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Wednesday 20 April 2005

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Mercredi 20 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

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Wednesday 20 April 2005

Mercredi 20 avril 2005

The committee met at 1530 in room 151.

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

I'd like to extend a welcome to the witnesses and individuals who are here today. For individuals, you have 10 minutes, and if you're a group, you have 15 minutes to speak. When you come to the podium, if you could identify yourself for Hansard, and when you begin to speak, I will start the timer. Should you leave any time at the end of your allotted 10 or 15 minutes, there will be an opportunity for the opposition and the government to ask questions.

ONTARIO NATURE

The Chair: If I could ask for the initial group to come forward: Ontario Nature. Linda Pim is our first delegation. Welcome.

Ms. Linda Pim: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Linda Pim and I'm acting director of conservation and science at Ontario Nature.

Ontario Nature was founded in 1931. We currently have over 25,000 members and 140 member organizations. We welcome the introduction of this legislation and support its overall thrust.

The bill engages the province in land use planning for broad geographic regions, transcending municipal boundaries, an approach that is essential for the protection of large natural features and the connectivity of natural features as well as for the protection of our irreplaceable agricultural lands. The bill intends to support a "culture of conservation," as noted in subsection 1(a). It intends to plan for growth "across natural and municipal boundaries," as in subsection 1(c).

I'll focus here on some of our concerns about the bill in order to give this committee input on how the bill could and should, in our view, be amended. I would also like to add that we made a very detailed written submission last week to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal's Ontario Growth Secretariat about its draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe, a plan which we believe presents many problems and which we hope will be improved as per our recommendations in that submission before the growth plan is approved under the Places to Grow Act.

Back to the bill. First, there is a focus on growth, with insufficient attention paid to environmental sustainability and the protection of natural features. The preamble, the purposes of the act in section 1 and the contents of a growth plan in section 6 accord insufficient attention to the "culture of conservation" suggested in subsection 1(a). An inordinate degree of attention is paid to growth for its own sake, its inevitability and the need to manage it, without looking to a wider vision for environmental and community sustainability and human quality of life. For example, in section 6, a growth plan may have policies relating to a number of parameters, but none explicitly refers to the protection of natural heritage features. Therefore, clause 6(d)(v) should be amended to reference specifically what are called key natural heritage features, as defined in the greenbelt plan passed pursuant to the Greenbelt Act.

Our second point relates to areas to be covered by growth plans. Section 3 of the bill is silent on the geographic delineation of growth plans and on the extent to which growth plans, say, across southern Ontario, will be contiguous with each other. Ontario Nature takes the position that environment-first and farmland-first growth plans must be prepared for all of southern Ontario. The boundaries of the growth plan areas should follow ecological units, such as watersheds, as much as possible, with a default to municipal boundaries if necessary in some instances.

Understandably, the government's initial focus has been on the greater Golden Horseshoe, where growth pressures are the most intense. We look forward, after Bill 136 receives royal assent, to hearing about the province's intentions for growth plans, preferably for all of Ontario but at least for all of southern Ontario to start.

Our third point pertains to the time period for municipal official plans to be brought into conformity with

growth plans. Section 12 of the bill provides for the conformity exercise of bringing municipal OPs in line with the growth plan to take place at the time of the five-year review of the OP under the Planning Act. This means that it may be well over five years from the time of approval of a growth plan under the Places to Grow Act until the municipal OPs in the area covered by the growth plan conform with that growth plan. This is an unacceptably long conformity period. It should be shortened to two years, which is actually more generous a conformity period than is provided for in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act.

Our fourth point is regarding the prevalence of growth plans over other provincial plans and policies. Section 14 of the bill is among its more problematic sections. Clause 14(2)(c) calls for a growth plan to prevail over the policies in the provincial policy statement under the Planning Act. Subsection 14(4) varies that provision by indicating that whichever provincial plan or policy is more protective of the natural environment or human health shall prevail in the case of conflict between a growth plan and other provincial plans or policies.

However, Ontario Nature has found at least one significant instance in which the draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe is less stringent than the policies of the provincial policy statement. Because the case does not relate directly to the protection of the natural environment or human health, the weaker policies of the draft growth plan would prevail. The instance at issue is the critically important matter of the expansion of settlement area boundaries where the tests under the PPS are considerably stronger than those in the draft greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan.

The purpose of the policies in both documents is to curb urban sprawl into the countryside, and it is essential that the more stringent policies of the PPS prevail. Ontario Nature therefore takes the position that the minimum standard to be applied in all instances must be the policies of the PPS. Ontario Nature also takes the position that section 14 should specifically reference the greenbelt plan by adding a clause (e) to subsection 14(5). The purpose here is to ensure that the generally more environmentally protective policies of the greenbelt plan shall prevail in cases of conflict between a growth plan and the greenbelt plan relating to the natural environment or human health.

In practice, while Ontario Nature supports what we call the “natural environment or human health override” in subsection 14(4), it may be that there will actually be few or no real conflicts between a growth plan and other provincial plans or policies, in the sense that being in conflict with one plan clearly means being in conformity with another. We have yet to come across a case where this natural environment or human health override would actually play out on the ground.

Our final point is that the bill does not require that provincial and municipal infrastructure works conform with growth plans. Section 7 of the Greenbelt Act provides that no municipality within the greenbelt plan area

shall “undertake any public work, improvement of a structural nature or other undertaking that conflicts with the greenbelt plan.” No similar provision is contained in Bill 136. Ontario Nature takes the position that such a provision is necessary given that Bill 136 has a strong focus on infrastructure planning for hard services, such as roads, sewers and waterlines.

Similarly, and just as critically important, in Bill 136 there is no requirement that the province’s own public works and structural improvements, such as provincial highways, not conflict with a growth plan. This latter amendment is important since one of the primary purposes of plans approved under Bill 136 would be to give direction to provincial infrastructure investments.

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Section 14 should be amended to require that provincially initiated or financed undertakings, as defined by the Environmental Assessment Act, shall conform with plans made under Bill 136.

In conclusion then, Ontario Nature supports the general thrust of Bill 136 and hopes that it will be passed promptly so that the process of public consultation on growth plans can continue in the case of the greater Golden Horseshoe and begin in the case of growth plans for other parts of the province.

It is our position that several amendments are necessary to improve the bill in terms of environmental protection as we have outlined above. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you. You’ve left about one and a half minutes for each group. Mr. Hudak, do you want to begin?

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): Ms. Pim, thank you very much for the presentation. You make a good point particularly in section D. Interestingly, the province exempts itself from the provisions of Bill 136. It exempts itself from any conflict provisions for its own provincial infrastructure, which is similar, if I recall, to the greenbelt legislation, Bill 135, where similarly the province exempted itself from its own legislation.

I’ll just give my questions quickly. How would you remedy that? Secondly, your earlier point, ensuring that the OP reviews took place in a more prompt manner and simultaneously, because greenbelt will ask for an OP review: This does, as well as the provincial planning statement. So what’s your best advice? If they say it’s not a two-year plan, what’s your next best advice on OP reviews and coming into concert?

Ms. Pim: I’ll start with your first question. You’re correct, and as I try to indicate in our section E, the Greenbelt Act does have a provision relating to municipal infrastructure. It does not have a provision relating to provincial infrastructure being in conformity with the greenbelt plan. We would like to see all growth plans under this Bill 136. Both municipal and provincial infrastructures should conform with the growth plan.

As far as bringing plans into conformity, given that the Oak Ridges process allowed only 12 months in the greater Toronto area and 18 months outside the GTA, we felt that a two-year time frame—when you think that an

official plan process is supposed to happen every five years, but then if the new OP is appealed to the OMB, you've got quite a long process. So we would stick with the concept of all municipalities being required to initiate an official plan amendment within two years, and frankly, we think that is the outside. If it's not done as part of the OP review because the timing is too far away, then as was done in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, it should also be done in the same way, that starting with royal assent you've got X years, two years, to bring your plan—mind you, you'd have to have the sub-area growth strategies, in the case of the greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan, approved, but once they're approved, OK, that's when the clock should start running: two years to bring your OP into conformity with that sub-area growth strategy.

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): Thank you very much for your presentation. I have such a short time. I agree with your suggestions for amendments, but I wanted to ask you this big question in the short time.

The greenbelt, although it's good that it's saving and preserving some of our environmentally sensitive land and farmland, in fact is going to allow highways and aggregate extraction infrastructure through it, which is something the government's aware is a concern of mine. It's not going to stop urban sprawl and all of that. Then we have this bill before us which essentially has the same problem, in my view, because we have highways and infrastructure. You allude to some of that.

My question would be, given that this activity is going on through the greenbelt and if this is not amended to deal with some of those issues, I'm wondering, when you say this needs to be passed quickly so that the public consultations can go on, without those amendments, what do you think are the benefits of the public consultations, and what will this, coupled with that activity being allowed, mean?

Ms. Pim: What I'm saying is that we would want the consultations on an amended bill.

Ms. Churley: Right.

Ms. Pim: I hear your concern about infrastructure in both the greenbelt and the growth plan area. One of the concerns we have—and this relates perhaps less to the bill than to the greater Golden Horseshoe draft growth plan—is that we understand that the Ministry of Transportation is independently working on a transportation strategy for the greater Golden Horseshoe, seemingly in isolation from the work of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Our concern is that we would really prefer to have all government ministries work together in developing their plans so that we don't have MTO off, frankly, in its silo working on highways when we're trying to see a transit-first master transportation plan that avoids natural areas as much as possible and moves goods and people efficiently but that's planned in a comprehensive way. So far, we don't see that happening. But that's the kind of amendment we'd want to see.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Thanks, Ms. Pim, for your great presentation and your interest in Bill

136. Just to follow up on Ms. Churley's comments, we heard this on the greenbelt as well, but I just want to have your input into how government can achieve these things. It's the chicken-and-egg situation.

I think one situation we're in right now, especially in the greater Golden Horseshoe, is that this should have been done 50 years ago. That's what we've been hearing all along; the same with the greenbelt. It hasn't happened. We know that there's a transportation strategy coming out soon. We just dealt with the greenbelt. I guess my concern is, how do we deal with all these things at once? In all fairness, we are taking a rational approach. Certain things will have to conform, and we're indicating that. Can you maybe tell us how we get away from the chicken-and-egg situation?

Ms. Pim: All I can say is, I wish you well, because I know that the government is undertaking so many initiatives simultaneously in trying to do a good job for the environment. In some respects, we think it could be doing a better job.

I should point out that when the discussion paper came out last summer on the greater Golden Horseshoe, it was indicated at the beginning of that discussion paper that a final growth plan would be approved by the end of 2004. I understand how things can get a little bit off the rails in timing. The original intent, as I think you may agree, was that the greenbelt plan and the greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan would actually be totally in sync. Because the greenbelt plan had very distinct timelines because of the Greenbelt Protection Act and the Greenbelt Act attached to it, it had to move very promptly and under a schedule. The growth plans under Bill 136 don't have timelines attached to them, and maybe that's where some of the problem is.

We would simply encourage the government, as soon as the bill receives royal assent, to publish the schedule and work with stakeholders to try to meet that schedule, assuming that the bill is, as I suggested with Ms. Churley, amended in a way that makes more comprehensive and more integrated the planning for things such as highways, which at this point, in our opinion, is being planned in isolation over at the Ministry of Transportation.

The Chair: Thank you for your delegation. We appreciate your being here today.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENCE

The Chair: Committee, our next delegation isn't completely here, so we're going to move to our 4:15 delegation, Environmental Defence, Mr. Rick Smith. We'll come back to our other delegations when all of the group is here.

Thank you, Mr. Smith, for coming a little bit earlier and stepping forward. We appreciate your being here. If you could identify yourself and the group you speak for—

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Do you have an office here?

The Chair: No heckling the delegation.

Dr. Rick Smith: Alas, no.

The Chair: If you could identify yourself for Hansard before you begin, and then you'll have 15 minutes.

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Dr. Smith: My name is Rick Smith. I'm the executive director of Environmental Defence. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on this issue that is of such critical importance to Ontario communities, to our environment and to the health of our citizens.

The last time I spoke to your committee on a somewhat more acrimonious bill, I think, I began my presentation with a quote from one of Ontario's better-known advocates for growth management. It worked so well the first time that I thought I'd do it again—a different quote this time.

"We are now faced with the threat of urban sprawl. If we are to halt its advance and to control it, all of us, with the co-operation of the private sector, must agree upon some basic principles governing future use of our land." This isn't Dalton McGuinty; it's not Mike Harris; it's not Tim Hudak. This is from the June 5, 1973, *Globe and Mail*, and the speaker, again, is Bill Davis. Mr. Davis's goal is more relevant today than ever.

I want to start today by saying that Environmental Defence strongly supports the reassertion of provincial government leadership in the areas of growth management and land use planning. The only problem is that the Places to Grow Act and plan, as they are currently written, require major improvements if they're going to provide the coherent direction that our province so desperately needs.

The irony of the situation we're in, dealing with such a problem with urban sprawl, is that the toll that ill-planned urban development is taking on our environment and health has never been better quantified. The Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Ontario College of Family Physicians have both recently concluded that urban sprawl has incredibly negative consequences for human health. The Ontario Medical Association calculates that 1,900 premature deaths a year can be attributed to air pollution, and of course urban sprawl is a major contributor to air pollution because it perpetuates the dominance of cars and of gridlock on our roads and highways. According to the Neptis Foundation, at the current rate, an area roughly double the size of the city of Toronto will be urbanized by 2031. I think the minister spoke of this the other day. About 92% of this area is classified as prime agricultural land.

Despite these alarming conclusions, despite new policy initiatives like this one being debated at Queen's Park, very little is changing on the ground. The threats to communities and the environment from huge, ill-planned developments are intensifying right across the Golden Horseshoe.

I've brought two examples—I think they've been circulated to you this afternoon—of these sorts of developments for your consideration today. The first example is a newspaper article from the Bradford West Gwillimbury Times of April 9. The second example is a press release from the city of Pickering from March 2. I won't

belabour the details; I'll leave those with you. In both of these cases, extremely aggressive developers and land speculators are working right now, today, to convince local councils to approve developments that would seem to be completely contrary to the kind of smart growth that the province says it wants to encourage.

