been drawn incorrectly and it needs to be moved? I think we're going to see those types of things come forward as time goes on. I don't see it as necessarily a bad thing, but you're right: I don't think anybody wants to create a huge bureaucracy to administer this; I think there just has to be some overall guidelines set, and some flexibility as well. If there's one thing in politics, there's always an exception to every rule, and I think we need to make certain that we can accommodate some of those exceptions.

1700

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mayor Gray. Ms. Churley, you have three minutes.

**Ms. Churley:** Thank you very much for your presentation, Mayor. I just wanted to have you expand a little bit on the issue around the responsibilities of the municipalities and the rights of the municipalities versus the province. You mentioned that flexibility and sensitivity to local circumstances are necessary to achieve the best results and that it's important to work co-operatively to get it right. Where do you see the balance in terms of—I mean, you've got an incredible challenge ahead of you in terms of the boom that's happening, given all the issues around urban sprawl and Kyoto and smog and all of those things. How do you see that working?

**Mr. Gray:** Thank you very much for the question. I think there will be, at times, disputes between municipalities and the province. I guess that at the end of the day we're creatures of the province and they win. But I think there needs to be at least a willingness on the part of the provincial government to really be serious about looking at municipal concerns. If you don't do that, then I think you're not going to be as successful as you wish to be.

Are there areas where the province needs to take priority? Yes, absolutely: the willy-nilly moving of the urban line just to get more growth because growth is very attractive to us as municipalities. So maintaining well-defined lines is going to be important, I think, and there has to be a well-defined guideline of what qualifies to move those lines.

Yet, as I say, I think there are a few lines that could be moved logically. We can use, for example, watershed areas as opposed to municipal boundaries. Sometimes you've got services on one side of the road, and yet you're saying, "No development shall occur on the east side of that road." Some of those things don't quite make sense, and that's where I think the improvements have to come into play. But there definitely has to be that strong interaction and understanding that municipalities do have a strong understanding of planning issues, as does the upper tier, the region of Durham.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Your Worship, for coming.

## NIAGARA REGION

**The Chair:** Our next delegation is from the Niagara region: Mr. Peter Partington, regional chair, and Bill Smeaton, chair of the planning services committee. Could you come forward, please?

Welcome. If you want to wait until your handout is out, I won't time you until you begin. If you're all going to speak, could you all identify yourselves for Hansard.

**Mr. Peter Partington:** My name is Peter Partington. I'm the chair of the regional municipality of Niagara.

**Mr. Bill Smeaton:** I'm Bill Smeaton, regional councillor elected from Niagara Falls and chair of the planning services committee of the region.

**The Chair:** Welcome.

**Mr. Partington:** Thank you. Joining us is Corwin Cambray, our commissioner of planning.

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to make a presentation on the regional municipality of Niagara's views on the proposed Places to Grow Act and draft growth plan. Your focus, I understand, is on the proposed act. The application of the act, however, can be seen in the draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

It is important to remember that the recently approved greenbelt plan affects Niagara significantly. Nowhere in the greenbelt area except Niagara have urban communities been completely cut off from urban expansion in order to protect the provincially and nationally significant tender fruit and grape areas. The region of Niagara has

been a strong supporter of protecting the tender fruit and grape areas, as set out in the regional policy plan's vision for future development and conservation. Support for agriculture, however, is necessary. While the greenbelt plan recognizes part of the vision on the tender fruit and grape areas, the other part of the vision is largely missing in the Places to Grow documents.

One of the purposes of the act is to provide a rational and balanced approach to decisions about growth that builds on community priorities, strengths and opportunities, and makes efficient use of infrastructure. In Niagara, we support the purpose of the act, yet the province has not recognized Niagara's priority for future development along the extended Highway 406 and Welland Canal corridor through Thorold and Welland to Port Colborne.

Similarly, there was no consideration of the already designated development potential within the urban areas in the southern part of Niagara; namely, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne. The Niagara-GTA corridor is recognized and is an integral part of sustaining a robust economy, another purpose of the act.

More specifically on the act, the emphasis should be on the broader strategic level to guide urban form, infrastructure and investment decision-making. There needs to be a clear link with and recognition of the municipal role in community planning. Therefore, five changes to the act are recommended:

Under section 2, the definition of "growth plan" should include the phrase "means a broad strategic plan" to indicate that it does not duplicate municipal plans.

Under section 4, the growth plan should be prepared for the whole area, keeping in mind its overall strategic nature. The phrase "or part of an area" should be deleted.

Next, under section 6, the contents of a growth plan are set out. Here there is clearly too much detail for a provincial plan while omitting the important role of provincial implementation, on which the chair of Niagara's planning services committee, Bill Smeaton, will speak.

Some changes we are recommending include removing clause 6(c) on growth strategies for single municipal areas and subclauses 6(d)(ii) through (vi), (xii) and (xiii) that can involve detailed planning issues for which we already have the provincial policy statement and municipal plans. What is missing from section 6, and that is fundamental to a provincial plan, is that the strategic growth plan should include specific actions to be taken by the province to implement or achieve the policies or goals.

Thus, in short, regional council is generally supportive of Places to Grow, while seeking recognition of Niagara's long-standing "grow south" strategy and focusing the act and plan on strategic issues, including provincial initiatives in implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you on these issues. We agree this is truly the time to plan for the future. I'd like to turn the matter over to regional councillor Smeaton.

**Mr. Smeaton:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to address you on the proposed Places to Grow Act and draft growth plan.

My comments today focus on the implementation of the growth act and plans and how this would affect municipalities. As chair of Niagara's planning services committee, I have a strong and long interest in how our communities develop to achieve a high quality of life, as stated in your act.

There is very little information supplied in the act as to how the growth plans would be implemented or what assistance the province will provide to municipalities in this regard. In Niagara, I believe the regional policy plan contains many of the key elements that support a provincial growth plan, including protection of agricultural areas, firm urban boundaries, alignment of capital expenditures and incentives for development in the urban centres of our communities such as brownfields or intensification of old and centrally located areas within larger municipalities in particular.

