



Queen's Park Update

The Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan Setting the Record Straight

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Abstract

For the last 5 years, elements of the development sector have invested significantly and intensively in mounting a multi-faceted communications campaign to undermine the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan. The campaign is comprised of:

- ① the commissioning and/or funding of reports and publications conveying incomplete, selective and/or inaccurate information;
- ① rhetorical opinion pieces released through various media, presentations and conferences; and,
- ① intensive lobbying of elected representatives and senior executives at both the provincial and municipal levels - relying on materials based on the reports/publications described above.

The key plank in the campaign is that the Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan have constrained the supply of land for and/or the supply of ground related housing - and that this is largely responsible for increased housing prices in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Repetition of such claims in the absence of the real and complete facts has seemingly led to their acceptance - not only in individuals and the public - but also in the financial and real estate sectors, certain academic institutions and the federal government. The campaign is misleading and thus irresponsible for it is significantly contributing to instilling uncertainty and a profound anxiousness and frenzy that is leading to ill-informed blame on the plans, calls for pause, pulling back, or worse, changing direction.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (1985), Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002), Greenbelt Plan (2005), Growth Plan (2006), Regional Transportation Plan (the Big Move - 2008) and Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (2009) are the cornerstones of Ontario's vision and regional growth management framework for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).

They result from the cumulative efforts of the last generation, involving innumerable civil society organizations, members of the public, municipalities and provincial governments led by all 3 parties. They are demonstrably non-partisan and reflect a common understanding of the impacts and continued threats that urban sprawl poses to the region, province and country.

They are therefore a shared vision as to how to move forward to protect, manage and sustainably prosper from one of the world's most well-endowed landscapes. These internationally recognized and award winning efforts, despite ample room for improvement, have led to the GGH consistently being viewed as one of the world's most successful city regions.

The claims that the plans are constraining the supply of land and ground-related housing are ill founded. The available facts and evidence, including the vast inputs to the Crombie Commission, are clear:

- ① The Plans are absolutely the right direction to follow
- ① The evidence is irrefutable that the Plans do not go far enough to address the impacts of urban sprawl and provide for a truly sustainable future
- ① There is more than sufficient approved land and planned and existing ground related housing supplies to accommodate projected growth to 2031 - and likely 2041 - and any claims to the contrary are not borne out

Following is a link (www.urbanneighbourhoods.ca) to the two-part brief entitled: ***The Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan - Setting the Record Straight***. It cites the key evidence as to why we need to strengthen the Plans - the "Case for Action" - along with the key facts on the supply of land and ground related housing - which provides the "Room to Act" in moving forward to strengthen the Plans.

Please e-mail a copy of this Report to anyone that you think might be interested.