The Places to Grow Act and plan are not going to arrest these destructive trends unless they are substantially improved. So the brief in front of you contains a number of specific suggestions for amendments to Bill 136. I'm not going to go through all of them, but I do want to take a few minutes to outline four of what we consider to be absolutely critical amendments that must be made to this act and plan if they are to accomplish their stated purpose.

First, the act needs to be amended to explicitly link future provincial infrastructure spending and Places to Grow planning. This would seem to be an obvious point, but it is missing from the act currently. Provincially initiated or financed undertakings as well as municipal projects will obviously have significant implications for the effectiveness of Bill 136 plans. If, as the government claims, one of the primary purposes of the plans made under Bill 136 will be to provide direction to provincial infrastructure investments, the bill needs to be clarified to state this goal. Quite simply, if this act is supposed to be the framework for future provincial spending, surely that should be spelled out in the act.

As has been mentioned by some previous presenters—I think you'll hear about it more today—there is a disturbing lack of consistency with respect to the stated purpose of Places to Grow and the massive new infrastructure projects included in the plan. The various highway extensions are one example; the plan's complete silence on major new water and sewage infrastructure is another. Where is the appendix to the plan that gives us the diagram of the big pipe? What's built? What's proposed to be built? This is a project of the same scale and with potentially more devastating ecological consequences than any highway extension.

The second point I wanted to highlight is that large-scale municipal undertakings would not be subject to Places to Grow as the act is currently written. So it's critical that the bill be amended to require that municipal works, structural improvements and other undertakings conform with Places to Grow plans. The Greenbelt Act actually already includes such a provision. How many pipes, big or otherwise, are going to slip through the cracks unless the act is amended to cover municipal undertakings?

Third, the time frames stipulated in the Places to Grow Act and plan for municipalities to bring their official plans into conformity are much, much too long. Again, we're going to see virtually an entire generation of schoolchildren grow up unless this plan is amended to speed up the process. The act's current suggestion of giving municipalities up to five years to conform with Places to Grow is excessive and unnecessary. A five-year time frame, as was mentioned by the previous speaker, is

also inconsistent with the approach taken in other recent provincial planning legislation, including the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act. The plan's suggestion of giving municipalities 10 years to achieve the important intensification target will ensure that we won't see any change to the destructive business-as-usual scenario for the foreseeable future. The solution is for the act to be changed to require municipalities to bring their official plans into conformity within two years of the approval of the relevant provincial plan and to hit the intensification target within five years. There's no reason why that can't be done. The coming into force of the Places to Grow Act itself should be made retroactive to the second reading of the bill—April 6 of this year. The coming into force of the Greenbelt Act was similarly retroactive.

The fourth point, which I want to finish with, is that the intensification target of 40% laid out in the plan is not ambitious enough to contain urban sprawl. Environmental Defence agrees with the submission circulated to the committee on Monday by Paul Bedford, the former chief planner of the city of Toronto. I wanted to draw that submission to your attention. Mr. Bedford indicates, "If 60% of all new residential development in each municipality continues to occur outside the built-up area, the prevailing pattern of low-density, car-dependent development will continue. Huge quantities of greenfield land will continue to be lost to development, while opportunities for brownfield development within built-up areas will be lost."

Mr. Bedford points out that the greater Vancouver region, Australia and the United Kingdom have residential intensification targets of 60% to 70%. If they can do it, we can do it here.

You'll undoubtedly hear over the next few days of presenters that the density targets suggested in the Places to Grow plan are inappropriate and not achievable. We believe the opposite is the case. In fact, we believe these targets are not ambitious enough.

To finish my presentation, I've brought a couple of visual aids. They are two examples of high density. My not-so-hidden agenda here is to provide you with mental images of what density can look like—images of communities that we realistically build with Places to Grow and images, frankly, to demonstrate that high density does not necessarily mean high-rise.

I'm going to start with this image; I'll pass it around. This is Norwich, England, a very quaint city, population just a little bit over that of Guelph, Ontario; it's undergoing some very extensive infill development downtown. These types of mixed employment-residential areas are hitting the kinds of densities that we would like to see through Places to Grow, so there's no reason why even smaller urban centres can't achieve relatively high densities in their downtowns.

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This image may be familiar to some of you. It's the distillery district in the King and Parliament area of Toronto. The city of Toronto tells us that it's incredibly popular and burgeoning. If you've been down there

recently at night, it is packed with thousands of people. The city of Toronto tells us that that district is actually hitting 200 units per hectare, which is the density target laid out in Places to Grow. What urban centre in the Golden Horseshoe would not want that kind of exciting, mixed employment-residential area in their downtown?

In conclusion, growth management is not an abstract issue. It's about making choices to ensure that what is unique and valuable and most beautiful about our province is protected. Strong provincial government leadership that results in increased density inside existing urban areas will revitalize Ontario's Main Streets and it will improve the health of our citizens. The equation is a simple one: more density downtown saves green space outside of town.

Places to Grow must result in the protection of prime agriculture areas such as Bond Head in south Simcoe county and irreplaceable natural habitats such as Boyd Park in Vaughan, which has been included in the greenbelt but is still threatened by a major road. If Places to Grow does not protect these kinds of areas, it will be judged a failure.

I'll be pleased to take any questions.

The Chair: You've left one minute for each party.

Ms. Churley: Tim Hudak said, "Yeah, but where's my backyard and where's my garden?" So perhaps you can answer that.

Dr. Smith: Those two are possible.

Ms. Churley: Maybe a roof garden. I support your contentions here, but those are the kinds of issues that are raised and will be raised—quality of life. Maybe you could respond to that.

Dr. Smith: Sure. The Places to Grow plan lays out one suggested density target of 200 units per hectare for mixed employment-residential. Of course, it depends on how large the area is that you're talking about. But if you're talking about one hectare of area, you could easily have detached houses with backyards, semi-detached dwellings and high-rises within that area, and hit 200 units per hectare. In other words, you can reach that density target in different ways, and you could easily have detached housing or semi-detached housing contributing to that density target.

Interjection.

Dr. Smith: And if you have roof gardens, so much the better.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thanks very much, Mr. Smith, for your commitment to this presentation. I know I only have a minute, but just briefly, we're combining this particular bill with Places to Grow because it's on the table right now, which makes a lot of sense to showcase what we're trying to achieve. You want Bill 136 to be more comprehensive, and we're talking about future plans in the rest of Ontario—east, west, north, wherever they may be. If we make this bill too prescriptive, don't you think it will be too difficult to achieve those goals in those other areas that don't have the pressure of the greater Golden Horseshoe?

Dr. Smith: I understand your point. What we're suggesting is that the inconsistency that currently exists

between what the bill says its purpose is and what the bill will actually deliver needs to be rectified. The government is saying that it wants this bill to be the framework for provincial spending from here on in. All we're suggesting is that the bill explicitly state that. Similarly, the government has suggested that future major infrastructure projects—presumably whether they're provincially or municipally initiated—should conform with these plans. Well, the bill doesn't say that. Frankly, what I'm doing today is trying to point out those inconsistencies and suggest that they need to be addressed.

Mr. Hudak: I'm going to ask a question very quickly, and Mr. Miller had a question. Rick, welcome back. It's good to see you again.

Here in Toronto, in Oakville and Port Dalhousie, there are intensification projects that local citizens will object to and put pressure on council to reject, and it will often go to the OMB. What's a policy suggestion on how to remedy that situation? I'll wait until Mr. Miller has finished his question. I just wanted to get that on the table.

Dr. Smith: I agree that that's a problem. As we welcome the very large number of new immigrants to our communities over the next few years, that's going to be something to address. I don't think this bill can do it, but I do think that other changes to municipal bylaws or perhaps other provincial initiatives will be necessary to start to engage people in a discussion about what intensification looks like: What's good intensification and what's not-so-good intensification?

I am unsympathetic to a lot of arguments made by the development industry. The argument that they're occasionally up against it with respect to density downtown is actually one argument that I have sympathy for. This bill can't address that. Perhaps other initiatives can be brought forward.

The Chair: Thank you for your delegation. We appreciate your being here today.

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

The Chair: Committee, we're going back to our schedule. Our next delegation will be the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, if they could come forward, please.

Good afternoon, and welcome. Please identify yourselves for Hansard. You have 15 minutes. After you've identified yourself and the group you speak for, the timing will begin. If you use all of your 15 minutes, there will be no opportunity for questions or comments, but if you don't, I'll make sure it's divided equally.

Mr. Gregory Daly: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. My name's Gregory Daly. I am the chair of policy development for the Ontario Professional Planners Institute. With me today, on my right, is Melanie Hare, a member of our policy development committee, and on my left is Loretta Ryan, our staff manager of policy and

communications. I'd like to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak.

My remarks today are based on recommendations contained in our letter to the minister dated December 17, 2004, and our submission of April 18, 2005. Copies of these and other submissions related to planning reform are posted on the OPPI Web site at www.ontarioplanners.on.ca. We'll be offering comments today on both the Places to Grow Act and the draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute, also known as OPPI, is the recognized voice of the province's planning profession. OPPI provides leadership and vision on policy matters relating to planning, development and other important socio-economic and environmental issues.

As the Ontario affiliate of the Canadian Institute of Planners, OPPI brings together 2,600 practising planning professionals from across the province. In addition, we have about 400 student members. The breadth of our members' knowledge and the diversity of their experience provides OPPI with a unique perspective from which to contribute to planning reform. OPPI members work for municipalities and other governments as consultants, in private industry, and for a wide variety of agencies, not-for-profits and academic institutions. Our members practise in many fields, including urban and rural community planning, and design and environmental assessment.

OPPI is a professional association funded entirely by membership fees and program and activity revenue. Through our public policy program, we conduct research on planning issues and general quality-of-life issues. We distribute this information to our members, government, the public and the media. Our purpose is to provide objective and balanced submissions based on the collective experience and wisdom of our members.

Our comments on the act are this: While we have some specific concerns, we strongly support your government's bold leadership in growth management planning. We urge the government to show equally bold leadership in meeting the fiscal challenges of infrastructure planning, development and operation. The Places to Grow Act and, in particular, the growth plan will only succeed if backed by very ambitious funding commitments.

Bill 136 proposes to place approval authority for growth plans at the cabinet level. This results in the introduction of new policy layers with the creation of growth plans and, specifically in the case of the greater Golden Horseshoe's draft growth plan, five sub-area growth strategies which would be amendments to the growth plan.

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While we support this direction, we are concerned that these sub-area strategies introduce another new layer of planning policy in the Golden Horseshoe. This new layer would be in addition to the growth plan itself, the provincial policy statement, local and regional official plans,

the greenbelt plan, the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan, the Niagara Escarpment plan, watershed plans and source water protection plans.

This has two key implications: additional resources and time required for the preparation of an additional set of policies and the interpretation and understanding of this new policy layer. There is a point beyond which a planning system can become so complex, no matter how laudable its aims, that it no longer functions efficiently and effectively and loses its credibility with decision-makers and the public.

Municipalities will have to be full players at the table, along with the province, in developing workable sub-area strategies. Municipalities will have to develop and implement the official plan and zoning bylaw amendments necessary to conform with the sub-area strategies and other new planning directions. They will have to interpret and apply these policies in their review of planning applications. Each Golden Horseshoe municipality will have to dedicate significant additional staff and resources to properly accomplish these tasks.

OPPI recommends that resources be made available, perhaps on a matching grant basis, to support the local governments in their implementation of Bill 136.

OPPI supports the establishment of growth management advisory councils. We request greater detail on their role, constitution and participants. We recommend that the councils should include members of the planning profession. As the voice of Ontario's planning profession we look forward to being involved.

OPPI recommends that a citizen-based model be considered for the advisory council. This council should include at least one member of the planning profession.

I'd now like to turn our comments to the draft growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. Many of our comments about this plan are of course closely related to our comments on Bill 136 itself.

With respect to the introduction of sub-area growth strategies, we are concerned that the draft growth plan defers many critical policy directions to the sub-area strategies that could be addressed at the growth plan level. In particular, we propose that identification of built-up areas, intensification corridors, affordable housing targets and waste diversion targets should be addressed in the growth plan now. Where appropriate, these targets could be refined in the sub-area strategies. Time is of the essence, and deferring these decisions risks their not being made soon enough.

OPPI recommends that the province prepare the sub-area growth strategies, in full co-operation with the relevant municipalities, by no later than June 2006. This will maintain momentum and quickly establish certainty with respect to key policies.

The province should amend the draft growth plan to include policies that identify intensification areas, intensification corridors and built-up boundaries as well as address affordable housing targets and waste diversion targets.

The growth plan's intensification policies and targets alone will not be enough to implement growth manage-

ment. Complementary regulatory mechanisms and financial incentives are essential to the success of these plans and need to be matched with the government's policy ambitions. It is our understanding that amendments to existing legislation and a new implementation tool kit are being prepared to address these challenges. We welcome the introduction of these supporting tools and will be pleased to comment on them.

One of the greatest challenges to achieving intensification within already built-up areas is objections from existing adjacent neighbourhoods to proposals for increased density, particularly along corridors. The draft growth plan identifies the need to protect heritage, stable neighbourhoods and environmental features in planning for intensification. However, the policies do not provide any direction to address the at times inherent conflict between intensification objectives and other needs. It would be helpful to add policy direction to address this conflict.

OPPI recommends that the province should offer more detailed elaboration and interpretation regarding the application of intensification targets; the province should issue a draft implementation tool kit to help municipalities implement intensification policies; and finally, the province should refine the growth plan to address the issue of intensification in the context of stable residential neighbourhoods.

With respect to natural system policies, the draft growth plan recognizes the value of a systems approach for protecting our natural environment. This appears, however, to reflect traditional approaches to the natural environment and does not reflect the most up-to-date planning strategies and innovations. OPPI encourages the province to support and encourage innovative approaches to natural system protection. In particular, we are concerned that the natural system protection policies are based on approaches to traditional greenfield development. They do not reflect the range of urban conditions within the greater Golden Horseshoe, and especially the intensified development that the draft growth plan advocates. It is essential to ensure that the natural resource objectives do not conflict with intensification objectives or source water protection targets. For example, with regard to source water protection, it may be necessary to consider watershed-wide targets that allow for transfer of performance standards from urban areas to other parts of the watershed.