What is missing are the provincial programs that will help us implement Niagara's vision for development and conservation. This vision supports the provincial growth plan, as the regional chairman has stated.

In another forum, but not an unrelated topic, regional Niagara has made clear what is needed to support agriculture, such as investment in research and marketing. That particular industry is worth \$1.8 billion to us in Niagara alone. It's huge, and the province was very complimentary of recent studies that we've done in that area.

If these provincial planning initiatives are to be converted into action for shaping the communities we want, public investment, we believe, is definitely required. The act needs to identify provincial implementation tools. It cannot all fall to municipalities, as clause 6(d)(xiv) would seem to imply. Certainly municipalities must do their share, but we feel that the province must also join with us in partnership.

**1710**

Within urban areas the province needs to provide financial incentives for brownfield redevelopment and intensification. Regional Niagara and the local municipalities are doing it now. What a much more effective program it would be with at least an equal contribution from the province. Section 6 should include a reference to provincial financial contributions and other tools. As everyone here knows, I'm sure, the municipalities only have one source of revenue, and that is, of course, the land use property tax base. You folks can go to other areas for your money.

The widening and extension of Highway 406, the building of the Niagara-GTA corridor, municipal transit, affordable housing and servicing infrastructure for future development are all important components in the future of Niagara in which the province is involved.

The Places to Grow legislation and the first draft growth plan seem to be drifting into too much detail

rather than staying at the strategic level and identifying the financial tools necessary for us to achieve a high quality of life for Ontarians. Places to Grow does not have to do it all; rather, it needs to work with and support the municipal planning system that, while not perfect, has achieved much.

In conclusion, the act and plans will not achieve their purposes and objectives, in our opinion, unless the province provides the supporting financial resources and infrastructure investment.

I thank you again. This is a very important topic that affects all aspects of our community, citizens and future. I'd be happy, along with Chair Partington, to answer any questions that members may have.

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentlemen. You've left about two minutes for each party to ask questions. Mr. Hudak, you have the floor.

**Mr. Hudak:** Chair Partington, Councillor Smeaton and Mr. Cambray, thank you very much for being here and for the presentation. I'm glad you emphasized the "grow south" initiative, the importance of the 406 extension and the GTA corridor, the good old mid-peninsula corridor. You pointed out on section 6 quite well the question I asked of Mayor Gray just beforehand from Oshawa. Maybe you could stress that. What is your concern with duplication between a growth plan and the work the region already does? Is there an example you could give us of that?

**Mr. Corwin Cambray:** I think the example we could give relates to the urban area boundaries and identification. They have been through, and go through, quite a rigorous process now and end up with the OMB if there is an appeal. To add another layer into that seems unnecessary. The important point is that it's the implementation of the development within the urban areas that we need the assistance on, not the management of the boundary, which we have well in control.

**The Chair:** Thank you. Could you identify yourself for Hansard, please.

**Mr. Cambray:** Sorry, my name is Corwin Cambray. I'm the commissioner of planning and development for regional Niagara. I apologize.

**The Chair:** That's OK.

Ms. Churley, you have the next two minutes.

**Ms. Churley:** I'm going to give over my two minutes to Mr. Hudak, because that is the area he represents.

**Mr. Hudak:** God bless you. Thank you, to my colleague.

**Ms. Churley:** You owe me.

**Mr. Hudak:** I'll give that two minutes back to you, plus interest. Just name your group.

**The Chair:** Don't waste it.

**Mr. Hudak:** Has it started already?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Mr. Hudak:** Second question: Have you had any conversations with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, or your own opinion on—what is it called?—the gateway economic zone, which is a new category for Fort Erie and Niagara Falls?

**Mr. Partington:** I certainly haven't. It's something we need to do in the near future, but I haven't as of yet. We do have a member who is representing the region of Niagara on that gateway. Can you add to that, Corwin?

**Mr. Hudak:** What would you like it to mean, relative to the other growth centres, like St. Catharines, which has been chosen as a growth centre?

**Mr. Partington:** One of the things we're concerned about is that Welland—very historic Welland, a very large industrial area—Port Colborne and Thorold were even left out of the document. That's one of our major thrusts into the south part of the region of Niagara. We've had virtually no growth in Niagara over the years, and that's because we protected the tender fruit lands. The greenbelt legislation freezes four major communities in the north end but then doesn't allow us to move south. Where is the natural area to go? It's a very large area, very centrally located in Ontario, and it's something we need to move forward on. That's what we've been stressing to the government. That's basically how those two strategies fit.

**Mr. Smeaton:** But we are going to need some dollar bills to do that infrastructure work. That's not to say the return won't be great to the province, just as we've seen in other areas of growth—there are huge revenues coming into provincial coffers—but in order to open up the south, as Mr. Hudak certainly knows, we are going to need some help with the roads and with the infrastructure that goes along with them. The new border initiative is something that certainly goes beyond municipal or provincial boundaries. There's tremendous federal interest in that as well. It augurs well, I think, for the entire province.

I don't know that we can separate local economies from provincial economies any more. They are all tied in so integrally now. We hope that by opening that south, we'll have a brand new opportunity economically throughout Ontario.

**The Chair:** Mr. Rinaldi.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** It's great that you're here today. I was trying to think what kind of day it was today and whether I should give up my time as well. I'm really struggling with that, but I want my two minutes.

A couple of questions on where it seems to be a little bit contradictory: On page 5 of the presentation from the Chair, it says that we need to be more specific, yet later on in the presentation, both parties say that we're too restrictive. It's a bit confusing. On the one hand, you seem to be saying—can you just give us some sense of where you're coming from?

**Mr. Cambray:** The document, the act, is quite specific about what it's going to include in terms of the plans, but it's not specific on what the province is going to do, the specific actions to be taken by the province. It mentions specific actions to be taken by municipalities. What about specific actions to be taken by the province to help implement the growth plans?

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentlemen. We appreciate your being here today and making your impassioned speeches.

