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Monday 25 April 2005

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Lundi 25 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**

Monday 25 April 2005

Lundi 25 avril 2005

The committee met at 1536 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 begin the third day of public hearings on Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans.

I'd just like to bring to the committee's attention that our 4 o'clock and 4:15 presenters, being the Toronto Environmental Alliance and Cecil Bovaird, have both cancelled. So those two delegations won't be appearing.

CITY OF BRAMPTON

The Chair: Could I ask Mr. John Corbett from the city of Brampton to come forward, please. Welcome. Could you identify yourself, and the group you're speaking for, for Hansard? You'll have 15 minutes to speak. Once you've finished, if you leave time, there will be an opportunity to ask questions or make comments on your delegation by all three parties.

Mr. John Corbett: Good afternoon. My name is John Corbett, commissioner of planning, design and development for the city of Brampton. With me is Deborah Reader, executive assistant to the city manager. We're here representing the city of Brampton's position on the growth plan legislation.

We have left with you today a copy of our presentation in colour format, and in addition to that, a copy of our staff report as approved by city council.

I'm going to begin by providing some basic context for the city of Brampton, relative to its growth position in the Golden Horseshoe.

First of all, I'd like to point out that Brampton has experienced the highest rate of growth among Canada's 25 largest cities and has the third-largest population in the greater Toronto area. It also has one of the highest transit-supportive densities, as we have proactively tried to meet sound planning objectives as we have ex-

perienced our high growth rates. In terms of those growth rates, our population is expected to grow from 380,000 today to almost 700,000 by the year 2031.

Just to give you a snapshot of the type of growth we've experienced, between 1996 and 2001 the city of Brampton averaged approximately 3,500 residential permits annually. In the last three years, we have experienced a much more rapid rate of growth, averaging 6,500 units between 2002 and 2003, and then last year we experienced a very large building boom with almost 10,000 residential permits issued. So the market pressures bringing to bear are having an impact on Brampton in terms of its growth rate.

To deal with this growth rate, we haven't been standing on the sidelines. We've been proactive in terms of adopting and implementing a growth management program that we believe is the first of its kind in Ontario. Our council has recently adopted a program considering a cap on growth to manage it in a logical, sequential and reasonable way.

We have adopted a transit master plan to reinforce our transit initiatives in the city of Brampton over the 30-year planning period. We have been mindful of the environment, with a stewardship strategy. Along with that, we've also adopted a capital works budget that works together with other service providers, such as the province and the region, to make sure infrastructure is advanced as quickly as possible to meet the needs of growth.

In summary, our position on the growth plan legislation is that we are very supportive of the overall goals and objectives of the growth plan. We believe that a strong growth and infrastructure plan is needed to support the prescribed levels of growth being experienced in Brampton and other areas of the Golden Horseshoe. However, provincial commitment to infrastructure dollars and changes to the Development Charges Act are essential to fund growth. Our experience over the last few years has been that it's very difficult to fund the impacts of growth because of specific shortfalls and development charges that are accruing to the city.

Finally, and most importantly, related to the growth plan itself, we strongly believe that local councils should be assigned the responsibility of implementing the growth plan, especially urban boundary expansions. This is especially the case where a local municipality such as Brampton has already engaged in a long-standing process to include more lands within its urban boundaries. I'll get into that more in a few minutes.

Our specific area of concern is that the bill requires additional transition provisions to allow urban boundary expansion to occur where there has already been a completed or substantially completed process. In other words, we're looking for a grandfathering type of policy where it's deemed appropriate. Brampton's urban boundary review had actually commenced, and the regional official plan amendment application to the region of Peel had been filed before Bill 136 and the growth plan's coming into effect.

Why urban boundary expansion in Brampton? The city council in Brampton has decided to take a strong position in terms of its destiny as an urban centre in the northwest part of the GTA. In point of fact, this initiative goes back to March 2000, when Brampton advanced its official plan review program.

Northwest Brampton is 6,000 acres located in the extreme northwest reaches of the city of Brampton. You'll see on page 4 of my presentation a map identifying the location. The unique attributes of this area particularly relate to its being centred on the development of a transit-oriented smart growth community around the Mount Pleasant GO station, which the province was of great help implementing and which opened very recently. We have been working very progressively toward developing a unique transit-oriented community with higher densities and mixed-use densities, live-work relationships and employment uses, which I think will be an example for the whole province in terms of how smart planning, smart growth and transit-oriented development can occur.

To accomplish the approval process, we had to conform to certain regional official plan policies. There were a number of stage 1 and stage 2 detailed technical studies required to justify the lands' coming into the urban boundary. These were related to residential/employment, shale assessment, transportation infrastructure, environment/open space, agriculture, and municipal finance and servicing, as well as a specific study dealing with the north-south transportation corridor that would link the city's west end with the Highway 407-401 freeway corridor.

The findings of the study were very supportive of urban boundary expansion. There were no high-level environmental constraints, and there was no impact on agricultural lands. The ultimate transportation/transit network identified was sufficient to serve long-term growth. There was available water and waste water infrastructure through the region of Peel jurisdiction. The impacts on municipal and regional finances were not prohibitive of urban boundary expansion. We've also identified that there were substantial quantities of shale resources found elsewhere in the province, and it was not necessary to provide any long-term protection for shale in northwest Brampton.

Brampton intends to adopt its final official plan amendment with respect to northwest Brampton on June 27 year as a culmination of the studies and many public meetings held over the past five years.

One of the key facts that I think needs to be considered is that Brampton runs out of urban land by the year 2018. According to the Hemson projections that were done as part of the growth plan initiative and as part of our own strategic growth plan program, an additional 100,000 people forecast in Peel region can't be accommodated within that urban boundary. So there is a need for another supply of urban boundary to take us into the future. As I stated earlier, this area has the unique infrastructure, in terms of the new Mount Pleasant GO station, to really make an example of good growth. Northwest Brampton will not be developed on the premise of traditional suburban development models. It will be done based on higher densities and mixed-use working relationships in order to provide a very effective, efficient model for growth. Significant public funds and resources have already gone into this exercise, and I think it deserves to be recognized within the growth plan on that basis.

One other area of comment that we'd like to make on Bill 136 beyond the northwest Brampton issue is that we believe the review period, once the plan is adopted, should be five years, to correspond to mandatory official plan reviews, as currently provided for under the Planning Act of Ontario.

That concludes my comments, Madam Chair.

The Chair: You've left about two minutes for each party, beginning with Ms. Churley.

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Thank you very much for your presentation. It's a good overview of what's happening in your area. What kind of resources do you feel you need to be able to comply with this and all the other acts that are coming before your municipality? I'll give the example of brownfields and the ability to use those fields for development—things like that.

Mr. Corbett: We've got a central, downtown planning priority area that we've designated to accommodate intensification. We also believe that to meet the full range of housing demands, to meet all income levels and housing preference styles, there needs to be an effective balance. Once a municipality has demonstrated that it has provided the opportunities for intensification in abundance, then a logical expansion into greenfields, where you're showing an emphasis on transit-oriented development, is critical.

Ms. Churley: Do you have brownfields that you can develop as well?

Mr. Corbett: Yes, we have a seven-kilometre stretch in the centre of Brampton as one of the priority growth centres designated in the growth plan, and a balance of the Queen Street corridor that extends into the old community of Bramalea. It all has been designated for higher-density, mixed-use development. We have also established what we call the AcceleRide bus rapid transit system to provide key linkages into York region and south into Mississauga to stimulate and support that growth.

The Chair: Mr. Rinaldi?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): Thank you very much for your presentation and for bringing forward some of your concerns. I have a couple of questions. I'm not sure what page it is on in your presentation, but I'll paraphrase and maybe you could explain it. Basically, you're saying that your official plan review has been finalized and has come into effect, and that Bill 136 should not interfere with it. Can you tell us why? Would it create any problems, based on what you see in the bill before us?

Mr. Corbett: I'll use the term, probably inaccurately from a legal perspective, but it's almost in terms of natural justice, in that we proceeded in 2000 to conform to the very rigorous criteria contained in the regional official plan to substantiate urban growth. We took on the due diligence to do that properly in an orderly and responsible fashion and have, basically through a collision of time circumstances, run into the deadlines imposed by the new growth plan. The technical basis for the urban boundary expansion is clear and irrefutable, in our view, and should be allowed to proceed, especially in light of the fact that the numbers prove there is not sufficient land to accommodate growth in Brampton beyond 2018.

Mr. Rinaldi: Just to be clear, the plan would not allow you further boundary expansion. That's your concern?

Mr. Corbett: Our understanding of the growth plan is quite clear in that any further urban boundary expansion would be subject to the sub-area growth strategies, the SAGs, as they're called, and that's going to be done as a separate exercise, with no definite timeline or indication of municipal involvement. That's really key. One of the things we've tried to bring out in our staff report and our presentation is that local council should have a strong say in determining their future, in terms of urban boundary and disposition of land uses. Ergo, we believe that after taking on that process in good faith over the last five years and doing our technical homework, that should be fully respected in the growth plan process.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Corbett. Thank you for your delegation.

1550

GREENBELT COALITION

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Greenbelt Coalition. Welcome, gentlemen. Once you get yourselves settled, please identify yourselves for Hansard. When you begin, you will have 15 minutes. I will begin timing your delegation after you have introduced yourselves. Should you leave time at the end, there will be an opportunity for us to ask questions or make comments on your delegation.

Mr. Ralph Capocci: Good afternoon. My name is Ralph Capocci. I'm the executive director of the Greenbelt Coalition. Joining me this afternoon is Dr. Frank Clayton, president of Clayton Research and the chair of our advisory council. Also joining us is Tom Hilditch, the

principal of Stantec Consulting, who will be here to answer any questions that you have of an environmental nature.

The Greenbelt Coalition is pleased to have this opportunity to express our views on Bill 136, An Act respecting the establishment of growth plan areas and growth plans, to the standing committee on general government.

The Greenbelt Coalition is a group of concerned citizens and organizations who share the belief that there is room for improvement in the government's greenbelt legislation. Although the greenbelt is the coalition's main concern, the Greenbelt Act and the proposed Bill 136 are complementary bills that will significantly impact each other. The Greenbelt Coalition believes that the greenbelt should demonstrate where growth cannot occur, while Places to Grow should demonstrate how and where growth should occur.

There is an ongoing concern that, because of the provincial initiatives, housing prices will increase, making housing unaffordable to many households. Bill 136 has laudable goals yet is fundamentally lacking details of how these goals will be achieved other than through the strong arm of the provincial government overriding the rights of landowners and municipalities.

The Greenbelt Coalition believes that the government has provided the stick without the carrot: No financial resources and tools are enabled under the bill to aid with intensification, smart growth, transportation and infrastructure needs.