OPPI recommends that the province should review the draft growth plan policy in light of current natural system preservation practices; the province should refine the natural system policies as they apply specifically to intensification areas, existing built-up areas and designated urban areas; and finally, where appropriate, the province should introduce policies in support of high-performance environmental technologies and innovations: green site and building specifications, green infrastructure and the like.

Implementation of this is key. OPPI recognizes and fully supports the Ministry of Public Infrastructure

Renewal's proposal for a 10-year infrastructure strategy. This strategy will be absolutely essential to successful implementation of the growth plan.

OPPI recommends that the province release its proposals for implementation mechanisms and financial incentives and resources as soon as possible. The province should target its funding strategies to support intensification and urban redevelopment and should use public investment to ensure compliance with growth plan policies.

In conclusion, OPPI commends the province for its ambitious initiatives to better manage growth. This is a very important new policy direction for our province and in particular for the greater Golden Horseshoe. We urge the government to take the complementary steps I've described to ensure that Bill 136 and the growth plan will indeed guide us toward a healthy and prosperous future.

Like the government, OPPI is dedicated to better, stronger and clearer community planning. Our members have a unique role to play in delivering on these ambitions. We urge the province to draw upon OPPI as a professional resource on matters relating to planning in Ontario. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives from MPIR or any of the other parties.

We thank you, and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have today.

The Chair: You've left just over a minute for each party, beginning with Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much for the presentation. There was a lot of thought, obviously, from your profession.

I want to focus on the subject that you repeated in a number of instances about avoiding duplication with municipalities. As a comment, the majority of municipalities are doing a very good job in planning, so we don't want to infringe on their fine detail. The plan we're talking about is the next level: to manage those local official plans and to meet. One of the arguments we've heard, both on the growth plan and this particular bill—and we've heard from about 1,600 people and had about 500 written submissions to do with specific growth plans—is that a lot of smaller municipalities don't have the capacity to do that intense planning like larger urban centres such as Toronto. How would we address that, if we then get involved provincially, to set those targets more globally?

Mr. Daly: I understand. You're speaking to the level of sophistication that any local municipality might have. I'll let Melanie Hare answer that question, sir.

Ms. Melanie Hare: One of our concerns is that there are appropriate resources, either on a matching grant basis or in a number of different ways, from your own provincial staff being able to help municipalities who don't have the in-house resource to address some of these issues or, even if they do have the in-house resource, the growth plan and sub-area plans, and the amendments to the official plans on zoning which will be required, are an enormous amount of work. We have a strong level of

concern, and certainly some of our members have let us know about their concerns. They're having a difficult time managing right now with all the urban planning issues on the table. They support this initiative but they're concerned about how they will actually manage this. I heard a previous speaker say that five years is too long to come into compliance. There are some issues about a bit of reality, and we would hope that the province could find some way of assisting financially, through other resource bases, a range of municipalities in staff complement to help them through this process.

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Mr. Hudak: Thanks again to the OPPI; I always enjoy your presentations. I have three quick questions so I don't use too much time.

First, you talked about the tool kit and that financial incentives are necessary. What would you advise the government to put in that tool kit? Secondly, you talked about the province playing a greater role in the sub-area growth strategies and setting the densification targets, corridors etc. The committee is going to wrestle with this, because regions will say the opposite. In fact, they feel that's a regional role. So a quick comment to that, if you could. And the third one: I didn't follow when you talked about—if you could maybe give us some examples about modernizing the way natural system policies are applied specifically in intensification areas. Help me understand practically what that advice would mean.

The Chair: He had a minute to ask that question and he's asked you to respond in that time, so they're going to have to be really quick answers.

Mr. Daly: I'll have Ms. Hare deal with the first and the last. With respect to the second aspect of your question, we believe that the information that would be provided to municipalities in the growth plan in an overarching way is going to guide regional municipalities within the sub-areas to come together on a common basis. As you can appreciate, the sub-areas are greater than any one region, so the opportunity for regions to come together and the potential conflicts that arise in the allocation could be guided by additional direction in the overall growth plan at the provincial level. That's our position. I'll let Ms. Hare deal with the other two aspects.

Ms. Hare: Very quickly, the tool kit: There's quite a range of things, I know, in having some conversations with your staff. They're aware of a range of them, but there's everything from tax relief to tax incentives, matching grants, financial granting, and policy mechanisms like development permit systems, where you can achieve some efficiencies particularly in intensification and infill areas. There's a whole range of policy mechanisms, financial incentives, granting, and a large spectrum within each of those.

The third question, on the natural system process: I think our concern is that the approach in the policy is well recognized, and the natural systems approach may be inherently in conflict with some of your objectives related to intensification. In intensification corridors you may need a whole different kind of performance-based

set of policies, as opposed to in greenfield developments, where you may actually go on a protection-based policy.

The Chair: Thank you. You did a good job in answering that quickly. Ms. Churley, you have a minute.

Ms. Churley: I was extremely impressed, and it's always good to hear from people like you who are the real professionals here. I must say that you're always complimentary and try to put the best on any bill that comes before any government. We all appreciate that.

I wanted to ask you: On page 4 you mention amending it to include things like affordable housing targets and waste diversion targets. Would you also consider that energy efficiency and conservation targets should be included in that?

Mr. Daly: You're seeing us nod our heads. Generally speaking, that would be an appropriate area to deal with as well. It flows from issues related to waste diversion, absolutely.

Ms. Churley: So you'd be happy if we threw that in as well?

Mr. Daly: That would be an appropriate additional area within which there could be direction provided at the provincial level.

Ms. Churley: I just wanted to ask about brownfields, where you're talking about the tool kit, and clearly that's such a huge piece of intensification. What are your recommendations around what governments need to do to make that easier to be developed?

Mr. Daly: I'll let Ms. Hare make a comment, too. I was interested by Mr. Smith's comment about the opportunity to build 200 units per hectare within a one-hectare area, and I agree absolutely that it's achievable. Not to be too simplistic about it, but you can't build the single-family housing first because that creates the conflict where, as you go back, people's expectations for lower density tend to rise. That's part of the issue. It's not to be cute about it, the way in which we develop our communities and the way that it's applied needs to be very carefully considered, and brownfields are one of those areas where there are inherent conflicts between often low-density areas where there is the opportunity to build at a much higher density on them.

Ms. Hare: We would support everything we can do about unlocking some of the potential brownfields. I think some of the most recent regulations are aiming at that in trying to apply that and understand the whole regulatory process that goes under that. It's quite complex and probably requires more financial incentives in particular.

The Chair: Thank you very much for being here today and for your delegation.

BOND HEAD BRADFORD WEST
GWILLIMBURY RESIDENTS FOR
RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

The Chair: Our next delegation is Bond Head BWG Residents for Responsible Development. Please come forward.

Welcome, gentlemen. You have 15 minutes, after you've got yourselves settled. If you could identify yourselves for Hansard and the group that you speak for. Once you begin, you'll have 15 minutes. Should you leave any time at the end, we'll be able to ask questions or make comments on your delegation.

Mr. Philip Trow: Good afternoon, honourable MPPs and Chair of the legislative standing committee. Today with me I have Robert Keffer, who is a member of our organization. He will not be presenting, but will be here to answer any questions you have, pertaining to our submission. I'm pleased to be here today to share input with your committee.

The Chair: Could I ask you to just identify yourself first, please?

Mr. Trow: Yes, my name is Phil Trow, and I'm the chair of the Bond Head BWG Residents for Responsible Development. Our group is focused on protecting the rural and agricultural character of our community in south Simcoe county. Bond Head and Bradford West Gwillimbury are located only a few kilometres north of the Oak Ridges moraine, and just outside the greenbelt boundary.

Since the introduction of the greenbelt in December 2003, there has been an unprecedented rush on land speculation in our area. The clear intent of these developers is to leapfrog the greenbelt. Without strong and immediate action from your government through Bill 136 and the Places to Grow policy, we feel we will lose much of our valuable prime agricultural lands and farm community viability.

Our small hamlet of Bond Head is located on some of the best non-tender fruit land in Ontario. Yields are commonly higher than in Peel, York and Halton. The topography provides a unique microclimate that allows farmers to be on the land earlier in the spring, often weeks before neighbours living up the road.

Within a 10-mile radius of Bond Head, there are 10 dairy farms, a major farm equipment dealership, four grain elevator operations, three fabricating and welding businesses, three seed corn dealerships, four seed-cleaning operations, 10 trucking businesses that transport our farmers' grain, livestock and milk, three fertilizer plants, four abattoirs, four feed dealerships and Ontario's largest cattle auction and stockyards.

While we applaud the government's efforts to preserve a greenbelt around the GTA, as it stands, the greenbelt has left the communities and farmland in south Simcoe vulnerable to large-scale leapfrog development and urban sprawl. This is the community where I live amongst neighbours, many of whom are multi-generation farmers.

In May 2004, Neptis Foundation released a report titled Simcoe County: The New Growth Frontier. This report identifies the factors driving development north of the Oak Ridges moraine, the reasons why developers are proposing such large-scale developments on greenfield sites and what these proposals mean for Simcoe county and the province.

According to Neptis, "Simcoe county is an important test case for the region and the province as a whole. If the smart growth policies promoted by the province fail to be implemented here, it will signal that the existing planning regime is unable to meet the challenges posed by rapid growth."

Clearly, Neptis has identified Simcoe county as the region most threatened by future growth. At the legislative committee hearings to consider Bill 135, members from all parties identified south Simcoe county as the priority area for government intervention to prevent leapfrog development.

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The government's commitment to smart growth hasn't changed the attitude of large developers. It's business as usual, as developers follow the path of least resistance by leapfrogging the greenbelt boundary and focusing their sights on south Simcoe. A large developer has submitted a proposal to amend the township of Bradford West Gwillimbury's official plan to clear the way for a massive development on prime agricultural land. This development would increase our planned population growth of 47,000 people to 115,000 people over the next 25 to 30 years. It is a greenfield proposal that falls outside our town's development boundary, and it contradicts the guiding principles of our community's official plan. The developer's proposal encompasses 6,200 acres, almost 80% of which is prime agricultural land designated as class 1, 2 and 3 lands.

These lands are presently zoned agriculture in our official plan, but despite this designation, farmers in our area are being inundated by speculators. The current system is not working. We need help. Speculators are scrambling to take control of this prime agriculture land. It is not a healthy situation for the agriculture industry to have developers trying to tie up land for possible future development.

The official plan for the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury could not be clearer in its support for agriculture. It states, "The town will protect the agriculture industry (both in the Holland Marsh and on the highlands) because of its importance to the economy of the town." It also states, "The high quality agricultural land which makes up the bulk of the land area within the town, including the Holland Marsh, shall be kept exclusively for agricultural use, and all non-farm uses will be directed away from these lands.... The town will continue to define much of its character based on its role as a significant agricultural economy." And lastly, "The long-term preservation and maintenance of the agricultural land base in the town is a basic principle of this plan."

We need protection. A 1999 study on the economic impact of the agriculture industry in Simcoe county showed that it directly employed 4,770 people and that over 14,000 jobs were tied to agriculture; sales locally, nationally and internationally totalled \$265 million per year; the agricultural community spent \$235 million per year locally on goods and services. The agricultural

industry in our community is a vibrant, self-sustaining economic entity that is a critical component of this province's overall well-being. Because this and other Ontario farming communities function so well as an industry, their importance is all too often taken for granted.

The past few years have been very challenging for farmers. Farmers in Ontario need a farm plan to make farming more viable, but the first step is to protect prime agricultural lands by preventing development on them, like other jurisdictions have implemented around the world. Opening the door to leapfrog development on prime agricultural land is not the answer. We must protect this finite resource. Ontario needs its agricultural industry.

Our residents' group agrees with the Places to Grow goals and visions pertaining to the protection of prime agricultural land and a strong urban growth policy, as stated in the discussion paper. A recent survey of BWG residents conducted by the town of Bradford West Gwillimbury in conjunction with a public visioning meeting held in November 2004 clearly indicated that the number one priority for our town council to consider is preserving prime farmland. But unless firm and detailed guidelines are developed to protect prime agricultural land such as ours in Bradford West Gwillimbury, leapfrog development will destroy our rural community, increase urban sprawl and destroy prime agricultural land. These consequences contradict all the critical objectives of Places to Grow policy.

Our area is also home to the Bond Head heritage highlands, a truly unique environment. The area is rich with cultural heritage sites and acts as a watershed divide between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay basins. Our drumlins, heritage farms and woodlots form an irreplaceable landscape that should be protected.

We also ask that you adopt a natural heritage system for south Simcoe that extends the protections contained in the greenbelt to our neighbouring county. There is no reason we can discern for providing protection to features two miles south of us, without also including our landscape.

Again, our residents' association urges you to act swiftly with the Places to Grow policy and defend your government's stand on Smart Growth by curbing urban sprawl. Our community in Bradford West Gwillimbury is at risk of losing its roots as a vibrant agricultural community in south Simcoe county. Surely our community has the same right to protection as the communities that fall within the current greenbelt boundary.

At this point, I'd like to give the committee a visual example of our area, Bradford West Gwillimbury. In your package I've provided two pages of pictures. The first photograph is Bradford as it is today. You can notice its proximity to Cook's Bay or Lake Simcoe, which is at the top of the picture.

The second photograph outlines the urban boundary of the southwestern region of Bradford West Gwillimbury, demonstrating the area designated for future urban growth. You can see that by the black marker.

The third photo shows parts of the Holland Marsh, which is part of the greenbelt boundary, and the Holland River leading to Cook's Bay.

The final photograph is the proposed amendment area, which gives an aerial view of our prime agricultural lands that are at risk for this massive development.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: You've left a little under two minutes, beginning with Mr. Miller.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): Thank you for your presentation today. Your images do a good job of showing the prime agricultural lands that you're talking about.