## PEMBINA INSTITUTE

**The Chair:** Our next delegation will be the Pembina Institute: Dr. Mark Winfield. Welcome, Dr. Winfield. We have your presentation. After you've identified yourself and the group that you speak for, you'll have 15 minutes.

**Dr. Mark Winfield:** My name is Mark Winfield, and I'm director of the environmental governance program of the Pembina Institute. The institute welcomes the opportunity to address the committee on Bill 136, the proposed Places to Grow Act.

The institute has followed the province's growth management planning initiatives closely over the past few years, beginning with the work of the previous government's Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel. The institute welcomes the introduction of the proposed Places to Grow Act and believes that the growth management planning initiative is an important component of the government's overall efforts to reform Ontario's land use and infrastructure planning system to promote more sustainable urban development patterns.

Our specific comments on the bill are as follows:

We've noted in the preamble and purposes section of the bill that the concept of growth occupies a very central role. Indeed, the bill seems to take the inevitability of growth and the need to manage it as givens, as opposed to employing a wider vision of community sustainability, well-being or quality of life as a starting point.

The focus on growth per se seems inconsistent with the direction of recent discussions regarding urban and community development in Canada. I point to the recent work of the National Round Table on Environment and the Economy, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Smart Growth British Columbia and others that have emphasized the need for a broader range of environmental, economic and social end points to guide community development.

I would suggest that the purposes section should focus on the promotion of economic prosperity, environmental sustainability and social well-being in community development, particularly with respect to land use and infrastructure, as opposed to simply growth and its management.

Section 6 of Bill 136 outlines the potential contents of growth plans. We note here, surprisingly, that there are no references to the protection of key natural heritage features or hydrological features, the maintenance of the ecological-hydrological functions of these features or the maintenance and improvement of connectivity among them. Therefore, we're recommending that the bill be amended to address these issues. Specifically, the policies, goals and criteria of the plans should include goals related to the protection of key natural heritage and hydrologic features, the maintenance of their functions and the maintenance and improvement of connectivity among them.

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We also note that section 6 of Bill 136 makes no references to policies, goals and criteria related to energy

conservation and renewable resources. This is despite the government's stated interest in the promotion of conservation and renewable energy sources. Therefore, we are recommending that section 6 also be amended to require that the plans include policies, goals and criteria related to energy conservation and the development of low-impact energy sources.

Section 14 deals with the effect of growth plans, and in particular would require that decisions by municipalities and provincial agencies under the Planning Act, the Ontario Planning and Development Act and the Condominium Act conform with the plans made under Bill 136, and that the provisions of the plans made under the act prevail in the event of a conflict with official plans, zoning bylaws or the provincial policy statement made under the Planning Act.

Surprisingly, however, given the emphasis of the entire growth management exercise on infrastructure planning, Bill 136 makes no provision requiring that municipal works, structural improvements and other undertakings conform with the plans made under the act. We note that the parallel legislation on the greenbelt, Bill 135, did include such a provision. We are recommending that a similar provision be incorporated into Bill 136.

Consistent with that theme, we also have noted—and I think the previous witnesses alluded to this—that provincially initiated or financed undertakings, as well as municipal projects, can have significant implications for future development patterns and the effectiveness of the plans that might be made under the act. One of our understandings of the primary purpose of the plans that are to be made under the act is to give direction to provincial infrastructure investments and ensure that they are consistent with the direction of the plan. Surprisingly, though, the bill doesn't contain a provision that requires that provincial investments actually follow the direction of the plan. Therefore, we are recommending that section 14 be amended to require that provincially initiated or funded undertakings—and we would recommend defining "undertakings" as per section 1 of the Environmental Assessment Act—conform with the plans made under the act.

Thank you very much for your attention. I'd welcome any questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Winfield. You have left about three and a half minutes for each party to ask you questions, beginning with Ms. Churley.

**Ms. Churley:** Thank you very much, Dr. Winfield. It's always a pleasure to hear your analysis of these bills. Your presentation, in many ways, is quite technical in nature. I'm just digesting it here. My overall question would be on your recommendations for certain amendments. If these amendments don't happen, what is your view of the effectiveness of the bill, if these things aren't done?

**Dr. Winfield:** I would point in particular to the last two recommendations regarding the conformity of infrastructure undertakings with the plan. As we've understood it, the intention of the entire exercise has been to

give direction to the province's infrastructure investments and to make sure that they are shaped by some sort of policy direction that is supportive of the directions that are laid out in the plan in terms of intensification, the role of transit for moving people and all those kinds of things. Our concern is that we're not certain that's what we are actually seeing yet. Indeed, that would seem to undermine a lot of the purpose of the plan.

On the planning side, it's relatively complete, but of course we've already got a lot in place now through the revised provincial policy statement. Since the plan is just fleshing some things out there, it's really on the infrastructure side where we're sort of left with a blank. There had been some questions raised about some of the infrastructure projects which are in the plan, particularly economic corridors and how well they fit, for example, with the overall directions of the plan and broader goals in terms of air quality, future development patterns and those kinds of things. So I think it's really quite crucial that these things be better integrated.

Indeed, we've noted in our comments on the plan itself that there seems to be a real problem in terms of the level of integration of the goods movements aspect of the plan with everything else. I think you need this kind of amendment to make sure that sort of coordination is covered off.

**Ms. Churley:** I agree with that. But would you not say, given that it seems to be the direction of the government to move forward with infrastructure, as with the highway proposals and the big pipe and other infrastructure within the greenbelt, that the contradiction is there but the likelihood of an amendment—I know you're proposing it. If that is the objective of the government, is there any other way around this?

**Dr. Winfield:** I don't think so. The whole intention of the exercise, as I understood it, has been to provide a stronger policy direction to the province's infrastructure investments. There was a concern under SuperBuild that there was not a lot of direction underlying it, certainly not consistent with principles of urban sustainability or smart growth or what have you. The previous government might have been moving in that direction but didn't get there.