The Greenbelt Coalition, along with its members, would like to work with the minister in helping to get the legislation right. Experts in a number of fields are prepared to assist in this important work. We believe that our combined efforts could yield legislation that could be beneficial to future generations of Ontarians, with a balance between economic, social and environmental issues.

The Greenbelt Coalition recommends that, prior to its passage, Bill 136 should be amended as follows:

(1) Amend the bill to provide checks and balances on the unbridled power of the minister and cabinet.

(2) Remove section 15 and subsection 16(1), which hammer individual rights with a steel fist.

(3) Evaluate, state and commit the financial tools that will be available for brownfield redevelopment.

(4) Evaluate, state and commit to the financial and implementation tools that will be available for greyfield redevelopment.

(5) The financial tools for urban intensification must be clearly defined, and stated, to ensure that intensification goals can be met.

(6) The government must provide an economic assessment of the effect that the greenbelt and Places to Grow will have on the cost of housing.

(7) Supply and demand models for both employment lands and new ground-related housing lands should be generated to ensure that there is sufficient land available in the appropriate locations.

(8) All growth plans must take into account a transportation plan, and financing for implementation, to ensure that public transportation will be more of a viable alternative to the private automobile.

(9) Bill 136 must commit to the use of all existing infrastructure within the designated growth area. The government, within Bill 136, must ensure that growth plans contain funding commitments to regions expected to meet growth targets.

The need for a stronger plan:

The Greenbelt Coalition is concerned about the relationship between growth management and the greenbelt. Much like the Greenbelt Act, Bill 136 is filled with promises that, even as they are spoken, are made to be broken.

The Greenbelt Coalition has many concerns regarding the effectiveness of the bill. We are concerned about the lack of financial tools and resources available to aid with future development. We are concerned that there will be inadequate resources and tools available to implement policy initiatives aimed at increasing densities. Local opposition and the high costs associated with intensification make densification, to the extent envisioned, impossible to achieve. We are concerned about future housing prices, and we are concerned about a sufficient supply of future employment lands. Moreover, we are concerned about the interaction and contradictions between the Golden Horseshoe greenbelt and Places to Grow.

Neither this draft legislation, nor the draft plan, provides enough detail as to how stakeholders will meet the goals set out in this plan.

Problems with the current bill:

There's too much power in the hands of too few. Bill 136 invests too much power in the hands of the minister and cabinet. The Greenbelt Coalition submits that this is not appropriate. The bill requires amendments to provide checks and balances against the exercise of such strong powers so that municipalities, stakeholders and private interests can have legitimate impact and be protected from abuse.

Recommendation 1: Amend the bill to provide checks and balances on the unbridled power of the minister and cabinet.

What kind of society do we believe in? Bill 136 sacrifices all individual rights in favour of the growth plan. Section 15 and subsection 16 (1) strip, from individuals affected by the growth plan, all of the rights of appeal, access to the courts, protection of the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, and even the right to make a claim in expropriation. This does not reflect the societal values that Ontarians stand for. An initiative such as Places to Grow, which is intended to be in society's general interests, should not be at the cost of individual rights.

Recommendation 2: Remove section 15 and subsection 16(1), which hammer individual rights with a steel fist.

At this point, I'd like to turn it to our chair, Dr. Frank Clayton.

Dr. Frank Clayton: How much do we have left?

The Chair: Eight minutes.

Dr. Clayton: I would just like to make a couple of comments. I'm an economist. I've lived in Toronto since 1971 and have practised urban and real estate economics since that time.

I'm quite convinced that the combined effect of the greenbelt legislation and some other things and Places To Grow will be an escalation in house prices and in industrial land prices, and I'll be glad to elaborate on why I believe that is the case.

I would like to draw attention to what I regard as a fairly significant flaw in the methodology for the projections that underlie the Places To Grow Act. The act, or the background paper, relies on the compact scenario of growth projected by Hemson. Hemson projected something called current trends—if you don't do anything, here's what the world is going to look like—and then they have a compact scenario. The difference between the two scenarios is essentially 76,000 fewer single detached housing units. That's the big difference: 76,000 fewer single detached housing units. The scenario says that all these people are going to live in apartments, not single detached houses. It also says that there are two separate housing markets in the region. One is the GTA and Hamilton, and the other is the outer ring, and they will never meet. So these projections say that if you take 76,000 single detached housing units out of the demand—there's only one way you can do it: have less land and increase prices—none of that growth will occur in the outer ring, will occur outside the greenbelt.

Well, that is faulty, in my humble opinion. A lot of that growth—people will want single detached houses; they will just go farther afield, like they did in the 1980s, to get it.

I would like you to take a close look at it. There are not two separate housing markets out there. There's not a GTA-Hamilton housing market and an outer ring housing market. They are all part of the same housing market, and you've got to recognize that doing something here is going to influence what goes on out there. What it really means is that there's going to be more growth in the outer ring than the projections indicate.

With that, we'll open it for questions.

1600

The Chair: You've left just over two minutes for each party, beginning with the government side.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much for your presentation today. I wonder if you could elaborate somewhat for me. An objective of the proposed legislation is to make efficient use of infrastructure. In your opinion, what criteria should the province use to make infrastructure investment to support this type of growth? That's the intent of the bill.

Dr. Clayton: Sorry. What was the second part? I missed it.

Mr. Rinaldi: I'm really asking for your opinion, because you keep on saying that what we have here doesn't fit the picture. I'm asking your opinion. To go forward on

intensification and create sustainable infrastructure investment, what criteria should the province use to achieve its goals?

Dr. Clayton: The criteria, of course, is efficient use of infrastructure to keep your costs as low as possible and get as many economic benefits as possible from your infrastructure. What you have to realize is that, with the exception of transit and some of the expressways, most of the infrastructure is already in place. We need to expand in places like south Simcoe and so on, but basically you want to keep growth in areas contiguous to where other growth is. This is what we're talking about: sprawl, if you allow some area way, way out to grow. You want to keep it contiguous and you want to build on what you already have. For example, if Durham region has infrastructure on the west side of Durham region, make effective use of that infrastructure.

Mr. Rinaldi: Do I have more time, Madam Chair?

The Chair: You have 40 seconds.

Mr. Rinaldi: Then I'm really confused, because I believe that's what the legislation is trying to provide: a guide to achieve what you just said. What am I missing here?

Dr. Clayton: The legislation is trying to tamper with the kind of housing market that people want. They're saying that 76,000 households will not be allowed to have a single detached house. That's what the legislation is saying: "We're going to stick you in apartments in brownfields and intensification and in greyfields, and you're going to like it." But the world doesn't operate that way. The world operates just like in the 1980s: People jumped to Barrie, went to St. Catharines and went to Darlington to get single detached houses, and they'll do the same thing this time. The ideas are great—yes, do it—but they're missing the effects of what's going to happen when they do what they're trying to do with all this intensification. The world needs a lot more greenfield lands than are being considered in this plan.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): Thanks, gentlemen from the Greenbelt Coalition, for the presentation. I sometimes feel like a heretic on this committee. I think a fundamental policy we should support is encouraging home ownership, that people would have their own private property. I think this is a good economic policy. I also think that we have hundreds of years of culture where people like to have a bit of space. The assumptions that Mr. Clayton mentioned may be fallacious, in that I don't think everybody is going to want to move into apartments. People are still going to want to have a home and a yard and a garden, and you'll see that growth on the outer fringes, unless you stop them from doing that by making them poor, making them wait longer for transportation and that sort of thing. Have you quantified the impacts of this legislation without some planning for outer-ring growth?

Dr. Clayton: Some work I did previously suggests, to my mind, that prices will rise about 3% more than what they otherwise would as the supply of land gets dried up. So over a period of about 10 years, you'll have house

prices, in real terms, probably about a third more than they otherwise would be. If you're going to take people out of single detached houses, there's only one way to do it: increase prices and you force them out and into something else, into apartments, or you force them farther out. But you're right. The demographics are right in those age groups where people want home ownership. Not everybody wants low-density, single detached houses, but a lot more than want apartments. There's no question about it.

Mr. Hudak: In terms of investments in transportation infrastructure, transit is important, but highways will also be important. Have you looked into advice to the government as to which of those types of projects or where that balance should be made most appropriately?

Dr. Clayton: You need both, but where we have a shortfall over the last 20 years is on transit. Our transit system has been starved, no question, but don't stop roads and expressways because you're going to have more emphasis on transit. Toronto is growing. The projections show 45,000 housing units a year in the Toronto area, 50,000 jobs per year. We've got to have land for the jobs. We've got to have land for the low-density housing to accommodate. You need both types of transit, not one or the other. You need both, but a greater priority on transit right now because we've starved the system.

Mr. Hudak: Any particular types of transit?

The Chair: You have about five seconds to answer that one.

Dr. Clayton: OK. I personally am a great believer in extending the subway as a spine of the system outside the city of Toronto.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Churley?

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much for your presentation. Of course, people don't want their kids to continue choking on bad air and smog as well. That's another reality, as is sitting for hours in their cars trying to get to work.

But one of the problems, I think, with your financial analysis is not looking at the externalities of the cost of sprawl. Sprawl is only affordable because of taxpayer subsidies. During the greenbelt hearings, we heard from experts, including some developers, who put the premium paid for sprawl by municipalities at between 12% and 30%. In other words, existing taxpayers are underwriting some of the costs of sprawl once you figure in all of those externalities I'm talking about: the services, the infrastructure and stuff. I think your analysis here is really flawed if you don't take that into account.

Dr. Clayton: My analyses take that into account. With the Development Charges Act that we have in this province, growth pays its own way.

Ms. Churley: But this is on top of the development charges.

Dr. Clayton: There's only one place that growth is not paying its own way today, and that's in transit, because the Development Charges Act is based on a historical service level, and transit is not in that historical service level. That's the only place. Any place else—you

know, do a study. You just had Brampton here today. Brampton has done studies that show that residential growth and industrial growth of the type that Brampton is getting more than pays its own way. Their own studies by the Hemson consulting group show that. So growth does more than pay its own way. One place it doesn't is transit right now, and that's where the province should be putting its money.

Ms. Churley: There are other studies that show what you're saying just isn't correct. I think it's something that we have to put on the table. Perhaps you can provide more information, but I can also provide the studies that show the tremendous subsidization of sprawl. Think about it. The kind of extraordinary services that have to be put in to allow for that kind of sprawl are covered by taxpayers on top of the development charges.

Dr. Clayton: Sorry. It is basically covered through the Development Charges Act. I'll be glad to—

The Chair: You're going to have to agree to disagree, I think, at this point.

Dr. Clayton: I'll be glad to give you the reference to the Hemson study in Brampton, which shows—

Ms. Churley: OK. I can provide you with some of the references I have as well.