You mentioned you are concerned about the leapfrog effect of development that is going to happen because you're just outside of the greenbelt boundaries. You've pointed out that you have some of the best non-tender fruit land in Ontario and some prime agricultural land, and you're just outside the greenbelt. Why was this area not included in the government's greenbelt area?

Mr. Trow: We're still asking that question ourselves. I don't have an answer for that. I don't think we were ever really given an answer to that as a group. So it still begs the question of why we were left out when we have such an important area with agriculture.

Mr. Miller: As the opposition, we've been arguing that it's been political science, not based on what's actually on the ground, that's defined where boundaries of the greenbelt are. You're illustrating that by showing that you're right on the edge and yet you have prime agricultural land that's been excluded from the greenbelt. Would you agree with that?

Mr. Trow: Yes.

Mr. Miller: Thank you.

Ms. Churley: Thank you for coming forward again. I really congratulate you on keeping up the fight—good for you. I'm glad you've brought the visuals, because when you look at them, they really illustrate how important it is that this be protected. You know that I've made amendments and they were turned down by the government.

Environmental Defence just came forward and said quite specifically that if these lands aren't included, because they weren't under the greenbelt, this act would be a failure. I don't know if I have any questions for you, because we've talked about this many times, except to impress upon the government that the greenbelt, in my view, is a failure for other reasons, but this is a big piece of why it's a failure.

I'm simply saying to you that you have my continued support to try to get the government to do the right thing when it comes to protecting these lands, not only for the sake of preserving valuable farmland but to prevent that kind of leapfrog development that is one of the major flaws in the greenbelt. You have my support on that, and I hope that the government is now meeting with you for further discussions on this. Are they?

Mr. Trow: We have not yet had any conservation about that.

Ms. Churley: I hope that maybe the parliamentary assistant today will agree to meet, because I can assure you I have before under the greenbelt. When you really look at what's at stake here, I think this time you will agree that this has to be included and protected.

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Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much for your presentation and your commitment to your cause. We were referring back to the greenbelt and there was ample discussion. I guess the questions are to focus on what we have in front of us today. In your presentation you want some action. Can you be a little bit more specific on the type of action you would be looking for from government to address your concerns?

I guess for the few who would ask the question, "Very well, we want to be included in the greenbelt today," I'm not so sure. To be very honest with you, I'm not going to be able to answer that question, but with the tools that we have in front of us today, what would you recommend you'd like to see us do?

Mr. Trow: Our town is being faced with this proposal. It's been there for almost two years. Our council has been waiting for all the information that they've been asking for to make a decision regarding this proposal. But the question is, why is our council being faced with these kinds of proposals when our official plan outlines what our growth is for the next 30 years? They've gone to the government and got it passed by the OMB. This is what our plan is, yet we have growing pressures to say, "Let's move that boundary and let's take out 6,000 acres of prime agricultural land," where our town is 500 and the rest of it, as you can see by the photographs, is land for growing food.

In Places to Grow, you're trying to establish—which is a good vision—where you want the growth to take place. You're saying that Barrie is one of the places that you want it to take place because you want it to grow from the infrastructure out. You're saying that Newmarket, which is five minutes from Bradford, is an emerging area because they have certain infrastructure. But we're being faced with going 60,000 more people on top of the 47,000 that we have allowed within our official plan that was endorsed by the government.

We need help. Our council needs help to say, "Here are the tools that we're working with, and we are going to make that decision," but they're feeling the pressure from outside influences. So we need action from the province now.

The Chair: Thank you for your time, Mr. Trow. We appreciate you being here today for your presentation.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE/ONTARIO

The Chair: Our next delegation is Mr. Rodgers from the Urban Development Institute.

Welcome, gentlemen. If you're both going to speak, could you identify yourselves for Hansard and the group you speak for. You will have 15 minutes once you do

begin. Should you leave time at the end, we will be able to ask questions or make comments on your presentation.

Mr. Neil Rodgers: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Neil Rodgers, president of the Urban Development Institute/Ontario. Joining me is Mark Tutton, the chair of the organization. We are pleased to be here before you today.

Development and its related construction activities employ over 350,000 men and women in the province of Ontario. Over the past five years, the value of residential construction alone has grown by approximately 9 %, three times the rate of growth of the entire economy. This growth, in turn, help, the province contribute to critical social services, such as health care and education.

We intend divide our remarks up in terms of both the plan and the bill.

With respect to the bill, we support section 5. To this end, we call on the McGuinty government to deliver on its 2004 budget commitment and appoint a provincial facilitator. Furthermore, we call on the government to appoint a blue ribbon panel of experts to review the advice from municipalities and stakeholders before submitting the draft plan to cabinet for consideration. This is in keeping with language previously committed to in both the discussion paper and the draft plan.

With respect to section 6—this lists a number of identified items which are very similar to matters contained within upper-tier official plans—UDI believes that provincial growth plans should not duplicate regional planning efforts and processes. We submit that creating sub-area growth strategies, SAGS, while well-intentioned, will get bogged down in parochial interests. This is not where the province should be investing its efforts. The growth plan has the potential to be an excellent foundation from which municipalities can build strategic policies addressing growth management and infrastructure investment.

To this end, we recommend that areas of provincial interest in interregional growth management planning be focused through the PPS and the coordination of 30-year population and employment forecasts, and that the planning, financing and delivery of provincial and inter-regional infrastructure services be the sole responsibility in this section.

Section 9 authorizes the plan to be reviewed every 10 years. A 10-year statutory review is not responsive to dynamic economic and demographic forces. Recent provincial legislation, including the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and the Greenbelt Act, operates within the same statutory time frame. On the other hand, the provincial policy statements are reviewed every five years, and municipal official plans under the Planning Act are on the same schedule. We believe this patchwork of land use policy and legislation creates a disconnect. In the interests of good public policy, a strategic one-window approach should be adopted.

We recommend amending section 9 and the related aforementioned pieces of legislation so that all provincial land use planning documents—the PPS, the Planning

Act, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, the Greenbelt Act and the growth plan—are on a five-year review cycle, which will allow them to be considered through a comprehensive process.

Section 12, the official plan conformity exercise: There seems to be a lot of conformity among the speakers on this issue. This section requires municipalities to bring their OPs into conformity with the growth plan during their next five-year OP review, as mandated by subsection 26(1) of the Planning Act. We are concerned that this will result in an inconsistent policy approach, particularly if upper- and single-tier municipalities are on different OP review schedules, and they are.

To ensure consistency among planning documents, UDI recommends that the province amend the bill in a fashion similar to section 9 of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act so that municipalities would be required to bring their official plans into conformity with the growth plan within 12 to 18 months of the growth plan's approval. That's the schedule in that particular act.

I'm going to move on to section 14. Subsection 14(5) establishes a legislative and policy hierarchy, but subsection 14(4) has an override provision that states that in the event of a matter relating to the natural environment or human health, the policy that provides more protection prevails. We have no objection to policies protecting human health and public safety. However, UDI submits that onerous local environmental policies applied to urban and urbanizing areas will conflict with the growth plan's compact urban form objectives and unintentionally propagate sprawl. For this reason, we recommend that the "natural environment" language be deleted from this section, as the natural heritage policies contained within the PPS, recently approved by cabinet, are more than adequate to protect the natural environment.

During the planning process, landowners are obligated to "be consistent with" the PPS, and we will now have to "conform to" the growth plan. This will undoubtedly create many interpretational debates as to how to meet the rules of the planning process. Further confusing the matter, the bill states that if there is a conflict with the PPS and the growth plan, the growth plan prevails.

Moving to sections 17 and 18, we are troubled by the broad and unprecedented regulation-making powers in the bill. Such powers are not transparent and do not offer landowners, municipalities and the public certainty as to the purpose of the growth plan. It is our belief that the province should try to build consensus with municipalities and stakeholders, and exhibit balance, fairness and reasonableness when exercising power. Clause 17(1)(c) is uniquely troubling as it gives cabinet power to deal "with any problems or issues arising...." This could be applied to virtually any potential scenario, offering neither fairness nor certainty.

We question the government's granting of authority through subsections 17(4) and 18(4). These sections, which permit Bill 136 regulations to prevail over other acts, are well beyond the powers typically given by statute to the Lieutenant Governor in Council or a min-

ister. We recommend that sections 17 and 18 be limited in their scope.

I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Tutton.

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Mr. Mark Tutton: UDI/Ontario concurs in the Places to Grow vision and guiding principles. Places to Grow has the potential to be the needed catalyst for implementation of the province's overall policy for municipal and infrastructure planning in the region. Unfortunately, for too long, successive provincial governments have not reinvested adequately in the region's infrastructure, to the point where the infrastructure deficit has grown out of reach. UDI looks forward to the McGuinty government, in conjunction with the federal government, investing in Ontario's future and accelerating the required infrastructure investments to support Places to Grow. Infrastructure is the most critical element of the growth plan. Without it, the growth plan risks becoming just a development control and zoning document.

UDI was hopeful that there would be concurrent announcements made with the release of the growth plan regarding the MTO master transportation plan strategy for the greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority. We remain concerned about timing, and believe that the government is not moving forward fast enough on their campaign commitment to introduce legislation to create and finance the GTTA. These two matters form the foundation of the growth plan and are critical first steps toward easing congestion and offering commuters a seamless transit network across the GTA. We urge the government to release information concerning both of these initiatives to the public without further delay.

UDI is concerned with the growth plan's lack of strategic prioritization of infrastructure investment. We submit that the growth plan may in fact have too many urban growth centres, or UGCs. While we support raising the density bar within such centres, we believe that having too many will dilute the infrastructure investments required, to the point that it will not achieve the desired goals for any of the identified UGCs. Of the 25 identified, only two, downtown Toronto and Yonge-Eglinton, have attained the density targets identified in the growth plan, for the simple reason that these two centres have experienced previous substantial provincial investment in the public transit system.

When comparing measures of land use efficiency and compact urban form, Ontario's planning system is a leader without equal. On the North American continent, the greater Toronto area and Hamilton region, or GTA, has achieved the second-highest concentration of housing densities, exceeding New York, Chicago and San Francisco metropolitan regions by a wide margin and comparing favourably with London and Paris. As net residential densities have increased in the GTA, gross densities for new communities have decreased. This is the result of a steady increase in the amount of land being taken for public and environmental uses through the development approvals process.

The air photo sketch that's included in the package illustrates the Springdale community in the city of Brampton. It attains the 50 persons and jobs per hectare, but on a net basis, not a gross basis. As you can see, some of the densities, or the jobs and persons per hectare, are quite high.

If you look at the table just below that, the far-right-hand column gives you an idea of what the gross densities are in the various regions across the GTA and Hamilton, with only the city of Toronto currently exceeding the 50 level, at 69, on a gross basis.

Creating more compact urban form in the future will require consideration of the cumulative impacts of municipal and environmental dedications and a determined effort to rationalize the continuously increasing demand for public land. Needless to say, Ontario's planning system is complex, and public policies are often in conflict.

Housing demand across the GTA is heavily weighted to ground-related units. This is unlikely to decrease substantially in the foreseeable future due to prevailing demographic trends, the economic climate and consumer preference. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. estimate that there is currently a 3.7-year supply of single-detached units and an 11.3-year supply of apartment units across the GTA.

The region's current phenomenal success in attracting and retaining skilled workers from around the world can in large part be attributed to the relative affordability of ground-related housing in the region. A diminishing land supply, among other reasons, has led to significantly higher and rising land costs. Also, the employment land needs of the region should not go unrecognized. To accommodate the projected employment growth to 2031, the GTA will require an additional 16,800 hectares of land to be designated beyond what exists in current official plans.

To summarize, how will the province resolve the conflicts between market forces, consumer preferences and fiscal barriers? The lack of commitments and detail in the growth plan leaves both the development industry and municipalities asking questions surrounding the potential success of the growth plan and when we will begin to witness real, positive change. The bottom line is that Places to Grow is a step in the right direction; however, for it to succeed, more than words and promises are necessary.

The growth plan must resist becoming a zoning document. The McGuinty government will lose an historic opportunity to modernize Ontario's aging infrastructure and build for tomorrow if Places to Grow becomes a blueprint for stopping growth. Places to Grow must look beyond the current horizon and define strategic employment nodes, deliver a predictable, competitive and long-term land supply that will sustain housing choice and affordability, and address the infrastructure deficit. Unfortunately, the draft growth plan has left much of the implementation heavy lifting to municipalities through the development of sub-area growth strategies.

Now is the time for the government to deliver a functional growth agenda commensurate with an infrastructure investment strategy that will truly modernize Ontario into a 21st-century economy. If Ontario is to remain the economic engine of the nation, we simply cannot expect anything less.

The Chair: You left about 30 seconds for each party, beginning with Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thirty seconds? There's no time to ask questions. I guess I can ask you quickly, you believe that in some ways the government is getting too involved in the minutiae. Would you agree with the Bond Head group, which presented before you, that their municipality has said very clearly that they want to preserve that land as farmland but the province is saying, "No, it's going to be developed"? Who should make that decision?

Mr. Rodgers: There are challenges no matter how you see it, whether or not you are considering the development of green fields and farmland to accommodate these people. I was in Halton region this morning giving a similar presentation, and they have made it quite clear that they don't want intensification. So the challenges are on both sides of the equation. Quite honestly, Ms. Churley, I think the government has to wrestle with how best they choose to intervene in local planning to defend the interests of ratepayers and taxpayers, because it's a slippery slope no matter how you cut it.

Ms. Churley: I wish I had more time to follow up on that one.

The Chair: That was a trick question. Ms. Matthews.

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): Welcome back. It's nice to have you with us again. I just want to refer to what you have on page 10, which shows the consumer preference survey. Do you have data that would include rental as well as a home purchase? I believe this is just a survey of those who intended to purchase. The housing market involves a substantial rental component too.

Mr. Rodgers: I don't have that information at hand. I'm sure they conducted a study of that nature.

Ms. Matthews: That would be interesting. It gives us a better look at the whole demand for housing.