Here I think it really becomes quite crucial, because one of the other factors which is at play clearly is that the province is going to be presented with requests from municipalities for quite significant infrastructure investments. I think we heard that from the previous witnesses. We know it's out there. Places like York region and Waterloo have large transit plans for which they are looking for provincial assistance. I think it becomes quite crucial that the province be making decisions about which of those requests it's going to respond to that are consistent with the directions it has tried to set through the plan. Having provisions in the legislation that say that's where these types of undertakings and these investments need to go would simply seem to complete the circle of what's being attempted here.

**The Chair:** Mr. Duguid.

**Mr. Duguid:** Mr. Winfield, thank you very much for coming here today. I believe you made submissions during the greenbelt as well, if I recall. I thank you for that, and I thank you for the support of the Pembina Institute in terms of the overall direction of the bill—it's important to hear that from you—and for your suggestions for improvement.

I have two specific questions. I'll ask the first, and we'll see if there is time for the second.

The first one relates to section 10, the amendments to growth plans. You're suggesting that the "notice and opportunities for written submissions provided to the public, affected municipalities, planning authorities and planning boards" is not sufficient, in your view, when making amendments to the growth plan. You're suggesting that not only public notice be given but that the public be invited to make submissions. I'm wondering what form you would foresee that in. Are you thinking it would have to go to a committee for even minor changes to the growth plan? How do you see that happening?

**Dr. Winfield:** I think our observation on the drafting of the bill was simply that there is this oddity that the bill doesn't actually require that members of the public be given notice or be invited to make submissions in relation to proposed amendments. We're simply saying—it may have been an oversight in drafting—to complete that off, to say that when amendments are being proposed, members of the public be clearly given notice. That could be in all kinds of different mechanisms. You could put something on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry, you could put notices in newspapers of general circulation in the area that would be affected—all the usual types of things. It's simply making sure that if there is an amendment in the process, the public gets included in the conversation as well as the affected municipalities.

**Mr. Duguid:** It was my understanding that there would be notice given, unless we're talking about a different part of the bill, and that there would be opportunities for the public to make written submissions.

**Dr. Winfield:** That's in relation to the actual development of the plans themselves. At least as we read the act, there seemed to be a gap in relation to proposed amendments. That's what we flagged in our submission.

**Mr. Duguid:** OK. That clarifies that. I appreciate that. Is there more time?

**The Chair:** One minute.

**Mr. Duguid:** Very quickly, and this is a quick one, you talk about conformity with provincial official plans within a two-year period. That might be a little onerous for municipalities, given the five-year cycle for reviewing their official plans. Do you not think that's a little ambitious?

**Dr. Winfield:** This is consistent with the position that we took on Bill 135, and it is also consistent with the approach the previous government took with respect to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act to require conformity relatively quickly.

We're conscious of the five-year cycle, but we're also conscious, on the other hand, that an awful lot can happen in five years in terms of planning decisions, infrastructure investments. I think our preference would be to send a firm signal to municipalities that this is the direction we're heading and that, going forward, we want to line up what's happening in a reasonably timely fashion.

**The Chair:** Mr. O'Toole.

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** Thank you very much for your presentation. You do present often and diligently to these committees.

I just wanted to follow up with a couple of comments. I take it as a compliment that the Smart Growth work done by the previous government is finding itself in this framework which the ministry staff are diligently trying to carry forward, as you mentioned, in the cycle of things. What's missing here, clearly, is the money, whether it's SuperBuild or called some other name. I take those as compliments and encouragement for us to use the resources of Ontario wisely. What concerns me, again, is there is no money.

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I am more concerned about the lack of an appeal process. It's more of a centralization. We've argued with the "regard to" and "consistent with" policy directions. At the end of the day, there are ministerial interests in areas and there is no appeal mechanism. What's your response to that? Questions have been asked today about due process. Do you feel that's sort of centralizing the authority with some kind of oversight? Should everything look like Toronto?

**Dr. Winfield:** I think what's being proposed is somewhat more complex than that. On the appeal question, there are layers to it in the sense that there is a route of appeal, as I understand the way this would work, in terms of the specific interpretation and application of the requirements of the plan. If you don't agree with the way in which a municipal council has interpreted what the plan asks it to do, then you can go to the Ontario Municipal Board.

I think the question you're raising is more the plan itself and its contents. One would have to think, what would an appeal process look like at that level?

**Mr. O'Toole:** It could be a fundraiser, \$1,000-a-plate kind of thing.

**Dr. Winfield:** One would hope that's not—

**Mr. O'Toole:** That's—

**The Chair:** Can you just let the delegate answer?

**Mr. O'Toole:** I'm just trying to make sure—

**The Chair:** You have a minute and a half.

**Dr. Winfield:** I think that's clearly not the way one would want it to play out. There is a consultative process built into the bill, which includes opportunities for submissions and everything else, so there is a record of what goes into the process. The question becomes, what comes out at the back end and how do you line up with what they heard from what they—

**Mr. O'Toole:** I have one small question. I hate to interfere. Here's the key: In my area, which includes a great part of the Oak Ridges moraine, quite controversial in the greenbelt legislation are the natural heritage features. These are landmark kinds of formations, the Oak Ridges moraine being one. What about the end uses like you mentioned in section 6 of the bill, wanting to talk about low-impact renewable energy forms. I am the critic for that file. What about wind turbines on those highly sensitive natural heritage features?

**The Chair:** Mr. Winfield, you have 30 seconds to answer.

**Dr. Winfield:** We actually do have a position of record on that, which has been to say that low-impact renewables should be excluded from what are identified as key natural heritage features. That includes the protected areas in the Niagara Escarpment, the two highest levels of protection there, and the two highest levels of protection on the Oak Ridges moraine.

What we've seen is, you're getting very intense land use conflicts being generated from proposals for renewables in natural heritage areas of high significance. We said that the saw-off obviously is the high-end natural heritage features. We've worked with the wind industry quite a lot. We've said to them, "Don't go there. There are lots of other places"—

**Mr. O'Toole:** I heard a thing on CBC.

**The Chair:** That is the end of your time; it has expired. Thank you, Mr. Winfield. We appreciate your being here today.