Dr. Clayton: Neptis, I know. I've read their studies. I'm familiar with them.

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

Our next delegation, I believe, is not here. The Toronto Environmental Alliance cancelled today. Cecil Bovaird also cancelled today. He's not here.

CITY OF HAMILTON

The Chair: Would the city of Hamilton be here?

Mr. Larry Di Ianni: The city of Hamilton is here.

The Chair: Wonderful. Thank you very much. We appreciate you appearing earlier on our agenda than you may have planned for. Welcome. Please identify yourself and the group that you speak for. When you do begin, you'll have 15 minutes. Should you leave time at the end, we'll be able to ask questions or make comments on your delegation.

Mr. Di Ianni: Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Larry Di Ianni. I'm the mayor of the city of Hamilton. With me is Steve Robichaud, who's the manager of our growth-related process. I'll explain that in a little more detail with my presentation. Thank you for allowing us to make the presentation. I was really interested in the comments that Frank Clayton had to make and I'll perhaps touch on some of those as well this afternoon.

Bill 136 complements what we have been doing in Hamilton since amalgamation in 2001. In my presentation today, I'd like to cover how Hamilton has been planning for unprecedented growth as per provincial projections and how Bill 136 complements this growth, and I would like to provide input that we in Hamilton feel will improve this legislation.

First of all, the city recognized the importance of an integrated planning process that brings together land use planning, infrastructure planning, economic development and social development in a comprehensive fashion. Bill 136 also recognizes the importance of an integrated and comprehensive planning process.

1610

Your work thus far complements what we have already been doing in Hamilton with our growth-related integrated development strategy—what we call GRIDS—of which Steve is the manager. GRIDS will identify a growth strategy based on the principles of community well-being, economic well-being and ecological well-being, much the same way that Bill 136 does.

My comments today are on Bill 136 and not the plan; we have sent comments separately for that. What I'd like to do is focus on the three themes of community, ecological and economic well-being as they relate to building stronger communities specifically for my city in Hamilton.

In Hamilton, we're already seeing extraordinary residential growth. In fact, in 2004, housing starts were up 46% over 2003. This housing boom is not restricted just to new neighbourhoods, although overwhelmingly so, but in fact our downtown core is undergoing a bit of a transformation where currently we have over 1,000 condo units under construction as we speak.

It's also critical that Hamilton has been selected as an urban growth centre. We prefer the "priority centre" that the previous draft plan had, but we'll take the "urban growth centre" designation. The legislation focuses on downtowns, and these downtowns share some characteristics, which are these: They are major employment centres; they have transit or the potential to offer transit; they have a diverse mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses; and they have easy transportation access to our borders and our trade corridors.

Centres like downtown Hamilton are ready and able to accommodate much of this growth. We are home to a number of businesses and working to attract new ones. We have GO Transit and our own transit system, the Hamilton Street Railway. We offer a diverse mix of commercial and residential, as I said, and Hamilton is in a great location, at the head of the lake, to access border and trade corridors; in fact, multi-modally, by road, rail, air and water.

What Bill 136 is trying to achieve is that same community well-being that the cornerstone of our GRIDS process is all about.

The city of Hamilton has been recognized for its innovative approaches to encouraging intensification. Building on what we have already done, our challenge now is to work with the government to achieve the intensification targets in the Places to Grow plan. I'll concede that they do offer us some challenges.

For example, I've also asked our local home builders' association to come up with a plan on how that can be accomplished, how we can add more to the intensification while having some balance in the greenfields areas

as well. I've been told by the association that this will be difficult and there may be need for future discussions to remove barriers to intensification.

Bill 136 is also about directing growth to provide for a clean and healthy environment, and we appreciate that. Ecological well-being is more than just protecting a woodlot. Managing growth to urban growth centres helps to protect important natural areas, and we believe in that as well. But we must also think about the way we interact with this environment.

Livable, walkable communities have a public health benefit. Taking public transit is good for the air. Having jobs near where we live is good for the air. Reducing commuting times also reduces highway congestion and improves air quality. I'd agree with the previous speaker that investment in transit by this government is what is needed. By caring for our community and ecological well-being, we build stronger foundations for the economic well-being of our communities. All three areas indeed are interrelated.

This bill promotes compact development to make better use of our infrastructure and prevent pressures on our green spaces as much as possible. This is good for a city like Hamilton, with an established urban core that needs to be revitalized.

It also identifies specific measures that we should be focusing on, such as making it easier to restore abandoned brownfields by providing better access to financing tools and eliminating barriers to redevelopment. In Hamilton, we have been working toward redeveloping existing brownfield sites to create new employment and residential opportunities within the city. We need the government's help to continue doing that.

We have some real successes already. For example, McMaster University just purchased a former industrial site called Camco, which was essentially a factory. The plans are to build a new research park there, and that's attracting tremendous interest on everybody's part. We need to do more of this. That is why this legislation is so important to Hamilton.

We will need an increase in provincial funding to promote further brownfield development, be it loans, loan guarantees or grants. Therefore, the legislation that permits this is good legislation, and given opportunities, such as providing input to this committee today, Bill 136 can be fine-tuned to meet the needs of communities across Ontario such as mine.

For example, Hamilton has a unique situation that I want to bring to the committee's attention, with our airport lands, which require flexibility. That flexibility currently is not in the legislation, and that is why I'm asking the government to pay attention to this message. What do I mean by flexibility? Well, both the city of Hamilton and the province of Ontario have identified the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport as an economic development priority. The Places to Grow discussion paper identified this airport as Hamilton's top economic priority, while stating that growth should "take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the airport."

The Hamilton Airport Gateway Opportunities Study stated that "a strong industrial base in the vicinity of the airport will support and solidify its function as an important part of southern Ontario's transportation infrastructure." The provincial draft terms of reference for the Niagara-GTA corridor also state that this airport is "a future economic growth centre and major development area in the region."

In order for us to realize what everybody believes, that is, the full economic development potential of the employment lands—and I emphasize the employment lands—surrounding the Hamilton airport, it will be necessary to expand the urban boundary for employment purposes. That is where this legislation needs to be reviewed to allow us to further align the legislation with our GRIDS process.

To be clear, and I want to make this clear, this is a timing issue. It is critical that this issue be addressed. As you know, there is a proposal out there to build an airport in Pickering, spending billions of dollars to build an airport that isn't in existence right now, on greenfields land in Pickering. The facts, though, are that Hamilton is experiencing population growth and that growth is heading west, Hamilton has an international airport already in place, and the growth of this airport will serve as a catalyst to create significant employment growth. There is no reason, therefore, to be looking at Pickering as a site for a new airport, with billions of dollars attached to that, billions of dollars that could go to other needed services, when everything points to Hamilton as the best place for any level of government to invest.

Bill 136 must provide us the flexibility to allow the city to implement its vision for the airport. Our recommendation is that the minister must have the authority, in special circumstances, to exempt certain areas, like Hamilton airport, from the restrictions on urban boundary expansions, while the Places to Grow initiative continues.

This makes sense not only for the airport and the city of Hamilton but for the province of Ontario.

I focus my message to you on the airport lands that are now caught within the restrictions. In closing, I want to say that Bill 136 is important to the city of Hamilton, not only to help us deal with our future population growth but also to allow us to create employment opportunities that will make Hamilton a stronger, healthier and more vibrant community. This balance, combined with the needed financial assistance, is key to our future success.

Again, Madam Chair, I thank you and the committee for the opportunity to present, and I will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair: You've left about a minute and a half for each party, beginning with Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Your Worship, for being here. It's good seeing you.

Mr. Di Ianni: It's nice seeing you too.

Mr. Hudak: I wanted to pursue the John C. Munro Hamilton airport issue. You say specifically that the legislation should be changed to allow the minister to grant restrictions from urban boundary expansions. Are those

restrictions that you mean with respect to the 40% intensification, or the greenbelt restrictions? What do you mean?

Mr. Di Ianni: Right now, the lands around the airport—and everybody acknowledges that this is an important employment node—are not developable; they're designated agricultural. They're being treated, in other words, the same as residential lands. Before we can get to them, we need to improve our residential intensification within the urban boundary. I'm saying it doesn't make sense for us to designate an airport that's so critical for employment, to restrict those lands from being developed in the way that all of us want to develop them.

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The Chair: I'm going to give you more time, since Ms. Churley isn't here. You're going to have the whole two minutes; you've got a minute.

Ms. Churley: Go ahead.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you; I'll owe you.

If you're giving advice to us as a committee in terms of the most important infrastructure to help advance the GRIDS plan that you speak about in Hamilton, what type of infrastructure investments would do most to help you achieve the growth targets, the intensification targets?

Mr. Di Ianni: What the city of Hamilton needs is employment, and anything that would allow us to service our airport lands would really be appreciated. Anything that could be done for our brownfield properties—we have lots of them—to allow us to redevelop and do some of the intensification that makes sense for my community would also be very helpful. Also, transit, as the previous speaker said, is another area for us to look at.

Mr. Hudak: Are you satisfied with the level of GO Transit currently into Hamilton? What enhancements would you like to see?

Mr. Di Ianni: No, not nearly satisfied. I know some of the issues around GO Transit, and we're trying to deal with them, but we need better and more regular service into Hamilton by GO.

Mr. Hudak: What about the links coming from the east, from the Niagara Peninsula, for example, or some of the more rural parts of the current city of Hamilton? How is the transit support in that direction?

Mr. Di Ianni: We are also very keenly looking at the transportation corridor up on the escarpment and want that to move forward. I'm meeting with all the mayors from your municipalities and we want to see that process move forward as well. That is also absolutely critical to us.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you, Your Worship, for your great presentation. First of all, let me congratulate you and your city for being leaders in the redevelopment of brownfields. I had the opportunity to be briefed a little bit, and you're certainly a leader. On that same thought, though, the city of Hamilton has done that sort of in a hodgepodge, on their own, with whatever tools were available. You indicated that this type of legislation will help you achieve those goals. Can you elaborate and be a

little more specific about what this will enable you to do more easily than before?

Mr. Di Ianni: First of all, the legislation is good for a city like mine. We're at about 18% of intensification within the urban boundary, with the downtown areas, and we need to bring that up to a more acceptable level. You're suggesting 40%. It's going to take us some time to get to that 40%, but it's good for us to redevelop our downtown. One of the major factors stopping us right now is essentially not having sufficient money to deal with some of our brownfield lands, abandoned sites that need major assistance for private investment to come in. Anything that could be done, along with a plan in terms of the financing, to assist us in doing that would just be a tremendous boost to a city like ours.