Mr. Rodgers: But the phenomenon of housing activity has been, in large part, because renters have been moving out of their accommodation into for-purchase market housing. That's why we're seeing such a significant vacancy rate in the city of Toronto, which we haven't seen in 25 or 27 years.

Ms. Matthews: I suspect there are lots of other factors contributing to that phenomenon as well.

Mr. Rodgers: Low interest rates, of course—all those things.

Mr. Miller: A previous presenter said that there's a point beyond which a planning system can become so complex, no matter how laudable its aims, that it no longer functions efficiently, and effectively and loses its credibility with decision-makers and with the public. I just wonder whether we're heading that way or whether you have any suggestions to simplify this process.

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Mr. Rodgers: I think we've gone over the edge in terms of the complexity of the planning system. It's something that started about seven or eight years ago and, quite frankly, it has been a system which has offered far too many sticks and very few carrots, whether it be for developers, for municipalities or for people who wish to invest in this province.

The Chair: Thank you, gentlemen. We appreciate your being here today.

AGGREGATE PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario. Welcome. Could you identify yourselves—the individuals who will be speaking today—and the organization you speak for. When you do begin, you will have 15 minutes. Should you leave any time at the end, we'll be able to ask questions or make comments on your delegation.

Ms. Carol Hochu: Thank you very much, Madame Chair, and good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. For the record, my name is Carol Hochu. I'm the president of the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario. Joining me today is Peter White, our association's environment and resources manager. We're pleased to be here today representing the interests of Ontario's sand, gravel and crushed stone producers, speaking on a matter of public interest.

Some of you may be unfamiliar with our industry's contribution to Ontario, although everyone in this room is indeed a user of aggregate. Whether it's the road you travelled on to get here today, the school your children attend or the hospital that cared for your ailing family member, all these sectors depend on a vital supply of close-to-market aggregates, as do the environment and our economic prosperity. Let me add that the products our industry supplies are not discretionary. The industry only supplies product that is required for construction and other uses and for which there is an immediate demand. Without aggregates, neither maintenance nor construction of infrastructure is possible.

Our purpose in attending today's meeting is to provide you with some comments and advice on Bill 136. At the outset, let me congratulate the government for having the foresight to lay out such an ambitious plan. The growth act and plan will lead to large-scale construction projects across the province: hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and more. All of these projects require aggregate in order to come to fruition, and we're pleased to play an important role in assisting the province in meeting its overall infrastructure goals.

Now, on to our comments and advice on both the act and the plan. Consistent with government policy set out in the new greenbelt plan and the provincial policy statement, the draft growth plan establishes the intention to protect an abundant, close-to-market supply of aggregate. However, some of the language in Bill 136 and

the draft growth plan doesn't support this intention. So in order to support the growth plan's laudable objectives, specifically with respect to the protection of close-to-market aggregate supply for the greater Golden Horseshoe, we suggest that the mineral aggregate resources section, 4.5, and in particular the context section, 4.5.1, be modified to include the need to identify and protect areas of high aggregate potential for future use to ensure the availability of aggregates close to market.

We also recommend some additional statements to the policies section, 4.5.2, as follows: that the policies in this section do not apply to lands included in the proposed greenbelt plan; that mineral aggregate resources close to market provide environmental, social and economic benefits; and that extraction is a temporary rural resource use, and rehabilitation of sites, as required by the Aggregate Resources Act and other plans and policies, can provide positive after-uses, including natural heritage, agriculture, recreation and water management uses.

We would not include any reference to a long-term strategy, as indicated in section 4.5.2. However, if such a provision is to be included, we request that it be reworded by adding a bullet point that refers to the need for comprehensive approaches to identify and protect areas of high-aggregate potential for future use to ensure the availability of aggregates close to market, and to make aggregate available within the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Regarding Bill 136, it is critical that the act and the plan be clear in relation to other provincial initiatives relating to land use. We understand that the act and the plan are meant to build upon and integrate these other provincial initiatives.

In relation to mineral aggregate resources, which are identified as "valuable" and "required" for infrastructure and growth generally, neither the bill nor the plan should add any further constraint to the adequate supply of much-needed aggregate, which the PPS directs should be preserved. We request clarification of how subsection 14(4) of the bill achieves government objectives, including an adequate supply of close-to-market aggregate.

Before closing, let me make a few general comments about aggregate availability. The 1992 study, *A State of the Resource*, found that close-to-market licensed aggregate supply was reaching critical levels in southern Ontario and needed replacing. This finding was consistent with earlier provincial studies. Since that time, the shortage has become even more critical. Over the past 12 years the GTA has replaced only one tonne for every three tonnes it produces. That is a depletion-deficit ratio of three to one.

The need for a close-to-market supply of aggregate has been clearly established and is recognized in the new provincial policy statement. This is particularly the case for the GTA, the greater Golden Horseshoe, which is the economic engine of Canada. The Ministry of Natural Resources made a comment on a recent licence application, noting that "current licensed supply is rapidly depleting for the GTA and this operation is needed to supply

forecasted demand." Aggregate extraction is only approved with full consideration for other issues. This is a requirement of the provincial Aggregate Resources Act and the PPS.

The fact is that it's very difficult to obtain new licences in Ontario. On average, we see five to 10 years and hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars to obtain a new licence. Further, the planning policies and environmental laws that govern issuance of new licences require the highest degree of environmental scrutiny and full, upfront consideration of impacts on other uses and resources.

This government, at a previous time, passed the 1989 Aggregate Resources Act and announced it as amongst the most environmentally sustainable legislation regulating extraction in North America. The current focus should be on implementing that legislation and the long-standing government policy that encourages adequate close-to-market supply from well-regulated operations in order to support Ontario's economic prosperity in a responsible manner.

On the issue of recycling: It will not replace the need for new licences. It will have only a small overall impact, estimated at about 5%. As early as 1992, Ontario was, and by the way still is, considered a leader in recycling compared to all provinces and most US states. The Ministry of Transportation maximizes use of recycled products, taking into account environmental, engineering, economic and safety requirements. Much recycling occurs at the job site, called in-place recycling, which means that the statistics on recycling don't capture this high rate of reuse.

Some suggest that the solution to land use conflicts around high-demand growth areas is to find alternative supplies and materials, including finding materials from faraway sources and transporting them by truck, ship or rail. Transferring the perceived problem unnecessarily adds costs of a social, economic and environmental nature.

Members of this committee I'm sure are aware that Toronto's decision to ship its garbage to Michigan is not an environmentally sustainable solution. Consider for a moment if this same principle were adopted for aggregate. Shipping Toronto's garbage requires 70,000 truck trips per year, where fulfilling the GTA demand for aggregate requires three million truck trips per year. It's simply not environmentally responsible to abandon the long-standing principle of maximizing resources close to market. The right approach is to encourage conservation and recycling and to encourage new close-to-market supply. This will help address the immediate shortfall in high-quality aggregate products for the greater Golden Horseshoe.

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The policy direction of ensuring adequate close-to-market supply, while minimizing social and environmental impacts and requiring progressive rehabilitation to agriculture, natural heritage or other appropriate after-uses, is the necessary long-term strategy which should

now be implemented. This policy direction and the regulatory tools are now in place through the updated PPS and the amended Aggregate Resources Act with its supporting provincial standards document.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. Hopefully some time remains, and Peter and I would be pleased to answer any questions you might have.

The Chair: You have exactly two minutes each, beginning with the government side.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you for your presentation and for being here.

Can you maybe be a little bit more specific about the conflict from this proposed legislation and what's in place now with PPS insofar as, I guess, controlling or guiding where your particular industry is?

Mr. Peter White: One of the principles for aggregate is addressed in the PPS, which is: As much as is realistically possible, as close to market, make resources available. This document is silent. It calls for the development of a long-term strategy and then outlines three objectives for that strategy.

We feel, with the Aggregate Resources Act and the provincial policy statement in place, and being relatively new, that the benefits to be gained of addressing a long-term strategy are small and that the direction given within the policy statement and the implementation requirements of the Aggregate Resources Act, and some other 28 pieces of legislation that we have to comply with, provide the guidance.

We're suggesting that the plan introducing the concept of doing an additional strategy begs the question, what would be the advantage, what's to be gained by that, when we feel that most of the concerns we've come across have been addressed through other pieces of legislation?

Mr. Rinaldi: Do we have any more time?

The Chair: Fourteen seconds.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: I'm sure Mr. Hudak will take that for you—an extra 14 seconds.

Mr. Hudak: I owe you.

The Chair: You've just used it up.

Mr. Hudak: Fair enough.

Carol and Peter, APAO, thanks very much for your presentation and for being here. I had a couple of questions, and I'll just ask both to give you more time to respond.

You have raised a concern about subsection 14(4) of the bill, which is conflict provision. Would you mind elaborating on your concern with subsection 14(4)?

You talked about the recycling of aggregates and made the claim that it would only have a 5% impact on supply. Where does the basis of only a 5% benefit from recycling come from?

My third point is with respect to an amendment to the plan, section 4.5.2, that it should be noted that the greenbelt plan would maintain its current rules. I think

what you're asking for is that the greenbelt rules for aggregates would not be changed by the growth plan.

Mr. White: We have statistical information that supports the 5% analysis that was done. The concept, as you can probably appreciate, is that you're not knocking down a whole lot of buildings. There isn't a lot of concrete just sitting around, waiting for somebody to make it into a useful product; asphalt, yes, and that's where the in situ or on-site recycling occurs. It doesn't show up in the statistics because it's extremely hard to measure. It's up and down in a matter of a couple of hours.

With regard to the greenbelt, the plan begs uncertainty as to which and how it relates to all the rest of the government initiatives. We just want to make sure that picture is abundantly clear and that it links together in a nice, linked format, as opposed to tripping over each other. We're just not quite clear that it does that yet. So we think it begs that question.

Mr. Hudak: Subsection 14(4). You had a concern about that.

Mr. White: Yes, clarity in the conflict clause: The glossary, some six pages in length, doesn't define two basic principles over which you could have conflict. "Natural environment" is not defined. So that leaves it to a bunch of other people to define whether they think it's in conflict or not. Again, clarity would assist the situation.

The Chair: Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. I want to ask you, because it's such a short time, a very specific question. As you know, your industry has been raked over the coals twice by the Environmental Commissioner. There have been other studies that indicate we're not doing nearly enough, and your industry is not doing nearly enough, to use secondary materials. You mentioned conservation being very critical. So my question would be, do you therefore support extraction taxes—as they've done in, say, England; I believe Britain's is up to 60% higher than we have here—to create that kind of incentive to do more on conservation and recycling? Clearly, as a result of studies that have been done and the Environmental Commissioner's report about environmental impacts—I'll stop there because I'm going to run out of time. Would you support a high extraction tax to get that done?

Ms. Hochu: I can start, and Peter can jump in. With respect to what you call the extraction taxes in the UK, I don't think it's fair to compare the UK market to the Ontario market. It's quite a different market. It's a much older economy in terms of having the buildings and greater materials available for recycling. You should also know that all producers in the province pay a six-cent-per-tonne levy—

Ms. Churley: Yes, I'm aware of that.

Ms. Hochu: —which gets dispersed to the province and municipalities, which is some \$9 million. We'd like to remind everyone that that happens.

We certainly assert that the industry can be doing more in the areas of recycling and conservation. We

understand that the Ministry of Natural Resources, and MTO and some other ministries are working together on a strategy to do that. The point was that there could be some additional material coming from recycling, but it's not going to replace the 170 million tonnes that we need every year in the province.

Mr. White: The only thing I would add is that reduction of aggregate is on the basis of demand. It's not sitting out there in huge lumps, all piled up waiting for somebody to say, "Oh, I think I need some."

Ms. Churley: So what do we do to reduce the demand, given the reports from the Environmental Commissioner and Pembina and others? There are clearly problems.

Mr. White: I think we're talking about large-scale society changes to reduce it, because aggregate is such an integral part of our environment. It's a basis of our construction industry. If we're going to change the basis of the construction industry, change the basis and how—

Ms. Churley: And what materials we use should be a part of that, right?

Mr. White: If you find a replacement material, yes.

Ms. Hochu: Just two additional points—

The Chair: You're going to have to be really quick; we're running over.

Ms. Hochu: The industry fills the demand; we don't create the demand for aggregates. Through intensification, which is part of the growth plan, you still need about 80% to 85% of the aggregates for lower-rise development.

The Chair: Thank you very much for being here.

SIERRA LEGAL DEFENCE FUND

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Sierra Legal Defence Fund.

Welcome. Thank you for being here. I'm sorry we're running a tiny bit late. Before you begin, could you identify yourself and the group you speak for? You will have 15 minutes once you begin. Should you leave time at the end, there'll be an opportunity for questions or comments on your speaking notes.

Interjections.

The Chair: Could I get a little bit of order, please.

Dr. Anastasia Lintner: My name is Anastasia Lintner. I hold a Ph.D. in economics and a law degree. Being an economist and a lawyer, if nothing else, means I'm the brunt of every single joke there is.

I thank you for the opportunity to allow Sierra Legal Defence Fund to make submissions before you today regarding Bill 136. You should have before you a short written submission, which I will make reference to, but I will not go through every point we've made. I hope I can be brief and allow time for questions.

Sierra Legal strongly supports the province taking initiatives to coordinate and lead sustainable community planning within Ontario. The negative consequences of our past and current land use planning and urban sprawl on human health and the environment are well known.

As Dr. Smith from Environmental Defence outlined earlier, these human health impacts can be particularly severe.

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Bill 136 is enabling legislation, and we appreciate that we've had the opportunity to look at a draft growth plan at the same time as looking at the enabling legislation. It allows us to better see how we think that legislation will play out.

Sierra Legal supports the environmental and human health protection override, and we believe that Bill 136 can be even further strengthened to promote environmental sustainability and social well-being within Ontario. I will make comments regarding three areas in which you could strengthen the aspects of environmental sustainability and protection of human health and social well-being: first, with respect to the preamble, the purposes and the interpretation; second, with respect to the contents of the plan; and third, with respect to the section that indicates the plan is not an undertaking with respect to environmental assessment.