## REGION OF WATERLOO

**The Chair:** Our next delegation is the region of Waterloo. Good afternoon and welcome. We have your packages. They've been distributed. When you're ready to begin, could you identify yourselves and the group you speak for for Hansard. When you begin, you'll have 15 minutes.

**Mr. Ken Seiling:** I'm Ken Seiling, regional chair from the region of Waterloo, and Larry Kotseff is the commissioner of planning, housing and community services for the region.

I'm going to speed through this fairly quickly. We've given you the material.

The region of Waterloo commends the province on the strategic and integrated approach—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. Can I just ask you to stop for just a second. You went really fast through your introductions. So you're Ken Seiling?

**Mr. Seiling:** Ken Seiling, regional chair for the region of Waterloo.

**The Chair:** Thank you. I just want to make sure for Hansard.

**Mr. Seiling:** And Larry Kotseff is the commissioner of planning, housing and community services.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Seiling:** Does my time start now?

**The Chair:** Yes. I haven't started you yet. I'm not trying to shorten your time; I'm making sure we've got the right people on the schedule.

**Mr. Seiling:** The region of Waterloo commends the province on the strategic and integrated approach to planning that is being adopted in Bill 136—it's great to see the province back in the game again—in an effort to accommodate future population growth, support economic prosperity and achieve a high quality of life for all Ontarians.

Growth management planning has been a long-standing hallmark in the region of Waterloo. In 1976, the very first regional official policies plan in Ontario focused growth into specified urban and rural settlement areas, introduced the concept of environmentally sensitive policy areas and proposed a central transit corridor. It was the first plan in Ontario and has been successful in guiding growth and development in the region, and is a marker to show that good planning can succeed.

In 2001, regional council reaffirmed its commitment to defining new approaches to growth management by directing staff to prepare a comprehensive and integrated growth management strategy. I should tell you that it took two years to do it; somebody asked that question of the previous delegation. It was approved by council in 2003, and it is providing initiatives to manage the growth of a population of approximately 700,000 by the year 2030.

The region's ongoing commitment to innovative growth management planning is evident in more recent initiatives such as the introduction of hard-edged urban boundaries, sub-watershed planning and extensive groundwater protection policies.

The RGMS proposes to reshape the region's urban areas by curbing urban sprawl through the intensification of existing urban areas along the central transit corridor and directing future suburban growth to targeted green-field areas. This balanced approach to development emphasizes the opportunity to direct growth to existing urban areas and create high-quality, healthy urban environments that attract and retain an innovative and entrepreneurial workforce, and complements ongoing efforts to promote downtown revitalization, cultural heritage, brownfield redevelopment and environmental protection. In addition, by taking a more strategically focused approach to infrastructure planning and development, the regional growth management strategy also promotes the region's long-term financial sustainability and health initiatives.

The province's Strong Communities-based planning reform agenda and the proposed act clearly complement the strategic directions and initiatives contained in the regional plan and its growth management strategy. While the region of Waterloo suggests some refinements for consideration, the subsequent discussion clearly demonstrates that the region is very supportive of the proposed Places to Grow growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

On October 28, the province introduced Bill 136, which, if passed, would create the overall framework and

authority to establish growth plan areas and growth plans within the province. The region of Waterloo is very supportive of the draft, as it complements our recently adopted work and helps strengthen the province's role in urban and rural planning, something which the region and many other stakeholders have sought for some time. Many of the act's purposes, such as promoting a healthy environment and a culture of conservation, making efficient use of infrastructure, enabling planning across municipal and regional boundaries, and ensuring that decisions about growth are made in the context of long-term visions and goals, are fundamental components of our own growth strategy.

In an effort to further strengthen the proposed legislation, the region would appreciate the standing committee's consideration of five suggestions that we believe will help build momentum for the successful implementation of Bill 136 over the next several years. I recognize that these may not be specific items in the bill, but they are suggestions.

It's important that the proposed Places to Grow Act requires municipalities to develop plans jointly with their neighbouring municipalities for key initiatives of mutual interest and beyond political boundaries. We feel this can be achieved through the proposed legislation and the sub-area growth plans being proposed. The region supports the idea of using sub-area strategies as a means of overcoming challenges associated with developing and implementing provincial policies, strategies and programs for application over large, geographically diverse areas. We see considerable merit in using sub-area growth strategies as a means to address interregional planning issues and certain matters of provincial interest and jurisdiction. Examples of this would include intermunicipal transportation and transit, natural systems planning, the provision of affordable housing, large-scale utilities planning, large-scale infrastructure planning, health care facilities planning and some areas of agricultural planning.

So our recommendation would be: To further strengthen the proposed legislation, the region suggests that the draft Places to Grow Act be revised to state explicitly that growth plans required by the province address growth issues that lie beyond the boundaries of single-tier and upper-tier municipalities, and that could include county to region, or separated city to the county which surrounds it.

At present, the proposed Places to Grow Act could provide further emphasis regarding the importance of water conservation, air quality and energy conservation, cultural heritage or the provision of human services, including affordable housing, to support growth. These areas are fundamental elements of achieving a high quality of life in our communities and, in some cases, are of provincial interest.

Our recommendation is that the draft Places to Growth Act be revised to emphasize areas such as air quality, energy conservation, cultural heritage and the provision of human services as matters that may be addressed in the growth plan. In addition, the province needs to ensure

that municipalities are provided with the stable, long-term funding necessary to support the infrastructure and human services required to realize the goals of the growth plan.

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As noted in our previous submissions to the province, the region's ability to respond to the population and employment growth estimates provided in the draft Places to Grow growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe is dependent on a substantial financial commitment by the provincial government to provide the required physical and social infrastructure. This includes the development of a rapid transit system, facilities and technologies to implement long-term water strategies and waste water master plans, and new health facilities and services.