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

RESCUE LAKE SIMCOE COALITION

The Chair: Our next delegation is the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition. Please have a seat. Mr. Crooks, could you identify yourself and the organization you speak for for Hansard? They take a record. When you begin speaking, you'll have 15 minutes. Should you leave time at the end, there will be an opportunity for us to ask questions of your delegation.

Mr. Tim Crooks: My name is Tim Crooks. I'm speaking on behalf of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition. I'm going to read a letter prepared by the chair of our organization, Mr. Robert Eisenberg.

"I am chair of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition and a director of Ontario Nature. Ontario Nature," formerly the FON, "partners with conservation groups all over the province and has about 25,000 members. The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition is an umbrella group of 13 rate-payer groups in the Lake Simcoe watershed.

"I can say without fear of contradiction that we all applaud the recent greenbelt legislation.

"If this government's goal is to protect southern Ontario's finest environmental and agricultural features, however, including Lake Simcoe itself, it must expand the proposed greenbelt to include south Simcoe and the Lake Simcoe watershed.

"Support for the greenbelt:

"Bill 136 is vital to the survival of Lake Simcoe. It is hard to grasp that the huge lake that has given us so much pleasure and is the underpinning of the recreational industry responsible for 40% of the local economy is deteriorating, notwithstanding the efforts of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, farmers and ordinary citizens. Weeds clog beaches and marinas, beach closings are increasing, the cold water fishery is no longer self-sustaining, and water quality is threatened.

"Lake Simcoe is the largest inland lake solely within Ontario. It is as valuable a natural resource as the Niagara Escarpment or the Oak Ridges moraine.

"The Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy, a study group under the auspices of the Lake

Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, has identified excess phosphorus input as the main cause of the lake's deterioration. And just as carbon dioxide is a surrogate for all the other forms of contributors to 'sick building syndrome,' phosphorus is a surrogate for most of the other pollutants that threaten the lake. LSEMS, Ontario Nature and Environmental Defence have all identified uncontrolled, poorly planned growth as the chief culprit in the increase in phosphorus input in Lake Simcoe in recent years.

"Numbers presented by LSEMS indicate that, notwithstanding the reduction in phosphorus loading from farmers and notwithstanding all the efforts by the authority and by ordinary citizens, phosphorus input into the lake has not decreased" over the last 30 years. "The problem is that non-point loading, runoff from newly urbanized land, has doubled. Population growth outside settlement areas has simply overwhelmed all other efforts to stop the lake's deterioration. We have all awakened to the alarming facts that not all growth is desirable or sustainable. Maximum growth anywhere any way is no longer optimum growth.

"That's why we need your help.

"Individuals can only do so much. People are willing to build their docks according to regulations designed to protect fish habitats, to refrain from adding sand or even rocks along their shorelines, and from building lakefront embankments to enhance their properties.

"And throughout the watershed, Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition's WAVE: Healthy Yards/Healthy Waters project has caught fire: People are avoiding phosphorus-based fertilizers and planting perennials instead of grass."

Ten communities around the lake have asked the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition to go into the community and teach people to look after their lawns and gardens without adding additional phosphorous to the lake.

"But it is hard to ask people to respect the regulations" protecting the littoral of Lake Simcoe when "new developments are gouging out canals, building new marinas, and making wholesale changes to shorelines. This used to make sense. The lake seemed a vast, invulnerable resource. It doesn't seem that way any more.

"That's why we must support the greenbelt legislation. That's why school children are writing letters asking us to save the lake. That's why the WAVE is so popular. We are experiencing a groundswell of support, but we need your help. We will not succeed in saving the lake without the protected countryside designation of the greenbelt legislation.

"Simcoe county:

"The value to Lake Simcoe of the greenbelt legislation is jeopardized by the failure to include Simcoe county. Excluding Simcoe county encourages developers to leapfrog York and Durham. Development pressures from Toronto on the Lake Simcoe shoreline are monumental" and growing all the time.

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"Projects on the drawing board outside recognized growth areas in Simcoe county threaten the health of the

lake and the Lake Simcoe way of life. There are several ways in which you can help to save the lake from poorly planned growth:

"Expand the greenbelt to include Simcoe county....

"The provincial watershed study includes an investigation into the carrying capacity of Lake Simcoe to withstand further development outside of settlement areas. Until the lake's carrying capacity study is completed," we're asking you to "restrict growth to existing settlement areas."

Right now I have a cottage in Shanty Bay, which is a settlement area, and there's a proposed development that is nearby but outside the settlement area. Any growth should be in existing settlement areas.

"Implement the proposed change to Bill 26 that requires that OMB and other land use decisions be consistent with Ontario's provincial policy statement.

"Growth does not mean sprawl:

"Before becoming involved with Ontario Nature and the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, I worked on the city of Toronto's Main Street Housing Initiative and was privileged to be on the mayor's task force that produced the King-Spadina, King-Parliament initiatives.

"...I have learned about the deleterious effects of poorly planned growth" from my involvement with other conservation groups. "From the committees I learned that a huge portion of Ontario's planned population growth can be accommodated in the city and that very palatable zoning changes can have huge beneficial impacts on the lives of Torontonians. Seemingly minor changes to land uses in these formerly dilapidated neighbourhoods unleashed an incredible building and revitalization effort that goes on to this day.

"Southern Ontario is losing between 40 and 60 acres of prime farmland, woodlots and wetlands a day due to poorly planned growth. It is obvious to everybody except some in the development industry and some who hoped to sell to the development industry that this cannot go on.

"Other jurisdictions have understood this. In California, a state with a population the size of Canada's, one can drive for miles in Marin and Sonoma counties without seeing a subdivision; building takes place within town limits. Outside of Nice, France, you would be just laughed at if you applied to rezone a farm. A farm is a farm. New York City is committed to spending US\$1 billion to protect its water and undeveloped lands.

"And the argument that we need the subdivisions to offer affordable housing just doesn't wash. In the first place, subdivision housing is" often "not affordable housing, it is subsidized housing. Ask the people in Milton, who were told that the new developments would pay for themselves and who are now faced with increased tax bills for the next 10 years. The cost of roads, schools, and services always exceed the development charges and new taxes. Or ask the people in towns whose Main Streets are threatened by the malls that service the new subdivisions."

Just to summarize the next paragraph, because I'm running out of time, "We have enough land in brown-

fields, along main streets and along hydro rights-of-way to accommodate growth for the next 30 years....”

“Conclusion:

“We may be the first generation that will be remembered less for what we have built than for what we have preserved.

“We will be remembered less for the quantity of new houses and shopping plazas that we build on the outskirts of our towns and villages than for the quality of life we have brought to our main streets and neighbourhoods.

“And you will be remembered by those of us who live in the Lake Simcoe watershed for what you did to save the lake and the Lake Simcoe way of life.

“There is evidence that Lake Simcoe is reaching a tipping point. Increased water clarity due to zebra mussels, fish restocking, and band-aid solutions such as weed removal have combined to disguise the gravity of the situation. Property taxes are being appealed, and tourists are afraid to swim in the water.

“That is why Mayor Grossi of Georgina convened a meeting of mayors from the watershed and provincial representatives to discuss the problem and to seek solutions.” That meeting occurred last fall. “That is why the membership of the many organizations under the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition supports the greenbelt legislation and asks for your help with Simcoe county.

“The government is showing enlightened, pragmatic leadership. The greenbelt legislation reflects Ontario Nature’s greenway strategy and Environmental Defence’s NOAH plan and years of research and input from the province’s most knowledgeable and sophisticated land use and habitat experts.

“Implementation of the greenbelt, combined with programs that create farm trusts or allow farmers to swap tax benefits and development rights, Main Street housing programs, and attention to Simcoe county are all practical, achievable measures that would ensure that the legacy of this government would be to conserve for our children and grandchildren an environmental and civic landscape unsurpassed anywhere.

“Sometimes it takes outsiders to tell us what we already know. When friends visit from other parts of the world, you will not be surprised that I do not take them to Richmond Hill or even Newmarket, nice communities though they may be. I take them to Lake Simcoe. They are blown away by the birds, the fishing, wildlife, swimming, boating—things we take for granted,” but we must take measures to ensure that these things are going to continue for generations.

“I hope my grandchildren and yours can play by the shore on unspoiled beaches, catch crayfish in the rocks, and swim in unpolluted water. You can make that happen.

“That’s something to be remembered for.

“Respectfully submitted by the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition,

“Robert Eisenberg, Chair.”

The Chair: Mr. Crooks, you’ve left one minute for each party, beginning with Ms. Churley.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much, Mr. Crooks. I guess with a name like that, especially these days, you’re never going to run politically, are you?

There’s not really much time to ask a question, but I appreciate your coming forward. I know your group tried very, very hard to get Lake Simcoe and your area included in the greenbelt. You know I put forward an amendment and made all the arguments about leapfrog development, but to no avail. I appreciate that you haven’t given up. I haven’t given up. You made the case again today that the greenbelt is laudable but will not stop urban sprawl, and it will continue to degrade the lake. That’s why you’re here today, for the government to hear that for the greenbelt to do what they say they want it to do, the Simcoe area has to be included. Anything you want to add to that?

Mr. Crooks: No. You’ve summarized it beautifully.

Ms. Churley: I know there’s not time now, but you reiterated what I said earlier to a previous group, and you gave some illustrations of communities where taxpayers paid more to cover the costs of new subdivisions.

Mr. Crooks: I’ve heard all my life that subdivision development charges don’t cover the full cost of all the services.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you, Mr. Crooks, for your presentation. Obviously, you’re here today to express your concern about Lake Simcoe. It was a well-put-together presentation. Can you maybe give some advice to the government on some of the priorities we should strike at first to help Lake Simcoe?

Mr. Crooks: First of all, any new development should be put into the existing settlement areas that have already been identified in Simcoe county and Oro-Medonte. I refer to the UCCI development, which is planned between the 4th and 5th line of Oro-Medonte. That is right in the middle of a forest. It shouldn’t be put there. It can be put in many other existing communities that are called settlement areas, and the settlement areas can accommodate any size of planned development in Oro-Medonte.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Thank you very much, Mr. Crooks, for joining us today. You spoke in your presentation about the farms, and you compared the farms outside of Nice, France. Of course, the French farmer lives in a different world than the Ontario farmer with regard to income support. Is your group saying that this government, with the implementation of the greenbelt legislation, has failed to address the needs of farmers with regard to farm support here in Ontario?

Mr. Crooks: I don’t think I said it has failed; I think we’ve said it should address the needs of farmers.

Mr. Yakabuski: But the fact that it doesn’t would constitute a failure, I would say. Would you not agree?

The Chair: I think you’re leading the witness, Mr. Yakabuski.

Thank you, Mr. Crooks. We appreciate your being here.