If you just want to turn to page 2 of our submission, we outline the fact that the preamble and the purposes are focused on growth and its management, and we believe that the preamble and the purposes could be broadened to promote environmental sustainability, economic prosperity and social well-being, to make it a bigger, broader vision of what is trying to be accomplished by the act. Within interpretation, as we support the natural environment and human health override, we believe that it will make the legislation clearer if there is a definition of the natural environment within the interpretation section.

My second area of comment is on the content of the plan. On page 3 of our written submission, we make several recommendations that deal with how the bill could be enhanced to outline the policy goals and criteria that will provide for environmental protection and sustainable energy use. Our recommendation 7 requests that amendments be made to ensure that the sub-area growth strategies would also enable protection of vital environmental systems, and Dr. Smith of Environmental Defence earlier mentioned a few of the key areas that would benefit from better protection.

Finally, on page 5 of our submission, with respect to subsection 16(2), that any growth plan that would be developed under this legislation is not an undertaking, it does say that the Environmental Assessment Act would continue to apply within a growth plan area. However, Sierra Legal is concerned that a combination of setting up land infrastructure without environmental assessment of the needs and rationale for that planned infrastructure, and then placing it within a plan that is not subject to the environmental assessment, could lead to a situation where planning, such as for highway corridors, would be made firm without appropriate attention to the needs and rationale.

We urge the government to move ahead and pass the greenbelt plan, the Places to Grow Act, and strengthen the act with amendments that would meet the goals of the

act: curb urban sprawl, protect vital natural systems, protect drinking water sources and promote sustainable development patterns.

Those are my comments. If there are any questions, there's time.

The Chair: You've got lots of time, almost three and a half minutes for each group, beginning with Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you very much for the presentation. There's great detail, which we appreciate you going into, and such specific recommendations to the plan, as well as making recommendations for the legislation.

I guess mine is a bit of policy. Earlier, to Environmental Defence—I'm not sure if you were here—I asked a question about the age-old challenge that municipalities are trying to encourage intensification projects within their boundaries. Often local residents object to them and municipal councillors feel under pressure to turn those projects down and may go to the OMB etc. Do you have any advice to us to try to remedy that difficult policy situation?

Secondly, the OPPI talked about a tool kit that municipalities and investors would need to really encourage intensification projects. Do you have any advice as to what things should be in that tool kit to make these projects a reality?

Dr. Lintner: With respect to how policies might reduce conflicts about land use planning within municipalities, I suspect that this legislation isn't going to assist us. I think we need to encourage planners and developers to allow their imagination and their innovation to create community development that is desirable for individuals who are living within that area. If more and more examples of spaces where you can walk and enjoy community are available, then people will see that infill intensification isn't bad.

On what additional things we might put into the tool kit, I think that one way we can really allow municipalities to reach goals of community sustainable development is to provide capacity-building within communities between stakeholders, allow conflict resolution, get information out about how conflict resolution can be both encouraged and accomplished within municipalities. Then maybe we don't go to the OMB; we find a way to resolve issues in a way that promotes the purposes of this particular legislation.

The Chair: Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much. It was a great presentation. There are some very good suggestions in there.

I wanted to ask you if you can give us some ideas about how this legislation may be amended to deal with some—shall I put it kindly—oversights, things that were left out of the greenbelt. We had a group come before us earlier—I don't know if you were here for it—the Bond Head/BWG they call themselves. The Bond Head area in Simcoe county and Boyd Park in Vaughan are areas that we tried to get included in the greenbelt, but the

government refused to put them in. Now they're coming before us—and I don't blame them. There is still a huge problem with prime farmland being developed. We refer to it as leapfrog development, leaping over into Simcoe county. They'd like to see this committee, with this bill, remedy the problem, because it wasn't dealt with in the greenbelt. Do you see a way to do that within this bill?

Dr. Lintner: I'm not certain that it can be fully accomplished with this particular legislation. But drawing your attention back to the contents of the plan, the section 6 issues, as Dr. Smith mentioned—it's not in our submission specifically—one of the things that can be done is to make the types of things that are included in growth plans mandatory. Change the language to "shall," and make sure that the criteria that must be included in plans emphasize the environmental sustainability issues, the connectivity and the protection of prime agricultural lands as being key. I think that might at least start to remedy the situation you've mentioned.

1730

Ms. Churley: So you're saying it wouldn't totally remedy it. What other suggestions would you have, then, to remedy this situation with leapfrog development and the eating up of the prime farmland in the Bond Head area? What else could be done if people feel, as I do, that that's critical? I agree with Environmental Defence that this bill will be a failure unless that's done.

Dr. Lintner: I agree it's critical that we find a way to protect natural heritage, prime agricultural lands, drinking water source lands. If, for the greater Golden Horseshoe area, we are going to do that, then the suggestion from the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal about putting these sub-area growth strategies in place with a set of criteria they've put in their proposed growth plan is a way in which the municipalities and the stakeholders within those sub-areas would get together and really protect those areas. From any of the public meetings I've been at regarding the growth plan, that's where the regional outer-ring stakeholders believe they can actually have an impact.

Ms. Churley: Thank you. That's helpful.

The Chair: Mr. McNeely.

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I'm interested in recommendation 6, that the policies include "energy conservation and the development of low-impact renewable energy sources." I guess that is in some of the OPs now within this area. What specifically do you see should be included in this document? What are the specifics you see we should include?

Dr. Lintner: Are you speaking about the growth plan or within this legislation?

Mr. McNeely: I'm a sub today. How would that be done? I think it's extremely important that we get that message out. This is the time to do it, with the overview. If it's not done, then I'd like to know how it should be done.

Dr. Lintner: We feel that given the government's focus on trying to bring about conservation and renewable energy projects, this is another opportunity to enable

growth planning, maybe not—as we've said, that growth is not necessarily the reason we should be doing this, but to allow this planning exercise to encompass all aspects of the initiatives that would assist us in developing better communities. As to the specifics that might be included in any particular plan, I don't think you want to be so prescriptive within the legislation. You would allow the planning exercise and the public input to what would be the best ways to accomplish that to allow us to be innovative and imaginative about reaching those goals.

Mr. McNeely: If I could have a second question, under recommendation 12, I would like to know how major infrastructure would proceed without the Environmental Assessment Act being involved.

Dr. Lintner: It wouldn't. It's clear that the Environmental Assessment Act still applies to any infrastructure that's going to go ahead within a growth plan area.

My concern is that as environmental assessment is a planning tool to allow for the mitigation of impacts that are going to be imposed on the environment as a result of some project, I don't want growth plans to indicate where that infrastructure is going to go without a process that allows us to decide whether or not we need that infrastructure and whether or not it has a rationale we believe in. If there are aspects of the plan that are being put in place without that kind of oversight, then I think it may lead to undesirable infrastructure or works projects.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Lintner, for your answers and your delegation today. We appreciate your being here.

ONTARIO HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Ontario Home Builders' Association, if they could come forward. Welcome. Thank you for being here. Could you identify yourself and the organization you speak for? When you begin, your 15 minutes will start. Should you leave any time at the end, we'll be able to ask questions of your delegation.

Mr. Victor Fiume: Madam Chair and members of the committee, good afternoon. My name is Victor Fiume, and I am first vice-president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association and chair of the land development committee. I have also served as president of the Durham Region Home Builders' Association and I have been involved in the residential construction industry for a number of years. I'm a volunteer member in this association, and in addition to my business and personal responsibilities I'm dedicated to serving the residential construction industry.

I'll start by telling you a little bit about OHBA. The Ontario Home Builders' Association is the voice of the residential construction industry in Ontario. As a volunteer organization, the OHBA represents about 3,700 member companies that are organized into 30 local associations across the province. Together we produce

approximately 80% of the province's new housing and renovate and maintain our existing housing stock.

Over the past several years, Ontario has generated tens of thousands of new jobs. Many of these jobs were created in the residential construction industry. It is estimated that Ontario's new housing industry provided over 240,000 person-years of employment last year. Additionally, the new housing industry provides tens of thousands of indirect jobs off the actual construction site and generates economic activity in a variety of industries that support new housing.

OHBA supports in principle the government initiative to plan and manage growth across Ontario and in particular the greater Golden Horseshoe area. Given the tremendous growth challenges facing Ontario, OHBA supports a centralized infrastructure planning process and the development of a 10-year infrastructure strategy, as well as a strategy to divert 60% of our waste from landfills by 2008. Our members also support the use of crown land for renewable energy opportunities, as well as the establishment of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority.

It is, however, my duty at this time to raise a number of concerns to this committee that our membership has with the proposed Places to Grow draft plan. OHBA does not believe the government has weighed or outlined the financial commitment to upgrading our aging infrastructure that is essential for this plan to work. Without a significant financial commitment from the province, this growth plan is doomed to fail.

We recommend that the province undertake a financial impact analysis of the growth plan on housing affordability and infrastructure replacement and/or upgrading, and undertake a process that focuses on the delivery of infrastructure and its financing.

Our membership is very concerned regarding the long-term consequences of this plan on our industry, new home buyers and, indeed, all the people of Ontario. With the key issue of financing in mind, OHBA also has several other concerns with the growth plan that I will now quickly address before taking your questions.

OHBA has great concerns that the growth plan is based on growth projections by Hemson Consulting and that the growth plan must conform to these projections. In our opinion, these projections are not true demand projections, but rather targets based on the policy of the growth plan. It is completely unacceptable that these projections be imposed without a peer review or any input from stakeholders.

We recommend that growth projections be modified by individual communities based on an overall scheme with stakeholder input.

A major concern with the growth plan is the lack of available land supply for intensification within existing built-up areas, fragmented land ownership patterns, compatibility with existing neighbourhoods and the impact of OMB hearings by local ratepayers. NIMBY, the not-in-my-backyard syndrome, is a major factor in the opposition of local residents in established neighbour-

hoods toward intensification. OHBA believes that this is the largest stumbling block toward the implementation of the Places to Grow plan.

Constructing infill and intensification projects is often a steep uphill battle for builders and developers due to a variety of hurdles, including NIMBYism and unsupportive municipal officials. If the draft growth plan is to succeed, the province needs to step in and ensure that NIMBYism does not derail intensification targets. We recommend that the province ensure that mechanisms are in place that will allow for intensification to occur.

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It has been stated by this government that intensification within built-up areas will make efficient use of existing infrastructure, and therefore it should be promoted before any greenfield development is even contemplated or allowed. We wish to point out that new infrastructure for greenfield development does not put additional pressure on the ability of governments to fund infrastructure, as the costs for these are borne by the residential construction industry. In fact, the pressure on the province and the municipalities is to invest in the repairs to existing infrastructure that have been neglected for decades and to bring it up to current standards and regulations.

From a transportation perspective, the objectives of using existing road infrastructure and minimizing our dependency on the automobile can be partially met.

While it is true that existing roads can be used, the amount of intensification may create a need for expanded road systems. In most cases, it is not possible to get extra land for more traffic lanes, and therefore the situation causes a strain on existing road infrastructure.

Intensification within existing boundaries would help in creating population densities that are more transit-friendly. However, in order to influence people to leave their cars at home, public transit will need to become much more efficient. Integrated transit will require a major financial investment by the province and municipalities in order to make it efficient to the point that it is a reasonable alternative to the convenience of “going where I want, when I want” provided by the automobile.

We recommend that the growth plan recognize a balanced growth strategy that allows for a choice in housing and requires that sufficient land be designated to allow both greenfield and redevelopment opportunities.

The draft plan provides some targets for intensification for new growth. One of the policies states: “Intensification areas will generally be planned to achieve a density of development that is not less than 200 residents and jobs per hectare.” OHBA believes that this target is too aggressive and impractical to implement. Even townhouses would not fit into this target, since generally a townhouse project would provide approximately 110 residents per hectare. We recommend that growth plan targets for intensification of 200 residents and jobs per hectare be re-evaluated. The objective should be flexible for the different centres and the targets determined by individual communities.

We are strongly opposed to the province setting minimum affordable housing targets within the growth plan. OHBA believes that there is an obligation on the part of all citizens of Ontario, not just the new home buyer, to provide housing for the less fortunate members of our society. We recommend that the requirement for minimum affordable housing targets within the growth plan be deleted.

At this stage, we do not have a good idea as to the financial impacts of the proposed legislation. In order to evaluate the impact of the growth plan, we need to know the cost of all the proposals. The merits of intensification and planned growth, including the real costs associated with this plan, should be able to stand alone and withstand scrutiny. The pain of this plan will come from the increased cost to the new home buyer, the taxpayer and the economy of Ontario. We recommend that the growth plan be released in conjunction with the funding plan.

Members of the committee, let me conclude by stating that a 10-year review period is far too long for such an important piece of legislation and does not allow an opportunity for the government and the stakeholders to monitor the effectiveness of the plan and to make modifications if necessary. The growth plan mandates that only the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal can initiate an amendment to the growth plan and that a review would take place every 10 years. We recommend that the review period be reduced to five years.

Chair, members of the committee, I would like to thank you for your attention and your interest in our presentation. We are committed in our resolve to ensure that Ontario communities prosper and grow, and are prepared to work with competing factions within the stakeholders to arrive at a workable solution that will enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Churley, you have two minutes.

Ms. Churley: I wanted to follow up on the affordable housing piece that you just mentioned. The government is not meeting its promise in the election campaign, and I really fear that if this is removed from this, it’s going to make it even worse. I guess you feel it’s not your responsibility, but how do you see your association working with government to ensure that as we build more housing—do you think it’s just government’s responsibility?

Mr. Fiume: Absolutely not. We feel it’s everybody’s responsibility.

Ms. Churley: So how would you fit into it?

Mr. Fiume: I think the premise of affordable housing—first of all, it’s a social issue rather than a land use planning issue. As well, increasing taxes and fees and making houses more costly to build goes directly against the whole principle of affordable housing. All these fees and levies are imposed by different levels of government. On the one hand, we’re imposing multiple taxes and levies and increasing them on a yearly basis; on the other hand, we’re saying we’re not able to build affordable housing. I think what needs to be done is that we look at

the financing of affordable housing spread across the province and the cost being borne by all the citizens of the province.