Our recommendation is that the province move quickly to prepare a funding strategy to support the implementation of both the provincial and regional growth management plans. We believe this can happen concurrently with the act, but not necessarily as part of the act.

We commend the government for engaging stakeholders through consultation in the preparation of the proposed legislation and encourage the government to continue with such a process. Although growth plans prepared under the authority of the act would be of interest to all municipalities, they are particularly significant to the large single-tier and upper-tier municipalities whose responsibilities typically include significant levels of delegated approval authority from the province. These include the provision of major, high-cost infrastructure and human services facilities, as well as services such as water, waste water, transit, housing, waste management, public health and social services. Municipalities need to be consulted extensively through the growth plan implementation process to help achieve effective and timely implementation of the plan.

Our recommendation is that municipal representation be included on any growth plan or sub-area strategy-related advisory committees that are created by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. That's really not technically part of the act, but it's a request that that process take place.

The region of Waterloo supports the proposed legislation and is confident that the strategic directions and initiatives contained in the act will have a positive impact on the communities in the greater Golden Horseshoe. It is critical that the province move forward with this important initiative expeditiously so that municipalities, in co-operation with the province, can accommodate future population growth, support economic prosperity and achieve a high quality of life for all its citizens.

Our recommendation is that the province proceed immediately with the current Places to Grow Act and that the legislation maintain a level of flexibility so that refinements, such as adding more requirements by way of regulation or ministerial direction, may be made in the future.

The region of Waterloo is eager and willing to move forward with the Places to Grow legislation. The recommendations contained in this submission are discussed in more detail in appendix B, our draft response, which is attached to the package we've given to you. I won't bother reading through all of them, but the points are there. At the same time, we understand that some of these suggestions will be addressed as the legislation moves ahead.

Finally, the region strongly supports the government of Ontario's efforts to build strong communities and manage growth in a rational and strategic manner. The province and the region will need to continue working together collaboratively with other stakeholders to develop, implement and finance an extensive range of policies, regulations, facilities and services to maintain a high quality of life for citizens of the region and of the province. The region remains eager and willing to work with provincial representatives to move forward with legislation that meets our common vision of accommodating future population growth while supporting economic prosperity and working to achieve a high quality of life. We must all work together to create a sustainable legacy for future generations, and Ontarians deserve nothing less.

**The Chair:** You've left two minutes for each party, beginning with Mr. Rinaldi.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** It's good to have you here, always in a positive mode. First of all, let me congratulate you and your municipalities for being leaders in planning for future growth and doing all the right things.

Just a quick comment, if I may—and you may want to expand on it. You want to see somewhere along the way more consultation and input from municipal stakeholders. We've had that through the greater Golden Horseshoe and, together with this particular piece of legislation, over 1,600 participants plus 500 submissions. I would say that's unprecedented from past governments, consultations. How can we expand that to make it even better?

**Mr. Seiling:** I think you're misinterpreting the comment. The comment was that we believe, actually, in a short period of time this government has done an awful lot of consultation, and we congratulate you on that. We think it's been very well done. The comment, I think, was in relation to the fact that once the plans start to be developed, particularly the sub-area plans, there need to be consultation mechanisms so that we can work with the government and deal with them.

Let me give you an example: Water supply becomes an issue for our sub-area. In other words, we expect the province to step in and participate, along with us, Guelph, Brantford, Brant, the municipalities along the way, and there would be a consultative process through there. That's what I was referring to.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** Very good. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hudak.

**Mr. Hudak:** Thank you for the presentation. Three municipalities in your region have been designated as

urban growth centres. At the launch, the ministry characterized this as sort of taking Yonge and Eglinton from downtown Toronto and transposing it on to the growth centres. Do you think the people of Waterloo are going to like that?

**Mr. Seiling:** I think the people of Waterloo have accepted the fact that they're in a growth area. Their concern is for quality of life and how they can best maintain that. Probably our region has had some of the strongest land use planning policies in the province of Ontario over the years, and people have grown accustomed to that. There's an expectation that we will take and shape—people in our area don't believe you can close the doors. This growth is going to come, so the question is, how do you best shape it? We believe that the plan that we put in place—with our own growth management strategy plan, we took those numbers to the public two or three years ago and worked with them, and the public is saying, "We like this vision of what's happening, we accept that it's going to happen and this is the kind of shape we want to have with it." So I don't believe there's an expectation that we can stop the growth from taking place. The expectation is that we manage it and do it properly.

**Mr. Hudak:** Have you had any cases in the region, to your awareness, that have been sent to the OMB: intensification projects that the local municipalities of the region rejected?

**Mr. Seiling:** There have been some—there's one high-rise project in the city of Kitchener that I can recall, but that was in a heritage district, so I don't know whether that's an intensification issue or whether it's a heritage district issue.

**Mr. Hudak:** Should that remain the local council's decision, or should the province play some role in terms of imposing these types of intensification?

**Mr. Seiling:** I'm very supportive of the province putting targets in place for us to meet, because quite often when you've got to shift people's attitudes, it's always good to have a bit of background or backup for it. I remember during the late 1970s, when the original regional plan was being developed; at that time the government was still in the game of supporting planning principles before they sort of backed away from it. The development of our regional plan really relied many times on our ability to go back and say, "This is where the province is going with it and let's work with it." So we found it quite helpful to have provincial support in those areas.

**The Chair:** Ms. Churley.

**Ms. Churley:** It's always a pleasure to hear from you and to look at the outstanding work you have done in your region in managing growth. You really are a leader in that area, and I think it behooves us all to take a good, hard look at the presentation before us today.

My question for you is perhaps a little too political, but I think it's an important question, and that is around how everything is to be funded. I agree with you when you bring up air quality, energy conservation, affordable

housing, human services—all those things. We just had the alternative budget group come out, and the Toronto Star wrote an editorial about it today, saying that with the tax cuts under the previous government—and basically they're being more or less maintained—the reality is, given the fiscal constraints because of that, it's unlikely, as much as we press, that this money is going to come forward. I guess my feeling is—and we're hearing it from some others as well—that without the influx of the resources, none of this can really happen in the way that the government wants it to. Do you have any comment on how we're going to deal with this dilemma?