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CITY OF BARRIE

The Chair: Our next delegation is the city of Barrie; Mayor Hamilton. Welcome, Your Worship. If you're the only speaker, you just need to identify yourself and the group you're speaking for. If anybody else is speaking, please let us know who they are before we begin, for Hansard. You'll have 15 minutes. Should you use all the time, we won't be able to ask you questions or make comments on your delegation. Once you begin, you'll have 15 minutes.

Mr. Rob Hamilton: Thank you. I'm Rob Hamilton, and I'm the mayor of the city of Barrie. I have with me the chief administrative officer, Peter Lee, on my left, and next to Peter is Craig Hebert, our manager of strategic services. I will be the only speaker unless I hand off questions to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here before you today regarding Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act.

The city of Barrie has been watching with great interest this government's actions and initiatives in areas that directly affect Ontario municipalities. The allocation of provincial gas tax funding to promote public transit at the municipal level is a welcome and much-needed step toward sustainable and predictable funding for municipalities and one that we look forward to building upon.

Another significant initiative of this government, one that is of particular interest to Barrie, is Places to Grow. We have been closely following Places to Grow, including the 2004 discussion paper, the draft growth plan, and Bill 136, the proposed legislation.

As you are well aware, the growth that has been experienced in southern Ontario, and the greater Golden Horseshoe in particular, has been substantial and is projected to continue at an aggressive rate well into the future. Barrie has experienced at first hand the challenges this high growth rate brings to local municipalities, and while we believe we have managed this growth fairly well in the past, the challenges of the future appear more daunting. We commend the province for taking a leadership role in growth management planning and the assistance and direction that will be provided in this regard.

The issues facing the city of Barrie in terms of future growth are significant. Barrie has historically been the regional centre of Simcoe county, and all indications are that this will continue. Since 1954, Barrie has needed to expand its boundaries nine times in response to the ever-increasing demand for residential and employment lands. More than half the population and employment growth in the county between 1991 and 2001 occurred in Barrie, and the forecasts prepared by Hemson indicate that this will continue to at least 2026. The city's role will become even more significant as key health and education services are centralized and expanded, including health care facilities at Royal Victoria Hospital and university-level education programs at Georgian College.

The city's population has increased by 50% in the last 10 years, and while this sustained growth has contributed significantly to the health of the local and regional economies, the city is quickly approaching a build-out situation in terms of land supply. We have virtually no parcels of land left within the city for which a draft plan of subdivision has not been approved.

Barrie is not the only jurisdiction facing these problems. We recognize that we are just one of 25 designated urban growth centres in the greater Golden Horseshoe. I would hope that all these municipalities are welcoming Bill 136 as a very timely piece of legislation. We have thoroughly reviewed Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act, and related documents, and can offer what we trust will be useful and constructive comments.

We fully support the basic intent of this legislation. An integrated and coordinated approach to growth management by all levels of government, particularly municipal governments sharing common issues and common pressures, will optimize environmental protection and public investment in infrastructure.

This high-level, provincially driven plan is welcomed by the city of Barrie, and although we are confident that we have been fairly successful in planning for and accommodating growth within the city, our efforts to coordinate growth management planning on a regional basis have not been as successful. Local solutions were previously the flavour of the day, and Barrie put forth significant efforts to coordinate a regional solution to growth management and even prepared a study for the Simcoe area in 2003. However, there has not been enthusiasm beyond Barrie for such a coordinated approach. Through Bill 136, we are pleased that the province is now stepping up to the plate in this regard.

We are encouraged to see that expansions or amendments to urban boundaries are contemplated by the plan. This is not just a local issue, but a provincial one, and we are pleased that the province has recognized this and is willing to address it. Constrained boundaries, such as we are currently experiencing, have implications not just on land use planning but also on economic development, transportation, and service delivery. Fringe development pressures are mounting immediately adjacent to our boundaries due to the availability of urban services within Barrie. We are service-rich and land-poor. However, the extension of infrastructure services alone does not solve the problem. Expansions to urban boundaries and service areas must also consider the expansion of municipal boundaries to ensure that consistent and appropriate jurisdictional, financial and operational responsibilities are maintained.

As a result of significant growth and constrained boundaries, pressures are increasing to redesignate industrial employment lands for other uses, including commercial and residential uses. Barrie has been resisting these pressures, with varying degrees of success, and we are very encouraged that the draft growth plan and the provincial policy statement will assist us by setting out clear direction in this area.

Transportation is a key issue that can make or break a community's ability to grow and prosper. Bill 136 appropriately addresses this, and the draft growth plan contemplates the effective integration of different transportation modes for the movement of people and goods, including transit, highway, rail, air and water. In Barrie we have all of these. We have a well-established transit system that is integrated with GO Transit bus service. We will soon be getting GO train service, and this is noted in the draft growth plan. We are also served by Highway 400, which is regularly congested by commuter and holiday traffic. These transportation systems are all functioning successfully and are financially supported by the province.

A lesser-known fact is that we also own our own railway and our own airport, both of which are key transportation facilities for regional industrial growth and both of which are financially challenged. The Barrie-Collingwood Railway is a joint venture between the city of Barrie and the town of Collingwood, and provides short-line freight rail service to industries in our communities. The Lake Simcoe Regional Airport is a joint venture between the cities of Barrie and Orillia and the township of Oro-Medonte and provides us with passenger and freight charter services to an international market. Both of these modes of transportation are vital to the economic growth of our region and will require significant capital investment to keep pace with the anticipated growth of our area. Both of these facilities are currently funded solely by the property taxpayers in our respective municipalities and are therefore constrained in their ability to grow in any significant way.

For the reasons I have mentioned, we welcome Bill 136 and the Places to Grow initiative and are glad to see that Barrie has been recognized as an urban growth centre. But what does it mean for growing municipalities in Ontario like Barrie?

Growing areas will require additional tools to deal with growth that is being experienced and will continue well into the future. Implementation tools discussed in the draft growth plan include Planning Act reform, provincial policy statement revisions and private investment in infrastructure. But we need more than that. We need:

—sustainable and predictable new sources of revenue that property taxes alone cannot provide. The additional wealth generated by growth needs to be shared with the municipalities that are providing critical front-line services. The New Deal for Cities that I and other mayors are working hard toward is starting to bear fruit, and we hope this will continue.

—revisions to the Development Charges Act so that development can contribute to improved standards and additional services not currently permitted, for example, health, solid waste management, and social, cultural and municipal administrative facilities. The 10-year average level-of-service calculation currently used is problematic for growing municipalities that need to increase service levels in response to growth. The statutory 10% discounting should also be removed so that growth can begin to

start paying for itself instead of increasing the burden on existing taxpayers, as is currently the case.

—changes to the environmental assessment process so that transportation and utility corridors that are developed and shown in official plans and sub-area growth plans are not subject to phases 1 and 2 of the class environmental assessment process. This process can significantly hinder a municipality's ability to move forward on much-needed and time-critical infrastructure projects. We have a number of local examples where infrastructure projects that have been contemplated and planned for over a number of years are stalled or delayed while we await a decision on a part 2 order, while in the meantime growth marches on.

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These are some of the additional tools that the province should consider as part of its overall growth management initiative.

Section 12 of the Places to Grow Act deals with official plan conformity. It requires that municipal official plans must conform to the provincial growth plan. While it is assumed that this conformance will be more closely related to the goals and policies of the sub-area growth strategies, this requirement has the potential to take planning out of the hands of local government. We anticipate that the provincial growth plan and sub-area growth strategies will provide fairly high-level direction, in similar fashion to the provincial policy statement, for example, so that local planning matters and municipal official plans will continue to reflect local needs and objectives.

In summary, Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act, is a welcome and timely initiative. It is a coordinated and comprehensive approach to growth management and planning that will focus our attention through the windshield rather than the rear-view mirror.

Dealing with growth issues requires some tough political decisions, decisions that are required for the betterment of the entire province, and I believe the time is now for this to occur. Barrie's problems are acute. However, we are not alone in requiring the benefits that this proposed legislation will bring so that 30 years from now we can all look back and recognize that things work and that the right decisions were made today.

Barrie is poised to grow, and with the provincial leadership and assistance that Bill 136 will provide, we look forward to being able to make "Better Choices for a Brighter Future." Thank you.

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

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much, Your Worship. I know that staff at PIR have looked at preparing the next wave. Your downtown renewal strategy is a model, and I congratulate you folks for taking that initiative. We all need to learn from that.

This is basically a statement. As you know, the province is partnering with Barrie and other Simcoe municipalities to do an assessment of Lake Simcoe's infrastructure capacity, also known as the Simcoe inter-

governmental action plan. We look forward to those results. We thank you folks for taking the leadership on that part, because I believe this is going down the same road that the legislation is. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Hudak?

Mr. Hudak: Thank you, Your Worship, and members of the Barrie administration, for being here.

I'll ask two quick questions, Chair, and give the mayor some time to respond.

You talked about the importance of changing the environmental assessment to streamline transit corridors—actually, you said “transportation,” so I take it you mean highways and utility corridors as well. How would you respond to the criticism that it could cause some environmental problems if you take it out of the EA phases 1 and 2?

Second, you talked about municipal boundaries. Are you talking about restructuring Simcoe county, expanding beyond the current municipal boundaries?

Mr. Hamilton: We realize that we must be environmentally friendly. However, surely there is a time limit placed on things. Everybody is busy. I guess it's what gets moved to the top of the pile or does not, but we're waiting for over a year, two years, for the assessments to come through on the projects we have on the books that are capitalized and that we need.

BMO is building an office in Barrie, a data centre. We hope they will employ 400 people to begin with, 600 in the not-too-distant future—a 200,000- to 300,000-square-foot building. The corridor we need for an arterial road and to run the hydro service to them is held up in an EA that we've been waiting on for well over a year. That's one example. We have others. We call the Ministry of the Environment on a regular basis, and really, there's not a whole lot of satisfaction about whether there's any light at the end of the tunnel. It's a little bit frustrating at our end. However, I'm not in your chairs and I don't fully realize the difficulties you encounter here. We're waiting not so patiently. It is a problem at the municipal level.

As to the municipal boundaries issue, we are built out, as I stated. I think your question is, are we hoping that you will expand our boundaries? Yes, we are. Our services are in place. We're putting in a \$60-million surface water treatment. We have wells right now; some of the wells are being decommissioned. This installation is needed. Our sewage treatment plant has lots of capacity; it's a state-of-the-art facility. Our landfill site has capacity until 2025, with some mining and some engineering.

Barrie is set. We are geographically well located, our infrastructure is in place, very good planning has been done in that city, and we're doing everything that Minister Caplan wants—with whom we have developed a rapport, and I certainly like what he's doing—in terms of infilling, intensifying, revitalizing our downtown. Tonight, being put before council, is a downtown master plan. The proponent of that, the person we hope to engage, the consultant, does a lot of work for Intrawest. They do it on an international basis: Canada, the States,

France, New Zealand. If we're going to the dance, we're going to dance with the prettiest girl, and in our opinion, this consultant is.