As a builder, I will build it if it makes sense for me to build it and if I can sell it or rent it. But at this point, it doesn't make financial sense. So until somebody steps up to the plate—

Ms. Churley: If I could expand on that quickly, then, and going through other areas of your presentation, Mr. Hudak asked a question earlier around carrots and sticks and the fact that one of the problems overall, in terms of, say, intensification is that if the carrots aren't there, then nothing is really going to happen. Would you agree that along with this bill there need to be more carrots to make sure that all these laudable goals are reached?

Mr. Fiume: Absolutely. The fact of the matter is, again, as builders and developers, we will build whatever our consumer will buy or rent.

Ms. Churley: So conservation, efficiency, all of those other goals we'd like to see—if you can gain something from it, you're happy to go along with it.

Mr. Fiume: If our purchaser will buy it, we will go along with it. But if this plan is going to increase the cost of housing significantly—our purchasers are already up against a wall. If they stop buying homes, how are you going to get them to intensify? It will not happen. To quote Field of Dreams, "If you build it, they will come."

Ms. Churley: "If you build it, they will come." I think that's bad sometimes.

Mr. Fiume: If the infrastructure is there and we're able to build and sell the homes, then we will do that.

Ms. Churley: It's interesting that you said that, because I agree that sometimes when you build it, they will come. If they build a highway in the greenbelt, you will come, won't you?

Mr. Fiume: Absolutely. The whole purpose of this growth plan is to ensure that the growth is managed and that our highways and transportation systems are aligned with the government ideals and the government goals. Put that road where you want to put it, and we will build it there.

Ms. Churley: You see? They will come. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much for being here today and for your association taking part in this consultation.

I just want to get something clear. Your presentation was basically to comment on the Places to Grow Act, which is in draft form right now for consultation. But prior to the consultation, I believe you made a statement that you're supportive of the present legislation we're trying to bring before the House to create areas for growth. Did I get that right?

Mr. Fiume: Absolutely. We certainly are in favour and supportive of the initiatives, but the devil is in the details.

Mr. Rinaldi: I want to follow up on one piece of the presentation on Places to Grow. You said that we need to have more consultation to make sure we get the plan that

you refer to here. We spoke to about 1,600 people specifically about the plan, and we had about 500 submissions. If you've reviewed that plan, what are some of the real harsh realities that you're having difficulty with? Because we did go out and talk to people. We've had a lot of these discussions. I know we have a very short time, but can you just tell us maybe one or two things where we missed the mark?

1750

Mr. Fiume: I attended many of those sessions and, thank you very much, it has taken up a considerable amount of our time.

First of all, there need to be meaningful consultations, but to try and comment on a piece of a puzzle where you don't know what the entire puzzle is going to look like is very, very difficult. The key component in this, in whether it succeeds or fails, is the funding initiatives. This is where this lacks completely. We don't know what's going to be available. If you're going to foist all this on the new home buyer, then we won't have to worry about it, because it will fail. We won't be selling homes, and you'll be destroying an industry.

However, if the province feels this is the way to go and the costs are shared by the entire province and the infrastructure dollars are there and the carrot is used—right now, we're using a carrot-and-stick approach without a carrot. So we absolutely need, in conjunction with this plan, the funding ideals by the government. That's really the problem with the plan. If we could achieve 200 people per hectare, great; we would do that. But how will we achieve it? The only way we're going to achieve it is if there's some government funding for transportation, for mass public transit, and improved roads for goods and services.

The Chair: Thank you. Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thanks very much for your presentation. I'm feeling, actually, getting near dinner, more carnivorous, so I'm going to talk about, "Where's the beef?" as opposed to carrots and sticks.

Mr. Rinaldi: I'm hungry.

Mr. Fiume: It provides a very different visual, does it not?

Mr. Hudak: No House duty tonight. I'm taking my wife out for a nice Italian dinner, Lou. So, yes, I'm feeling hungry.

They need some meat in this, and you were getting to that a little bit in terms of key investments in infrastructure, high-order transit, highways etc. Is there anything, top of mind, that you think should be high on the priority list? And secondly, if you truly want to create intensification projects, what do you actually need? What changes in tax policy, for example, would encourage builders to build intensification projects and consumers to choose them, instead of choosing to drive from further away so they can have a nice lawn and a garden?

Mr. Fiume: Certainly major funding for public transit to make it efficient. People are not going to take public transit if the first time they go out there it takes an hour to catch a bus or a train. So that infrastructure, that public

transit, needs to be there before somebody is going to move downtown.

In terms of local issues, first of all, each location, each community, should have the ability to decide what flavour their community will take. If it is high-rise, it may be workable in Toronto; it's not necessarily workable in downtown Oshawa, which is really what we're asking people to do in this plan.

In terms of the funding of individual projects, tax relief over 25 years is not going to do it. The fact of the matter is, if my purchaser is going to buy, I'm going to build. What's going to make my purchaser buy a townhouse that's fully intensified in downtown Oshawa versus buying something with a piece of terra firma around them? The fact of the matter is, it's going to be a cost issue to these people. How can we bring the cost of this housing down so that they can choose a one-acre parcel of land or they can choose a condominium in downtown Oshawa? Right now, they're going to take the piece of land, the single-family detached, because, all things being equal, it works out to the same price.

Mr. Hudak: Is there still time, Chair?

The Chair: About 15 seconds.

Mr. Hudak: The same price? Explain that. How can a condo cost the same price as a one-acre property?

Mr. Fiume: It's virtually the same price—not in Toronto necessarily, but in a lot of the suburbs they are very closely priced; they're very, very competitive. Why? Because condo builders need to be competitive, and so do single detached. That's what we do. We're in a competitive marketplace. That's why I say we will build any kind of built form that a consumer wants. We react to the marketplace.

The Chair: Thank you for being here today. We appreciate your coming.

CITY OF BURLINGTON

The Chair: Our next delegation is from the city of Burlington, Mayor MacIsaac. Welcome. Thank you very much for being here today. Before you begin, could you identify yourself and your title. You'll have 15 minutes, and hopefully you'll leave some time at the end where we can ask questions or make comments.

Mr. Rob MacIsaac: Let me begin by thanking you for the opportunity to provide some comments on this legislation. I am the mayor of Burlington. I'm also the chair of AMO's planning task force and the former chair of the Greenbelt Task Force, but just note that I'm really here speaking on my own behalf. I formerly chaired the Smart Growth sub-panel responsible for developing a strategic growth plan for central Ontario. Having worked in this area so much over the last few years, I really felt an obligation to come here today and say a couple of words, anyway. I'm not going to speak for that long.

At the outset, I just want to say I'm very supportive of this legislation. I think it's an important step forward for this province. From my perspective, our province really needs some new and sophisticated ways of managing

growth. We are in a dynamic and rapidly growing economy, but we are continuing to work with 30-plus-year-old systems for managing growth here in the Golden Horseshoe. No one has been doing big-picture planning growth management in the Golden Horseshoe. It's not that it's being done poorly; it's simply not being done.

I am convinced that continuing to grow in our current fashion will have profound negative impacts on our quality of life going forward. In 30 years, travelling in rush hour will take massively longer if we are going to follow business as usual. Populations in suburbs will have to travel huge distances just to satisfy their everyday requirements. Our urban area will cover a size about twice that of the current city of Toronto. Our air quality will decline. I think, ultimately, this will all have a serious negative impact on our economic competitiveness. So from my perspective, it's really important that we start growing smarter than we have been in the past.

I think that, as a society, Ontario hasn't been very strategic about managing growth for many years. We haven't been focusing enough on maximizing the benefits of growth and minimizing its impacts. Furthermore, I don't think we've been very good at recognizing the connectedness of things. We've taken a very balkanized approach to growth management. That's why I think what is being proposed here is really important.

Of course, I have some bias, but I believe the greenbelt was a very good first step in taking a big-picture regional approach to growth management. But it's only part of what needs to occur. I've been saying that if the greenbelt is the yin of smart growth, then growth management or Places to Grow is the yang. For the greenbelt to be really meaningful, it needs to be complemented by comprehensive growth management policies. I think this legislation will allow the province to take that strategic approach to growth management.

By linking where growth occurs to resource infrastructure, investment, environmental and social considerations on a macro scale, we have a much better opportunity to realize the tremendous capacity and potential that we have here in Ontario to build great cities, to build great communities. To fail to proceed with this jeopardizes that shared opportunity.

I think if we don't become more strategic, you will see anti-growth politicians elected at every level of government. Our constituents are suffering from the impacts of growth. Traffic congestion, smog, disappearing green spaces, hollowed-out downtowns, cities with no sense of place: Those are the attributes that growth conjures up in the minds of our constituents. I think if we continue with business as usual, ultimately, they will react at the ballot box. We really need to show people that growth is an opportunity for both creating wealth and enhancing community in our region. That means building new neighbourhoods in our cities that are great places to live. It means harnessing growth to bring us better amenities, a richer cultural fabric, a better standard of living. It means welcoming to and including new people in our commu-

ities who will add great ideas and energy to central Ontario.

We can use growth to retrofit existing and perhaps somewhat dysfunctional communities, suburban communities, to make them more livable, vibrant places, but we need someone to coordinate all of this, and this legislation is the first step. So I want to congratulate you on making this step forward.

I will end on one final note. While I think this is a very important piece to the puzzle—and I think this might resonate a little bit with what some of the other speakers have said—it can't be the end. The legislation and the resulting plans won't be of any use if we can't find the money to build the infrastructure to support all of this. This is critically important.

1800

If the province is venturing back into the city-building business, and that is going to take a sustained and significant investment in both soft and hard infrastructure, this is going to have to be accomplished in a variety of ways. There will need to be some direct provincial investment, but, as I understand OPPI said to you, we will also need tools for municipalities to help make it all happen and create this infrastructure.

Those are my comments, and I'd welcome any questions. Thank you.

The Chair: Great. You left three minutes for each party, beginning with Mr. Rinaldi.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you, Your Worship, for being here today. You've become a familiar face in this establishment. Thank you for all the work you did for the people of Ontario with all your portfolios. You've managed to help us along, all governments, I must say, with smart growth, and carry on. So I thank you for that.

You mentioned the fact that we need to move forward. I guess this is more of a comment. I think we're certainly going in that direction if this legislation is passed, and we hope to get support from all sides of the House to move forward.

I want to shift a little bit to the growth plan, because obviously you're supportive of the present legislation. What are some of the things that you see from the growth plan—even though that's not what we're here for today, but we keep on crossing it—that are priorities for municipalities, because they are really our partners in this? As a former municipal politician, I understand those municipal needs. You don't have to be specific, but could you give us some things where the municipality will need the help of the province to make this happen?

Mr. MacIsaac: From my perspective, transportation has to come first. That's what I hear most from my constituents. That's what's concerning them to the greatest extent.

My impression is that we are not ever going to be able to build enough roads to accommodate all the people who are coming. Frankly, public transit is going to be really key. I would encourage the province to think in big terms. We in this region deserve a world-class public transit system. I don't think it's just about adding on a

couple of more GO trains here or there. I really encourage you to think about what other great regions in the world have done. The people in this region deserve no less than what you see in Europe and in big cities in the United States. There's no reason why we in Ontario, Canada, can't achieve that same level of transportation infrastructure that will give people real choices about how they get around.

Mr. Rinaldi: Have I got more time?

The Chair: Fifty seconds.

Mr. Rinaldi: Oh, wow, that's great. I guess one of the things—it's more of a point, Madam Chair, and His Worship maybe will agree. I had the opportunity to travel a little bit in Ontario last year, plus within my own municipalities. I think we owe it to ourselves to see those municipalities being proactive in planning in the small sense: I see their downtowns full and vibrant, and then you go to the very next community and it's the total opposite. I think you would agree with me that this overall arching blanket that the province is moving toward, that regional upper-level planning, will bridge that. Would you say that's accurate?

Mr. MacIsaac: I would agree that we need to have some shared values about what our communities are going to look like going forward and that Places to Grow is an excellent start to Ontario enunciating some shared values about what our communities should look like. I totally agree with you that downtowns are such an important part of what makes towns and cities places that people can relate to and create a great quality of life for people.

I'll just put my mayor's hat back on for a moment and brag a little bit. We are investing in our waterfront, which is in our downtown, and we're seeing literally hundreds of millions of private sector dollars coming into our downtown because of our public sector investment. I think if we invest in our downtowns, we will see real dividends from it. That's certainly our experience.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Mayor MacIsaac, for the presentation. I don't know if you had a chance to look at this. How close would Burlington be today to the 40% intensification target, and what types of provincial tools will help a city like Burlington achieve that within the time frames the province is requesting?

Mr. MacIsaac: I can't tell you off the top of my head exactly the ratios that we're achieving across the city. I know in our downtown we're starting to achieve an approximation of the ratios that are being called for in the growth plan. Across the balance of the city there are still lots of opportunities that we have to get there.

If I needed to pick out one tool that I think would be really helpful, and it's one that I've seen hugely successful in the United States, I was actually in Chicago a couple of years ago and met with Mayor Daley down there, and he talked about tax increment financing, TIFs. He showed me a bunch of the projects that they've done in Chicago using TIFs. It's very exciting and it's a very practical tool that has allowed municipalities throughout the US to invest in very significant infrastructure and has resulted in intensification.

Mr. Hudak: In terms of particularly your area and to the west of the GTA, what transportation initiatives would be the highest priority to achieve the goals of the growth plan?

Mr. MacIsaac: In the short term, I would say we need to do everything we can to max out on GO train service. In the medium term, I think regular hourly GO train service should go to St. Catharines, should go to Niagara Falls. That's currently the 905 subway and it needs to be extended into Niagara, certainly through to Hamilton. That's underway now, but ultimately I would encourage the mayor of St. Catharines and the mayor of Niagara Falls to be pounding on the table saying, "We want that same service." I think it's critical for those communities and it will enhance the whole of the Golden Horseshoe.

Longer term, as I mentioned earlier, we've got to be looking at a world-class transportation system. I think of light rail, using hydro corridors throughout the whole of the region. Let's really think about a new paradigm for public transportation and invest in it.

Mr. Hudak: Any advice on financing of those models? Have you seen good models elsewhere that we could emulate?