**Mr. Seiling:** I think that the previous government and this government have both recognized—even in the latter days of SuperBuild, there was a recognition that money had to be spent strategically, that we couldn't continue to spread the money all over, because there just wasn't enough to go around. That started two or three years ago, and this government has carried on with that approach. I think that the whole thrust of this is to do strategic spending of money. Governments aren't going to stop spending money. We've got to build infrastructure. So the question is, where do you place it best in order to get the best bang for the buck? I think the federal government—how long it's going to be there, I don't know—has come to the conclusion that they need to fund infrastructure to achieve their objectives too. I think there's a willingness on their part to look at these one-third, one-third, one-third formulas for doing these kinds of things.

Our experience in taking a look at Portland, which has been our model for a light rail transit system development, has seen that good investments in infrastructure will bring in private sector investment as well, in some cases. So we think that the mix of them together will work very well. I think those communities that are able to plan well, to draw on the various facets, will attract all the sectors to participate. I think that's a good step ahead.

**Ms. Churley:** That was a good political answer. Very good, very experienced. Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** A nice way to end. Thank you very much for your thoughtful presentation.

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#### NIAGARA ECONOMIC AND TOURISM CORP.

**The Chair:** Our last presentation today is from the Niagara Economic and Tourism Corp.

**Mr. Patrick Gedge:** Good afternoon. Patrick Gedge, chief executive officer, Niagara Economic and Tourism Corp.

First of all, let me thank the committee for this opportunity to speak today. It is an area that is of extreme concern to us. Frankly, we think Places to Grow is a fantastic opportunity for Ontario, as well as the Niagara region.

Usually an economic development agency talks about all the good things that are happening within their particular area and all the assets they have to leverage. I'm not going to do that. Frankly, I'd like to actually get at some of the economic reality of Niagara—because it

does directly relate to what the provincial strategy is for the greater Golden Horseshoe—and how we can best work together in order to leverage a much-improved economy over the next number of years.

The current economy within Niagara is evidenced by very slow gross domestic product growth, employment growth and population growth. Contrary to many of the impressions that folks have, manufacturing jobs are the most important sector within Niagara and have been historically for over 100 years, and we've been losing manufacturing jobs over the last decade. That's nothing unique to Niagara in the sense that it's also happening within Canada and North America, but when it is your leading economic sector, that is very significant in terms of the wealth and prosperity of the area. Also within Niagara is the lowest average income of any CMA in Ontario. Finally, the real issue for Niagara is not urban sprawl and how to control massive growth, as it is within so much of the rest of the GTA; it's really an issue of how, together, we are going to stimulate additional economic growth and how we can do it proactively between the Places to Grow legislation and ultimately its implementation that will positively affect Ontario, as well as Niagara.

Some of the issues we have when we go through Places to Grow—and some of those may be that we just simply don't understand them or that there's some additional work that has to take place—are that so much of the draft seems highly focused on the massive growth that's going to develop along the GTA and the 401 corridor. Frankly, that makes a lot of sense. If you follow the 80-20 rule, in this case the 95-5 rule, that is where you're going to focus much of your attention and much of the policies and programs that you're going to look at developing.

Having said that, the region of Niagara is an integral part of the future growth of the greater Golden Horseshoe. Quite frankly, from a strategic and binational standpoint, Niagara is critical to the successful growth of the GTA and the 401 corridor. We can't find within it plans that will really be adaptable to help us take advantage of growing our particular area of the province. In fact, within the document you will see there's a projection that there's going to be growth within Niagara of less than 1% per annum over the next 30 years. By declaring that and almost endorsing that as acceptable within the document, it really becomes self-fulfilling that the economy will not prosper in Niagara the way it should in comparison with the rest of the Golden Horseshoe.

As was mentioned earlier by the regional chair and his colleagues, the overall strategy that Niagara has developed over the past decades and years of opening up the central and southern tier of Niagara for business is the absolute, single key to the economic development and prosperity of Niagara. The northern tier is fundamentally frozen by the greenbelt on one side and Lake Ontario on the other side. As a region, the southern tier is the only area that can significantly develop and, as a whole, add economic impetus for the region.

As has been mentioned many times during many presentations that all of you have so gracefully gone through, specific tools and the financial investments that go with those tools need to be identified for those towns and cities, for them to grow within their boundaries, and those are not clear within the documentation. This is particularly relevant to areas like St. Catharines, which again will be totally encircled by the greenbelt and Lake Ontario. They need assistance in order to stimulate growth in the future within their own particular boundaries, which will not change.

I'd also mention that the idea of sub-area growth strategies is not something we understand. Niagara is split up by sub-areas according to the document. Quite frankly, we would have thought that in order to move as quickly as possible to successfully implement the Places to Grow strategy, you would want to keep the boundaries that exist today and, in the case of Niagara, to the extent that over the years Niagara region has been able to pull together all of the 12 municipalities into a common approach and strategy for the future, that you would want to leverage all that work and be able to help Niagara advance as a whole without having to split it up into sub-areas.

What are the specifics in terms of where we think there would be real, significant help? Number one is immediately extending Highway 406 to Welland and ultimately to Port Colborne. This opens up the central and southern tier of Niagara for business. As I said, the northern tier has all the limitations that have been placed on it, many for very good reasons, but from a strategic standpoint, we have to open up the southern tier, and build that infrastructure, which the region or the municipalities together cannot afford to do. They really need to have it as part of a provincial strategy to complement the Niagara economic strategy.

As you've heard many other times as well, in terms of the longer term, how can we best accelerate the GTA-Niagara corridor, not just for the benefit of Niagara as a multimodal transportation corridor through the southern tier, but because of the need of the GTA and the 401 corridor to have that opened up as quickly as possible, so that growth takes place along the 401 in a very successful and easy fashion?