The Chair: I think you've answered the question. Thank you.

Mr. Hamilton: So we are on board with your initiatives.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Churley, it's your turn.

Ms. Churley: On page 6, “Revisions to the Development Charges Act,” you mention a few things. In the short time we have, could you expand a little bit? For instance, you say, “The statutory 10% discounting should also be removed so that growth can begin to start paying for itself instead of increasing the burden on existing taxpayers, as is currently the case.” What's happening right now, and what do you need to fix that?

Mr. Hamilton: Development charges cannot raise the standard. You take an average of what the standards were over 10 years, and the rule is that you cannot expect development charges to upgrade these standards for the new growth; people who are already there get a free ride. For the 10% discounting, I'll hand it off to Craig Hebert, from our engineering department.

Mr. Craig Hebert: The 10% discounting is part of the calculation. Once the development charge is calculated, a 10% portion of that gets discounted, in other words, transferred back to the taxpayer.

Ms. Churley: So the taxpayers pick that up.

Mr. Hebert: And it's a mandatory requirement under the act. In that sense, it's impossible for growth to entirely pay for itself.

Ms. Churley: Ultimately, what you're asking for is for that 10% to be taken off. What would the developers, for instance, say to that proposal: that it will increase their costs and therefore housing prices will go up?

Mr. Hamilton: I think development charges in Barrie are low. Residential development charges are too low, and growth has not paid for itself. The burden is on the taxpayer. People are angry, very angry, so I think this has to be revisited. Craig, do you have something to add to that?

Mr. Hebert: Obviously, the developers wouldn't be happy with that, but in their business it's all passed on to the homeowner in some way, shape or form. I think the key is that if a municipality anywhere in Ontario is going to grow—Barrie, obviously, is our preferred example—then growth needs to pay for itself more than it does now. That's the basis of our suggestion; it's to help us out.

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Your Worship. We appreciate your being here today. Thank you, gentlemen.

1700

TACC GROUP

The Chair: Our next delegation is the TACC Group. Welcome, gentlemen. Could you please identify yourselves for Hansard prior to speaking? When you begin, you'll have 15 minutes. Should you leave time at the end,

there will be an opportunity for us to ask questions about your delegation. Welcome.

Mr. Silvio DeGasperi: Madam Chair and the rest of the committee, thank you for having us here today. My name is Silvio DeGasperi. I'm the president of the TACC Group, which employs approximately 800 employees. We are a vertically integrated development company that provides full service: grading, sewer/water infrastructure, pipe manufacturing, gas installation, hydro, roadwork, highways, housing and industrial properties. So we do the full array of the development industry.

I will conclude at the end, but I'd like to have Ken Rovinelli, from our development group, bring the issue we have: the city of Pickering.

Mr. Ken Rovinelli: Thank you very much. I realize that the committee has had several delegations. I apologize if you get some bad repeats here.

Places to Grow and Bill 136 seek to enshrine broad planning objectives with limited analysis on how they can be achieved or if they can be achieved.

The province seems to have left all the hard work to the sub-area strategies, which may not support the intensification targets or land requirements set out in the plan. As a general comment, Bill 136 and the sub-area strategies introduce another layer of planning policy in the greater Golden Horseshoe. This new layer would be in addition to the greater Golden Horseshoe plan itself, the provincial policy statement, local official plans, regional official plans, the greenbelt plan, the Oak Ridges moraine conservation plan, the Niagara Escarpment plan, watershed plans and source water protection plans. There is a point beyond which the Ontario 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.

Intensification targets in the plan represent a one-size-fits-all policy that may not work for the 100 or so municipal organizations across the greater Golden Horseshoe. Many municipalities have registered concerns similar to those discussed recently at council in the town of Oakville. They are concerned with the imposition of unattainable standards of intensification and the imbalance that may be created when applied across broad regions. If you fall short on intensification, you fall short on the amount of land identified for future growth.

It's our feeling that before passing Bill 136, the province should involve municipal governments, residents and businesses in developing a more detailed plan. As well, there should be a socio-economic analysis completed to determine if there will be economic fallout from implementation of Bill 136 and subsequent growth plans.

Of concern, for example—and it was expressed here today—is that the availability of land supply in the plan seems to have been overestimated, as also reported by UDI and several senior planning consultants. The land supply assumptions form the entire basis of the growth

plan, and if this assumption is in serious doubt, then so is the entire process and plan.

What is also unsettling to many is how the province views Bill 136 and the Greenbelt Act. While it is dictating to municipalities that they must conform to them, they have exempted themselves to the extent that the provincial policy statement and minister's zoning orders need not conform to either. Some might consider this a double standard or self-serving, while others may simply view this as a lack of confidence that either the greenbelt plan or Places to Grow are on plan to succeed.

Places to Grow should also recognize local growth studies that were in process prior to the province's growth management initiatives. If they do not, they will be retreating even further from their commitment to give local municipalities more power to manage their growth. It is unfortunate, but by ignoring any well-intentioned and detailed growth study, you risk putting politics ahead of good planning.

The city of Pickering, out of need and at the request of a conservation authority, undertook a growth management study that included the provincial lands in Seaton and private lands known as Cherrywood. This planning process began before there was any talk of the greenbelt or Places to Grow.

In Cherrywood, the agricultural component of the growth management study concluded that agricultural uses were not viable at this location. In addition, the attached letter, in the package you got, from Ron Bonnett of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and an analysis from Wayne Caldwell, a past chair of the Ontario Rural Council, a senior planner in Huron county and a professor at the University of Guelph, support the idea that Cherrywood land being preserved for agriculture is more about ideology than pragmatism.

In general, the city's growth management study concluded that their plan area was suitable for growth and assigned a population of approximately 40,000 people to both Seaton and Cherrywood. City of Pickering planning staff reports supported Cherrywood as a growth area due to the low environmental sensitivity of the land, the existence of roads and services to accommodate growth and the site's location adjacent to the existing neighbourhoods in Pickering. The lands identified for growth in Cherrywood are south of Highway 407 and the proposed airport in Pickering. This puts Cherrywood adjacent to the largest future employment area in Durham region, creating the opportunity for a strong home/work relationship, compact growth and access to both local and inter-regional transit. In other words, Cherrywood has all the characteristics of smart growth and none that would qualify the area for inclusion in a greenbelt, yet that is how it is now it designated.

No scientific or agricultural studies were brought forward to justify this designation. The historical designation of the area as an agricultural preserve and some old and now misguided policies are all that is offered in support of restricting growth in Cherrywood. The city of Pickering adopted the growth management study as OPA

13. In addition to the residential uses, the plan includes a balance of employment and institutional areas. It also includes a generous natural heritage system designed with the same environmental standards used for the Oak Ridges moraine.

The city of Pickering's growth management study attempts to dispel 30 years of political baggage and provide all concerned with a balanced, clear set of answers regarding the future of Cherrywood. Places to Grow makes no effort to incorporate this work or take account of the wishes of both the city and regional governments, who support growth in Cherrywood.

Mr. DeGasperis: Lands that I own in Pickering have been impacted by shortsighted government actions. It is plans like the Pickering growth management study, a large, detailed and comprehensive report, that Places to Grow should call on for designated growth areas. Growth in Cherrywood has the approval of both local and regional council. The region of Durham's resolution clearly states:

"That the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal be requested to:

"(a) coordinate through the authority of Municipal Affairs and Housing an amendment to the boundary of the 'protected countryside' under the greenbelt plan to remove the lands in the Cherrywood community in the city of Pickering, and an amendment to the greenbelt plan to delete section 3.4.4.2.a; and

"(b) identify the Cherrywood community as a 'designated growth area' in the final growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe."

Why would local governments' wishes not be honoured? Why would the province pass over a growth opportunity and throw away hundreds of millions of dollars of existing infrastructure already in the ground? Clearly, this is a waste of taxpayers' money. It's a shame.

In addition to this fiscal irresponsibility, the province has double standards when it comes to the environment. Although the Ministry of the Environment has asked for a class D environmental assessment for twinning an existing sanitary sewer through York and Pickering, it has refused a full class EA on provincially owned land, despite the following efforts, which have fallen on deaf ears: (1) a unanimous council resolution by the city of Pickering, (2) a request by PACT, Pickering-Ajax Citizens Together for the Environment, with 3,500 petitions supporting that class D EA, and (3) a demand by the Liverpool Ratepayers' Association and the Boxgrove Community Association calling for a full class D EA.

Places to Grow displays a gross disrespect for local municipalities and regional governments. The Liberal government did not respect the resolutions made by municipal and regional elected officials regarding the greenbelt. The Liberal government ignored the recommendations of the Greenbelt Task Force. The Liberal government did not stick to its own election platform, which clearly stated that it would create an independent greenbelt commission to establish the greenbelt plan in conjunction with a growth plan.

The growth plan, as the government calls it, is discriminatory and prejudicial to new immigrants, low-income renters and first-time homebuyers. Since the Liberal government has taken power, land prices in the GTA have doubled as a result of their initiatives. It has become extremely difficult for the average-income family to purchase a home in the GTA, especially the Toronto area. The Liberal government is forcing people to live in low-income, affordable apartments, giving them no alternative. This is not really what they want. Why hold back the working class and prevent people from owning their own homes?

1710

Places to Grow is empty. Why do I say it's empty? The Liberal government must invest billions of dollars—today—in new subway lines, light rail transit, highway expansions, and sewer and watermain infrastructure. This is also very, very important. They must give back to the municipalities and regions their planning powers. Municipalities are the ones that will have to implement the growth plan. They must give Ontarians a choice of how and where to live. Finally, they must give back to Ontario property owners their rights.

Bill 136 leaves no right of appeal. This is not democratic. Even criminals have the right of appeal. Do landowners have fewer rights than criminals? As reported in the Financial Post on March 12, 2005, "Canada's Worst: Mrs. McGuinty's Nanny State Whacks Ontario." Is Ontario becoming what Russia was 40 years ago?

All political systems fail if integrity, openness and ethics are missing. As such, democracy transforms a government for the people into a government for itself. The credibility and legitimacy of Bill 136 can only be achieved if local and regional government's recommendations are respected. Otherwise, Bill 136 will have a fatal effect on communities and the economy.

Thank you for allowing me to speak regarding Bill 136. We've attached a list of important documents to our document. They're all important. I don't want to go through them all. Thank you for having us here.

The Chair: You've left about a minute and 30 seconds for each group, beginning with Mr. Hudak.