Mr. MacIsaac: I'd have to say that I think GO Transit is probably one of the best cost—are you talking capital or operating?

Mr. Hudak: Capital, really, but both.

Mr. MacIsaac: GO Transit is about as good as it gets, I think, in the world maybe in terms of revenue to cost recovery ratios. It's a good question. A guy like Bob Onyschuk could probably give you a better answer than I. He's a lawyer and I think he's helped out several governments on capital financing tools.

Ms. Churley: Good afternoon, Your Worship. I just love all this talk about more public transportation. The more we hear about that, the better.

I wanted to ask you a bit more about higher intensification, because that certainly is a key to all of this. Some people talk about that dreaded word, NIMBYism. I guess the question would be—and I know that you can't give us all the answers—what kind of mechanisms are required, in your view, to bring about intensification, and do you have any examples of what you've had to deal with in Burlington or what you're going to be doing to deal with some of these very real problems that we have to accept and put on the table and talk about, the mechanisms we need to deal with them?

Mr. MacIsaac: Sure. I can give you a very recent example, because last week I was at a public meeting which had about 300 people attend for a 22-storey high-rise tower on our waterfront. It was in fact the second public meeting we'd had on it. The first one was just an absolute disaster.

Ms. Churley: I've been to some of those.

Mr. MacIsaac: The first proposal was 30 storeys. It was all steel and glass. The public amenities weren't very impressive. We sent the developer back and said, "You've got to do a better job." He came back with a 22-storey masonry condo on the lake with a beautiful piazza

at the ground level surrounded by restaurants, and there was a very positive reaction by our residents.

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The first thing I guess I would say is, look, people are going to need to see good-quality development. If we try to foist bad-quality development on them, they're not going to like it. We need to be building great cities, and that means attractive architecture and it means building streetscapes that people feel comfortable with.

I think the other thing is that there's going to be a real responsibility on us at the municipal level, but I would also extend it to you at the provincial level, to start connecting the dots for people. We need to engage people in these issues of growth and try to get them involved in the different choices there are for our communities. I might be naively optimistic, but my experience has been that when you really engage people in it and say, "Look, we've got a choice. We can either try to build great cities with a little bit more intensification, and maybe a lot more intensification, or we can continue building out on farmlands and destroying woodlots and whatever," people will come to the right answer. But it's a ton of work and it means getting out there and drawing them into the process, because their natural proclivity is to get the kids to soccer and get home and wash the dishes.

Ms. Churley: Sounds good to me. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mayor MacIsaac. We appreciate your being here today.

EARTHROOTS

The Chair: Our last delegation is from Earthroots: Josh Matlow. Welcome. Best till last.

Mr. Josh Matlow: I'm delighted to wrap up the day for you.

The Chair: If you'd like to give your name for Hansard and the organization you speak for. You have 15 minutes when you do start.

Mr. Matlow: My name is Josh Matlow. I'm the campaign director of Earthroots. I'd like to thank the Chair and all the members of the committee for having me here today to speak to you. I'd like to speak specifically to the draft plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe and how it pertains to the bill.

Earthroots is an Ontario-based environmental advocacy organization founded in 1986 with a mandate to protect wilderness, wildlife and watersheds through research, education and action. Earthroots has been a leader in preserving green space in southern Ontario. Our organization and its members have been involved in working to protect the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment since 1998. As a result, we have taken a keen interest in all of the provincial government's recent initiatives aimed at curbing urban sprawl in the greater Toronto area and throughout the greater Golden Horseshoe.

Earthroots contends that urban sprawl is the most critical challenge facing the greater Toronto area. The proliferation of low-density, automobile-oriented development over the past 30 years has transformed Toronto into a vast urban region. It stretches from Niagara to Clarington and from Lake Ontario up to Lake Simcoe. In the process, much of our area's green space and agricultural land has been paved over or severely degraded.

The problems arising from unbridled growth have been well documented. Historically, however, little has been done at all levels of government to truly tackle the problem. It is within this context that Earthroots welcomes the initiatives put forth by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal in the Places to Grow Act. Our organization believes that the provincial government is the only body capable of tackling urban sprawl throughout the greater Toronto region and greater Golden Horseshoe region, due to myopic planning decisions which are also sometimes made at the local level, and welcomes the province's return to the land use planning process.

Earthroots is encouraged that the province has adopted land use intensification, with the purpose of taking development pressure off greenfield sites and encouraging transit use as a goal for the residents of the entirety of the greater Golden Horseshoe. However, Earthroots contends that the province's efforts in this respect, while they merit support, must go further. We are anxious to see whether the government's next steps will take Ontarians on to a bus, rail or driving their cars on new highways, such as the mid-peninsula highway.

I would like to spend the next few minutes articulating Earthroots' response to the draft plan, citing sections of interest or concern to our organization for your information. I'll start with section 2.3, "Intensification and Compact Development."

Accessory apartments are an example of the many positive measures which are included in this plan that unfortunately do not have the regulatory teeth to see them through to fruition. Under previous provincial governments, citizens have been given tax write-offs or seed money to renovate basements or garages in order to provide accessory apartments. We would hope that this government would undertake similar steps to ensure that this beneficial component of the act bears the fruit of its intentions.

Section 2.3.2: The residential intensification targets in the act are 40% for both the inner and outer rings of the greater Golden Horseshoe. Earthroots has several reservations with regard to this policy. First, this target is far too low, as it will lead to 60% of new developments paving over green space and farmland. In comparison, the target in Vancouver is 70%; internationally, the target in the United Kingdom and in Sydney, Australia, are both 60%. The province's target is quite weak, considering that there is more than enough land within areas that are already designated for development to accommodate expected growth past 2031 at current growth rates, according to the ministry's own research. As well, Earth-

roots contends that it is unnecessary to have a phase-in time of 10 years for the intensification targets to be met. Given that there are numerous sites available within existing built-up areas for development, municipalities should not need 10 years to comply with this very modest target.

In part 6 of the section it reads, "Intensification areas will generally be planned to achieve a density of development that is not less than 200 residents and jobs per hectare." Earthroots is concerned that the inclusion of the word "generally" puts the policy in jeopardy. If the government wants to tackle sprawl, instituting half measures and relying on voluntary compliance are not necessarily the way forward.

Section 2.5.2: This section reads, "Major office development (generally defined as office development greater than 20,000 square feet) will be located in areas where higher-order transit services exist or are planned."

While Earthroots supports the location of major office developments close to higher-order transit services, we are concerned that the wording of this policy leaves too much room for interpretation. Instead of stating that major office developments are generally defined as being greater than 20,000 square feet, Earthroots recommends that the province, through consultation, set a minimum size in regard to what constitutes a major office development and then enforce its location close to higher-order transit.

The statement "or are planned" with regard to higher-order transit services is a loophole that Earthroots would like to see removed from the provision altogether. As I am sure anyone who is familiar with transit in Toronto will know, there was the fiasco with the Eglinton subway line that never saw the light of day, yet saw many holes dug into the ground, and the ongoing saga over whether or not we're going to have the York University extension. There have been many transportation services that have been planned but have not come through to fruition. A stipulation that is more in tune with the transit planning process is clearly needed in this instance.

Section 2.6.2: According to the draft plan, the province proposes to have a minimum density requirement of 50 residents or jobs per hectare in the inner ring and 40 in the outer ring. This figure is simply not high enough to change the unsustainable pattern of development and the resulting travel choices that have plagued our region for the past several decades. According to numerous academic experts, transit-supportive developments require a minimum of 55 persons per hectare in residential areas and 70 employees per hectare in commercial centres. These figures double for higher-order transit services such as rail, which the draft plan explicitly supports.

The High Park area of Toronto, largely considered to be one of the more desirable areas in the GTA to live in, has 80 people per hectare. Higher densities are needed to conserve the GTA's remaining green space and make public transit a viable option for commuters. Decisions at the municipal level should be made with respect to neighbourhood and community needs, in consultation

with local ratepayers' associations and other community representatives.

Section 3.2.2: The plan states that municipalities must "include explicit targets for reducing the proportion of travel by car, and increase year over year the proportion of trips made on foot, bicycle and public transit." Earthroots is concerned that this important initiative to steer Ontarians toward sustainable transportation options may be unevenly implemented across the province. Every citizen across Ontario should be encouraged to make the responsible choice in every region, city, town and village.

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Section 3.2.4 states that the greater Golden Horseshoe requires an expansion of the current and future highway networks. Highways are the infrastructure for urban sprawl. One can't talk about curbing sprawl while building new highways at the same time. Highways disrupt wildlife corridors, add to air pollution in the GTA, and further facilitate urban sprawl. It has been demonstrated time after time that, in the long run, additional highway capacity does not relieve congestion; it just causes more people to opt to drive, thereby increasing the total number of cars on the road and resulting in the same amount of traffic delays experienced previous to the additional highway capacity. If the goal of the act is to promote public transit, as it is stated, the province is shooting itself in the foot by adding new highways, as this addition will only make driving more attractive.

Earthroots is concerned about the contradictions between the laudable goals contained in the province's act and current initiatives underway in southern Ontario. The MTO just finished public consultations on the mid-peninsula highway. It is unacceptable for a major highway to be going through an approvals process while an overarching growth plan for the region that should direct these sorts of decisions is still in the consultation process. Earthroots recommends a moratorium on all new highway development and expansion, at least until the province's growth plan has been finalized. This would be a responsible approach.

Section 6.8.1: Earthroots is encouraged that the province will devise a set of indicators to monitor the implementation and achievement of the growth plan. This is a crucial component of the plan and should be given a great deal of weight when the final legislation is drafted. Earthroots recommends that the province consult knowledgeable stakeholders, such as the Toronto-based Neptis Foundation, in choosing relevant indicators. Earthroots also recommends that the results of the ongoing monitoring process be shared with the public in an easily accessible manner.

Section 8.3: Finally, this last section of the plan deals with strategies for educating the public about growth management and, more specifically, the impact that Ontarians' decisions have about where they live, what they live in and how they get to work—how it affects the environment around them. This is one of the most important aspects of the bill. Recent studies have shown

that changing public perception toward car use and dwelling type can be an effective tool, in tandem with regulation, for achieving sustainable communities. Earthroots is very encouraged by the inclusion of these provisions in the plan, and offers its expertise in public education campaigns to the province.

There's been a great deal of talk in recent years that the greater Golden Horseshoe is at a crossroads with respect to growth patterns. Many have asserted that we can either choose to continue expanding in an unsustainable direction that has been the norm for the past 30 years or to put policies in place that favour compact, mixed-use, transit-friendly development.

Earthroots contends that the evidence, much of it supplied by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, suggests that the crossroads stage was reached at least a decade ago, and we are possibly now in a crisis situation. The city of Toronto's department of public health attributes over 1,000 deaths per year to smog in the city of Toronto alone, while countless others suffer from respiratory problems such as asthma.

Highways and other development have bisected wildlife corridors, resulting in habitat destruction for numerous animals, yet they continue to be approved. Ecologically sensitive areas have been paved over in favour of new subdivisions, compromising source water areas and biodiversity as a whole in the greater Golden Horseshoe.

The problems arising from urban sprawl have been well documented by government, academic and environmental institutions, yet every year more and more green space continues to be paved over to build sprawling communities which we know are unsustainable.

Ontario needs a strong and dynamic legislation to stem the tide of unbridled development in the greater Golden Horseshoe. While Earthroots supports the Places to Grow Act, we believe that it is generally underwhelming and suggestive.

Earthroots acknowledges that the government has opponents of this plan that will say that individuals have the right to choose where they want to live. Earthroots does not disagree with them. However, we believe that the social and environmental rights of all Ontarians should come first. The public expects government to ensure that they have clean air and water, access to green space and certainly to be able to get to their destination in a timely manner.

The Chair: You've left about 40 seconds each, beginning with Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thanks for the presentation. On the last point you talked about, people and their choice of where to live, people are increasingly choosing to live in the suburbs, particularly young families. So if you want to change that behaviour, how do you do so? Do you just eliminate the supply? Do you give incentives to them to live in downtown areas? How can you actually change what's been a cultural phenomenon for a long time?

Mr. Matlow: Certainly, the more that the public becomes aware of the health risks, the environmental reper-

cussions of their actions, I think the more and more people will make responsible choices about where they want to live and, hopefully, the demand will go down as the public is aware of what the repercussions are of their choices.

As well, the government, the province, certainly has a role to play in making sure that areas that are ecologically sensitive, agricultural lands that will sustain Ontario into the future, have real protection and genuine protection so that it really isn't even a choice. People want to live in suburbia, and I understand why they do, but there are ways to do it well and intensified that will be able to be viable financially to support public transportation and recreational facilities and other facilities that are part of a community's infrastructure.

Ms. Churley: Josh, that was a fantastic presentation. Thank you. I agreed with pretty well every word you said; so therefore, of course, I did find it fantastic.

Mr. Matlow: I appreciate it. Thank you.

Ms. Churley: Thank you for all the good work you did in critiquing this. Hopefully, we can get some amendments through based on yours and others' suggestions today.

Mr. Matlow: That's very kind of you to say. Thank you, Marilyn.

Ms. Churley: You're welcome.

The Chair: Mr. Matlow, before I go to the government side, are you able to put in a written submission?

Mr. Matlow: I'd be happy to.

The Chair: The researcher would be grateful if you did.

Mr. Matlow: I'd be delighted to, yes.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you, Mr. Matlow. It's great to see you again. Just a quick comment, because your presentation was mostly based on the greater Golden Horseshoe plan. I hope you had the opportunity—and I'm sure you have—to submit comments to the growth plan under the draft format so that our ministry could certainly—

Mr. Matlow: I appreciate that and while we have genuine criticisms, we want to find a solution. You're the window to do this right, and what we want to do is make sure that you take advantage of this opportunity and be the best you can be.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Matlow, for your constructive suggestions.

Committee, this brings us to the closing of our hearings for the day. I'd like to thank all our witnesses and all of our MPPs and ministry staff for their participation and their enthusiasm. The committee is adjourned until 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 25, in this room.

The committee adjourned at 1827.

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