The tools and related financial investment in cities and towns is absolutely key, and certainly places like St. Catharines would be in the forefront of wanting to revitalize their urban areas, take true advantage of brown-field development and successfully grow within the boundaries they have today.

Finally, and not least of all, we've made these comments with respect to the greenbelt. Let's take advantage of the greenbelt. Let's not just talk about the constraints that are there; let's start to think about innovative ways that we can develop new agribusinesses and new agritourism. That will help the agricultural industry and the communities that are surrounded by it to take advantage of the greenbelt and the benefits that the province sees for it over the next century.

Thank you very much. I'm glad to respond to any questions or comments.

**The Chair:** You've left about two and a half minutes for each party, beginning with the official opposition.

**Mr. Hudak:** Mr. Gedge, thank you very much for being here. I think the members know that Mr. Gedge, the chair and others from Niagara will be hosting a special session next week, meeting with the three caucuses, which will be excellent to drive home these points.

You made it very clear—a number of the members were also on the greenbelt committee, so they're very well aware of your arguments—and hopefully it will hit home that the northern part of Niagara is effectively frozen under Bill 135. That's why it's important to encourage growth, as you said, through the 406 and the GTA-Niagara corridor into southern and western Niagara.

The gateway economic zone also includes Fort Erie and Niagara Falls. In the original draft plan, they were cited as urban growth centres. Now they're in a different category called a gateway economic zone. Do you have any thoughts, on behalf of NETC, on what those should involve?

**Mr. Gedge:** It was interesting to see that. I must say that the document, by referring to it, at least acknowledges that there may be some unique opportunities in Niagara because of its binational character and where we are. Personally, I believe that we collectively have not taken advantage of the strategic location of Niagara and the fact that it is extremely important that we have efficient and easy access across the border that connects the economic engine of Ontario and Canada with the economic engine of the US. What I'm hoping for, as we get into more detail in the future of this zone that has been identified as a potential area, is that we start to think innovatively about how we can take advantage of that binational character. We're certainly open to work with whatever officials to try to identify opportunities for that.

**Mr. Hudak:** Could you just reiterate for the committee the importance of the 406 extension south into Welland and Port Colborne and how that fits in with the government's goal of utilizing existing urban centres?

**Mr. Gedge:** It's a couple of things. First of all, if you're going to attract new investment in Niagara, then you want that investment in the southern tier, around the extended 406. You don't want it in the tender fruit land. That's consistent with what all of us want.

Having said that, you need to have the transportation and infrastructure in place in order to attract businesses and get current businesses to expand within Niagara. One of the biggest features that businesses look for is their ability to very quickly move across the border, up to the GTA. Time is money. Not having transportation infrastructure that is adequate for those types of businesses will totally hinder us in being able to attract that business to the area.

1800

**The Chair:** Ms. Churley.

**Ms. Churley:** Thank you, once again, for your presentation. There are a lot of questions, but I want to focus

on 3.3, under Solutions. I'd like you to expand briefly on the tools and related financial investments for revitalization and brownfield development. Can you give us some specific examples of things you need to see in place for this to work?

**Mr. Gedge:** I think, first of all, it's just recognizing that if a community can't, or you don't want it to, expand outwards, you then want it to expand inwards very successfully. The opportunities are there in terms of identifying what tools will allow a community to creatively expand inside, while still keeping the quality of life.

I don't think we really understand exactly what that suite of tools is, what that tool kit is. Even if that tool kit is specifically identified in the future, unless there are resources allocated to it, it's rather a meaningless exercise to go through. So I think one of the outgrowths that we want to see from the Places to Grow, whether it's within it or a companion document, is an identification of what that tool kit would be and what type of resources or combination of resources between governments and the private sector would be incentivized in order to actually stimulate additional growth where otherwise growth would not take place.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Ms. Churley:** Specifically around the brownfields, for instance, you need to see, I presume from what you're saying, a partnership with government in terms of funding for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields.

**Mr. Gedge:** Absolutely, and I believe that the provincial, regional and municipal governments can all participate together in that. Otherwise, the private sector will not be able to overcome the initial costs of setting up business if they go into the brownfield business. When you particularly take older manufacturing cities that have a lot of brownfields, then you've got to ask yourself, do we simply let them rest because it doesn't make sense to the private sector, or do we try to have a level playing field so that the private sector will be interested in those grounds as well and ultimately start to generate new wealth out of the brownfield areas?

**The Chair:** Mr. Rinaldi.

**Mr. Rinaldi:** Thank you, Mr. Gedge, for your presentation. A comment on your first section, the state of your area: I just want to make a point that that's a reflection of not taking any action, from the past, as far as overall planning. We're doing things hodgepodge—you correct something, and it becomes that fragmented situation that you're now faced with—and we recognize that.

I know we've been mixing on the presentations. I know it's pretty hard to distinguish between Places to Grow, the act, and the greater Golden Horseshoe plan that's before everybody. But I also think it's good, because one can refer to something that's working its way up the ladder. Going back to the legislation, Bill 136, do you feel that that's a tool for regions like your area to work through the process to be in a better position down the road?

**Mr. Gedge:** Absolutely. Unless you have a long-term strategy—whether it's at a provincial level, a Golden Horseshoe level, a regional level or a municipal level—I don't know how you make resource decisions in terms of what you're going to focus on and where you're going to put your time and dollars. To the extent that this leads to an overall strategy that has good consensus around it, that is very positive.

One of the challenges, and I think big opportunities, is that the faster you can integrate a provincial or a greater Golden Horseshoe strategy with, say, in this case, a region of Niagara strategy—the faster those are inte-

grated and identified in a complementary way, the faster the actual implementation will take place, which I think is to the benefit of all of us.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Gedge, for your delegation. We appreciate your being here today.

**Mr. Gedge:** It was a real pleasure. Thank you.

**The Chair:** This brings to a close our hearings for the day. I'd like to thank all our witnesses, MPPs and ministry staff for their participation in the hearings.

This committee stands adjourned until 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20, 2005, in committee room 151.

*The committee adjourned at 1805.*

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