Mr. Hudak: Thank you very much for the presentation. You have used some very strong words, Mr. DeGasperis, at the end of your commentary. I'll just ask you this straight out. It was under David Young that the MZO was put on the land in question, which has been subsequently lifted. The city of Pickering recently sold off the easement rights on that land, shortly after the infamous \$10,000-per-person fundraiser at the home of Mr. Sorbara. Obviously, Pickering must have had some expectation that the government was going to do something. Were there promises made at that fundraiser? Did the Premier and the finance minister give some indication that they were going to make changes in this area, and did that then cause Pickering to want to sell off the easements?

Mr. DeGasperis: That has nothing to do with this bill, but the facts are—

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): Chair, I think the question is out of order. Would you consider that?

The Chair: I'm going to let Mr. DeGasperis answer the question.

Mr. DeGasperis: Those easements were the right of the city of Pickering. They were always there for the benefit of the city and the residents and taxpayers of Pickering. The city of Pickering has decided to lift those easements for the benefit of the taxpayers, not their own personal benefit. That's why they did it.

Mr. Rovinelli: I might add that it reflects their growth management study and their approval of OPA 13. The easements were only lifted on those areas designated for growth. The balance of the lands still have agricultural easements.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Churley?

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much, Mr. DeGasperis. I guess you know your name is raised a lot in the Legislature. You're in Hansard again today, because I asked a question about whether the government is going to appeal the decision.

When you did attend that \$10,000-a-plate dinner, were you made specific promises at that time about that land being preserved? Is that part of the problem now, that you were promised something and then the government went back on it?

Mr. DeGasperis: The only promise I was made was that the Premier was going to let Rob MacIsaac, chair of the Greenbelt Task Force, make that decision. That's what was promised before the election and that's what he told me at that dinner.

Ms. Churley: So he did tell you that at the dinner.

Mr. DeGasperis: Absolutely.

Ms. Churley: These lands were originally purchased with the full understanding that they were an agricultural preserve and had agricultural easements on them. That's why I can't understand—I mean, you bought them with that knowledge, right?

Mr. DeGasperis: When they sold those lands, the ORC sent out two letters. One was to the tenants and the other one was to the city of Pickering. Both letters concluded by saying that the final decision on uses of those lands is up to the local and regional government. Those are not the exact words, but those were the letters that went out from the ORC and the government at the time.

Ms. Churley: But the easements were on when you bought them.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Mr. Rinaldi?

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you for the presentation.

The Chair: Thank you very much. We appreciate your being here today.

FROGS: FORBID ROADS OVER GREEN SPACES

The Chair: Our next delegation is FROGS, Forbid Roads over Green Spaces.

Ms. Maxine Jafine: This is scary.

The Chair: It's not scary. It's just us.

Welcome. We appreciate your being here. Please introduce yourself when Hansard returns; they take a record of your name and the group you represent. After you've introduced yourself, you'll have 15 minutes. Should you use all of your time, there won't be an opportunity for us to ask questions of your delegation. Should you leave time, there'll be an opportunity for all parties to ask you questions.

Ms. Jafine: Super. I've never been in this building before. This is a new adventure.

My name is Maxine Jafine, and I represent an organization called FROGS, Forbid Roads over Green Spaces. Our mission generally is to encourage the construction of major highways in areas that do not impinge on environmentally sensitive areas. That's really what our mandate is.

As a member of FROGS—and this organization has been around for in excess of 10 years—I appreciate the issues involved in this particular bill. The act and the greenbelt initiative are very positive steps—way overdue, but thank you. I really appreciate all the opportunities the public was given to comment even before the bill was initiated, and the fact that this government actually listens is really refreshing.

I have a number of items. I've gone through the bill and the draft growth plan. I don't want to go through every part of that, so I'm going to skip this first little part with respect to the bill. There are certain comments on certain parts of the bill that maybe somebody could take into account.

With respect to the draft growth plan, a couple of issues concern me. One is the Queensville plan. I saw Mr. DeGasperis here—we all know Mr. DeGasperis—and he's involved in the Queensville plan. In all honesty, the Queensville plan has been very well planned. It conforms to Bill 136 in that it does have a balance between commerce, industry and residential, which should be lauded, because up to this point we've had all these bedroom communities. I'm not sure if transit is really part of that plan, to the recommendation of this particular committee. I was concerned with about fact that the developers a year ago asked for and received permission to build 10,000 homes without the requisite commercial or industrial base. They managed to convince the Ontario Municipal Board that they would use whatever development was at the southwest part of East Gwillimbury, which is at the corner of Yonge and Green Lane, as their contribution to commerce, even though it's 15 kilometres away. Will this modification to the plan be permitted under this act? That's my one issue with Queensville.

1720

The Keswick-Sutton situation revolves around the extension of Highway 404. I know it's not, so-called, on the construction plans right now, but it is on the Ministry of Transportation's map as potentially to be extended up to the Ravenshoe Road. Because this is more of a bedroom community, there is enormous stress on the local roads, and therefore there is this request to extend

Highway 404. However, in the particular plan here, you have the fact that highways should only be for the movement of goods, not necessarily for the movement of people, that other facilities should be used for the movement of people. I'm just wondering whether the extension of the 404, if it should come about, would conform to the bill.

The next issue I'm bringing up is the Bondhead development. I don't know if you're even aware of it, because it's not part of your plan there, and it's not part of one of the urban growth centres. Consequently, until about a month ago, there was this huge gold rush with regard to buying up land for development in that area, even though it's not one of the urban growth centres. I don't know what's going on there—it sounds a little nefarious—and it may happen again before the bill is actually passed.

Part 3.2.1 of the draft: integration transportation networking. Just a question: Are the Ministry of Transportation and the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority going to work together on this? Are the two groups going to marry to integrate and coordinate that venture?

My next point is the Ontario Municipal Board. I mentioned that the Ontario Municipal Board had given Queensville an amendment to their plan. I was part of that, and I was amazed that—even though the adjudicator was very bright, he was given very little time to really understand the situation, and they were given permission. I'm just wondering where in all of this the Ontario Municipal Board lies and what kind of powers they are going to have.

On policy 7.4, it's just a minor detail there.

What I really came to talk about is the Bradford bypass. That was one of our main focuses at FROGS. This is a planned four-lane highway that's going to connect Highway 404 with 400. It's not in the document, but it is on schedule 5. It's listed there as the Bradford bypass. Since this government came into power, they have put a hold on the construction of that highway. However, I went to the Web yesterday and found that the Ministry of Transportation has it on their plans. I provided that on the back of the handout, and I've outlined it for you; the Bradford bypass goes east and west. I also outlined the extension of Highway 404, just in case you didn't know where it was.

I think the driving force for this is the Queensville plan, and potentially the Bondhead plan, which will be part of Bradford, in West Gwillimbury. It looks like the Bradford bypass should be an obvious route. It goes just north of Queensville and extends right to north of Bradford and goes to the 400, which would make sense. However, one of the problems is that it only serves Bradford and Queensville; it doesn't serve Newmarket or anything south of that. Queensville is going to be one of those urban growth centres, but Bradford is not, at least according to this plan.

More important is the actual route of the proposed highway. It crosses both branches of the Holland River.

Until this highway was proposed, this was class 1 wetland. All of a sudden, it became class 2 or class 3 wetland. I don't even know what it is now. There is a big problem with the Holland River, which runs into Lake Simcoe, in that we have runoff from the Holland Marsh and from development. It causes all kinds of problems with regard to Lake Simcoe.

I'm a biologist, and I can't help but think that we really have no understanding of the impacts we have on the environment. I certainly can't be alleviated by any of the so-called experts who say that everything can be mediated.

One of the other major problems with this particular routing is that it goes right through a major historical and archaeological area. This is the key point, and I don't think the Ministry of Transportation has grasped this. The routing of the highway passes right over an area called the Lower Landing. This is a highly significant historical site, and I'll bet you nobody knows about it. It's on Lot 118. Its importance has been recognized by the Ministry of Culture. In 1996, Ruth Jackson mentioned its significance. At one point, a briefing note from the Ontario Ministry of Culture in 1998 said that "the Lower Landing is more significant than 95% of the historical and archaeological sites in Canada."

I have evidence, through other organizations I belong to—the East Gwillimbury heritage committee, as well as Canadian Heritage Landscapes—that early natives were present there, and many explorers, some of whom you would recognize from your days in public school. Historical records show that this is a gateway from Upper Canada to the Arctic as well as to the west; it was part of the northwest French passage for furs. It was an embarkation point for explorers like Jolliet, La Salle, Franklin, Goldie, Champlain, Brûlé, Hennepin and a bunch of others I haven't mentioned. It was a military post during the War of 1812. It provided supplies for the British forts in Detroit and Midland. It was the terminus of Lake Simcoe steamboats. It was a trading area with natives during the War of 1812. It had a military barracks called Fort Gwillimbury. Its importance in the early history of Ontario and Canada is unsurpassed. Surely the heritage division of this particular plan can recognize that as part of this plan.

How am I doing for time?

The Chair: You have three minutes left.

Ms. Jafine: The Ministries of Transportation, Environment and Culture were provided with this evidence. There is a document from Wilmot, who was the first surveyor of this area in 1811. His field notes show exactly where this was, so there's no doubt about it. However, the previous government decided that all this activity did not occur in Lot 118 but in Lot 111, and consequently, they chose to ignore the evidence and continued with their planning. I'm hoping that this committee can see its way to the fact that there has been an error here. We would request very much if you could rescind the EA approval for the Bradford bypass, because they didn't have the evidence and they certainly didn't have

these particular documents—the heritage plan, the growth plan and the greenbelt plan—in place when this was decided.

1730

As well, I mentioned something about the extension of the 404. The reason I outlined that is that the 404 has a number of paleolithic native sites that this thing is going to go right through, because it's on the shores of the old Lake Algonquin.

Thank you for allowing me to present these views. I'd be pleased to answer any questions in the remaining seconds I have left.

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

Ms. Churley: There's no time to ask questions, but thank you very much. You certainly pointed out some of the flaws in the bill. Thank you for bringing those forward. We'll make sure that amendments are made to try to improve the bill.

The Chair: Mr. Rinaldi?

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much for all your efforts and the time you put into your presentation. There really is not much time.

The Chair: Mr. Hudak, you have a whole 40 seconds, if you choose to use it.

Mr. Hudak: Well, I've got something to fill it. Thanks for the presentation. You did a great job. I've got to tell you, FROGS is one of the best acronyms I've seen at this committee. I didn't want to leap to any conclusions about what you were going to say, but we're happy for your comments on this bill, warts and all.

The Chair: Thank you very much for coming.

GREATER TORONTO HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

The Chair: Our last delegation today is the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association. Welcome. Thank you for coming here today. Could you please identify yourselves, if you're both going to be speaking or answering questions, and the group you speak for? When you do start to speak, you'll have 15 minutes. Should you leave time at the end, there will be an opportunity for us to ask questions or make comments on your delegation.

Ms. Julie Di Lorenzo: My name is Julie Di Lorenzo and I am president of the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association. I am also a condominium developer here in the city of Toronto. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. We have earlier distributed our paper Pull, Don't Push.

Joining me today is James McKellar, associate dean and director of the real property program at the Schulich School of Business at York University. Mr. McKellar is an architect, planner and former builder. He has served on the Oak Ridges Moraine Advisory Panel, the North Pickering land exchange panel and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. Mr. McKellar worked very closely with our association in developing Pull, Don't Push, our response to the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan.

For those of you who are not familiar, the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association represents more than 1,300 builders, professional renovators and associate members operating within the Greater Toronto area. We exist to educate, to advocate and to be the voice of the industry.

From an economic standpoint, new home building and renovation in the greater Toronto area currently accounts for around 240,000 jobs, \$10 billion in wages and \$18 billion in GDP. We pay more than \$5 billion in taxes to the various levels of government. Beyond the statistics, we fulfill the hopes and dreams of up to 40,000 home buyers annually, be they young urban professionals buying a condominium in the city or newlyweds starting a family in the suburbs.

We have been following the McGuinty government's land-related legislation quite closely, and I would like to dispel one myth: We are not opposed in principle to the greenbelt and never have been, nor are we opposed in principle to growth management. From the outset, we have been supportive of these initiatives, while putting forward our criticisms and suggestions. Staff has been forthcoming and open, and we will participate in working sessions to ensure that the plan works.

With respect to the greenbelt, we believe in the protection of our environment and the preservation of our prime agricultural land as a legacy for our children.

With respect to growth management, we understand the importance of efficient land use for the future prosperity of the regions and this province and for our future competitiveness and the importance to our future quality of life.

I would now like to let James McKellar speak to this issue more specifically.

Mr. James McKellar: I'm James McKellar, from the Schulich School of Business. It's my pleasure to be assisting the Greater Toronto Home Builders on this submission. I would also indicate that it's been my pleasure to serve the government of Ontario in a number of capacities, most recently as the appointee of the province to the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation; I've just finished my second term there. So I've had involvement on both sides.

I'm here to say that this plan, if it works, is a good plan. I would just like to say that if you were an optimist, you would say that Pull, Don't Push would read something like, "The home builders support growth management, we want it to work, and we have some suggestions." If you were a realist, you might say growth management is only as good as its implementation, and if the province doesn't back it up with significant infrastructure dollars and stand behind the plan in the face of local opposition, then we might have to just put that plan aside right now. If you were offering a critical summary, you might say, "If you're going to put all your eggs in the intensification basket, you'd better get it right, because if you get it wrong, there will be untold damage that will really affect people for the next 10, 20 or 30 years."

As Julie has said, we support the objectives of the plan. We have some concerns about what the plan

doesn't say. One might say that it's very unusual for an industry to get up here and say the plan doesn't go far enough, but that really has to do with implementation.

The plan has areas that must be addressed. We need a transportation plan; we desperately need public transit. We don't have to argue over that. The question is: Give us a date and tell us when it's going to be there. That's what we need. We need the money, we need the commitment, and we need the organizational structure. We don't need a patchwork. I know well enough. I'm at York University. We have 1,300 buses a day. We can't even decide what transit line should be there. I live with that problem every day.

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): What about the subway?

The Chair: Please don't interrupt the delegation. Ask your question at the end.

Mr. McKellar: We need it, yes. Everyone needs everything, and I know it's a matter of money. Future home buyers will be convinced that public transit is a viable alternative if they see it and they know where to put their ticket in the fare box, or their high-tech credit card.

Another weak part of this plan is the issue of intensification. I think the home builders have made a significant contribution to intensification: you just have to look at the skyline of downtown Toronto and the number of condos built. That's not the issue. The issue is that local municipalities and local associations really stand in the way of intensification. Local opposition may be one of the great threats to the plan. Whether you want 20%, 30%, 40% or 50% intensification, you are going to have to deal with that, and that is a provincial responsibility.

We've seen several recent development proposals, in well-serviced areas accessible to public transit, scaled down and strongly opposed simply because they were near existing neighbourhoods. One can appreciate what those neighbourhoods are going through. This does call for some very careful work. We're not in any way saying that intensification should be rammed through, but if that target is to be met, there has to be a way to do it. Provincial restrictions on development also make sense, but they only make sense if the intensification is there. If it doesn't occur, then you've got the worst of both worlds, where you've got a lack of housing supply, and we know what that does. If builders are prevented from developing the suburbs and face traditional obstacles in the inner area, then we have problems.

Just some final notes, because we want to leave most of this open for questioning.

There is a lot of debate about numbers in this plan. Let me say, our ability to forecast weather is pretty lousy and our ability to forecast land supply is pretty lousy, and I don't think we should be sitting debating those numbers today. We don't want to make assumptions sound like truisms. We're saying that we need a body that has provincial, municipal and industry representatives who can agree on an annual basis what those numbers are and,

if we miss targets, what adjustments have to be made. That's very important. We don't want to be arguing about numbers from here to eternity.

To conclude, our overall approach is to pull versus push. You can see what we're saying: Don't push us with regulation, pull us with incentives. We need carrots as well as sticks. The plan at the moment doesn't identify what those carrots are, but the market does respond very well to incentives. We know it in the energy field, and we have to do the same in development.

Finally, we are home builders, and above all we're concerned about housing affordability. We have to make sure that this plan works, particularly in terms of those people at the lower end of the income scale.

With that, I will end.

1740

Ms. Di Lorenzo: Thank you, James. Before we open it up to questions, I just wanted to debunk another myth, and that is the perception that all our industry is building is large, single-family homes in the suburbs. Month in, month out, high-rise condo sales account for between 30% to 40% of all new home sales. Meanwhile, the suburbs of today are much more intense than they were five, 10, 15 years ago. Last month, 40% of our high-rise condo sales were in the 905 regions, and we believe this trend will continue.

I started out by talking about the economic impact of our industry. This is something that should not be taken for granted. The extent to which the growth plan boosts or curtails the economic impacts of the industry depends largely upon whether the province backs the words in their plan with significant infrastructure investment and strong leadership to ensure that the intensification targets are met. Our recommendations are offered in the spirit of partnership and good faith.

We would now be delighted to answer any of your questions.

The Chair: You've left just over two minutes for each party.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you very much, Ms. Di Lorenzo and of course Mr. McKellar, for all your help and time you've given the province to have a better place to live. I want to comment on your slogan. I think it's very good.

Just a question to elaborate on your presentation: What can the province do to help achieve a better design for intensification development that people will see as an asset to their neighbourhoods, rather than a liability? You touched a little bit on how some people don't like intensification, so what approach do you think we can take?

Ms. Di Lorenzo: I can tell you, from our own experience, being involved in developments in the city of Toronto and communities, I don't think there is an understanding of the benefits of that intensification. For example, in the city of Toronto last year, we understand there was a \$20-million surplus that came from new intensification, a new tax base. If neighbourhoods knew that those monies were going into improving their sidewalks, public art contributions and in fact keeping their

property taxes down, we believe the public would understand that intensification is a positive thing.

Also, impacts are supposed to be the main criteria. If we were able to explain that intensification on main arterial roads helps transportation systems work etc. and provides the established neighbourhoods, as I said, with more stability, then I think we would have come a long way. So part of it is an education process.

The Chair: Mr. Hudak?

Mr. Hudak: Thank you both very much for the presentation. Chair, I'll just ask my three questions upfront to allow time to—

The Chair: He just likes to push the envelope, doesn't he? They'd better be quick answers, then.

Mr. Hudak: It's an excellent presentation and it begs a lot of further exploration. You talk about consumer preferences, that builders respond to consumer preferences. Consumers, for some time, have preferred more space, having a backyard and a garden and that sort of thing. How can you change consumer preferences so they'll opt for intensified areas of living? Then the builders, I assume, would respond.

Second, you talked about the NIMBY issue, which would pressure local councils to reject intensification. Is there an incentive for local neighbours to be more supportive of these projects?

Third, in terms of the approval process for transit corridors, is it important to speed those up, and how would you do it?

Mr. McKellar: Three good questions.

If you're going to change people's preferences, I think you have to give them new choices. For example, you can't say you're going to have transit-oriented housing when there's no transit. They have to see the benefit.

One thing I should point out: The actual amount of money that people spend on housing today is no different from what it was in the 1970s. They spend twice as much of their disposable income on cars. So people realize there's a real benefit to transit. All I'm pointing out is, give people real choices. Put the transit there, as we used to. Back 100 years ago, we always put in the streetcar first; look at Toronto. We have to lead with the infrastructure, not trail. Then I think the market will say, "You know what? It's a different world," and we'll see different housing choices.

Too often, we talk about the negatives and not the positives. We talk about infrastructure costing too much. What about the benefits of infrastructure? We have to do a better job of getting out there and saying that growth

isn't all bad. I agree with Julie. Neighbours have to see the tangible benefits of supporting that, as opposed to thinking that money just disappears into someone's pocket.

Ms. Di Lorenzo: To your last question regarding the approval process, if the provincial policy statement remains as strong as it is in terms of advocating the issues that we discussed and if the Ontario Municipal Board remains there as the body that should follow the provincial policy statement, then that will be a likely route to avoid local political agendas.

The Chair: Ms. Churley?

Ms. Churley: Thank you very much. I appreciate the work you put into this report and a generally balanced approach. I really appreciate your focus on transportation, because that is a big piece that's missing from this plan. Specifically, what are the carrots and sticks that you would need to meet the intensification objectives of, say, 40% to 50%?

Mr. McKellar: Let me give you an example. In February 2005, Massachusetts instituted smart growth zoning, which says, "If you build housing that achieves smart growth, we'll do several things. First, we'll give you TIF, tax increment financing. Second, rather than charge you development charges, in fact we'll give you money, because there's a benefit to the public." They set aside \$500 million in a trust fund that's funded by the sale of surplus state property. So developers in fact are getting a real benefit and the community's getting a real benefit. That's an example. They have another policy there of what's called fast-track approval, a comprehensive permit. If you build according to the principles of smart growth, you get a very faster permitting process.

This isn't rocket science. It says they're willing to stand behind and do—I'm just giving you examples, but I think we must have incentives, not just rules.

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

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

This concludes our list of delegations today. I'd like to thank all our witnesses, the MPPs and ministry staff for their participation in the hearings.

I'd like to remind the subcommittee to stay after the meeting. We have a short meeting to discuss additional legislation.

The meeting is adjourned until Wednesday, April 27, at 3:30 p.m.

The committee adjourned at 1747.

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