



## TOWN OF MINTO

**DATE:** February 13, 2018

**REPORT TO:** Mayor and Council

**FROM:** Bill White C.A.O. Clerk

**SUBJECT:** Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

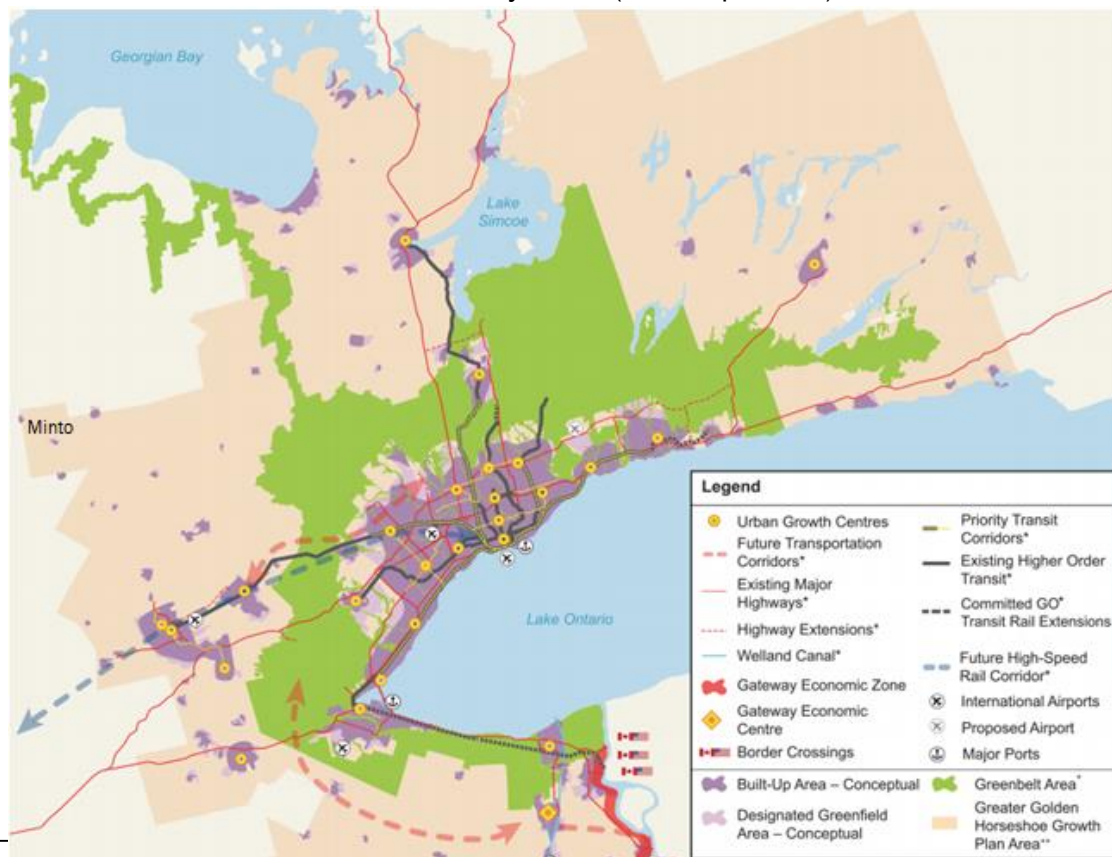
### STRATEGIC PLAN:

Ensure growth and development in Clifford, Palmerston and Harriston makes cost effective and efficient use of municipal services, and development in rural and urban areas is well planned, reflects community interests, is attractive in design and layout, and is consistent with applicable County and Provincial Policies.

- 9.1 Establish and maintain streamlined planning approval processes that use innovative and cost effective tools to protect Town and public interest and ensure development proceeds quickly and affordably.

### BACKGROUND:

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was approved by the Province effective July 1, 2017. The Growth Plan “builds upon the policy foundation” of Provincial Policy, but takes “precedence over” it providing specific direction on future land use for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Minto is within the most northwesterly edge of the “outer ring” of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Plan Area in May 2017 (see map below).



The plan designates Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston as “Built-up Areas Conceptual”, the same designation as the City of Toronto, Guelph, Waterloo and other large urban centres. Although nearly invisible on the map, both Clifford and Harriston have sections designated as “Greenfield Areas – Conceptual” but no such area is identified in concert with Palmerston. Perth, Huron and Grey County on Minto’s borders, are excluded from the Growth Plan and are not subject to its higher level planning policies.

Essentially the Province through the Growth Plan dictates development follow a much more regimented process set by the Province coordinated between the County and Local municipalities. The intent is to ensure a diversity of land use is provided and key natural and agricultural areas are protected. This policy work is in a context of climate change and other Provincial policy initiatives. Within the “Outer Ring” of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, designated greenfield areas (newly developing settlement areas) shall develop at no less than 80 “residents and jobs combined” per hectare.

As far as Minto settlement areas, specific policies in the Growth Plan require the following:

- Upper and lower tier municipalities to establish a “hierarchy of settlement areas”
- Establish infrastructure plans based on full “life cycle costs” including options to pay the costs over time
- Optimize infrastructure along “transit and transportation corridors” and create “complete communities” using a “compact built form”
- Protect the environment and agricultural lands
- Apply a “municipal comprehensive review” which means a new official plan or amendment apply Growth Plan Policies

Currently the Minister is establishing a “methodology for assessing land needs to implement” the growth plan. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs summary of the methodology is attached to this report. The methodology is out for public consideration through February 28, 2018. The methodology is a 135 page discussion paper that outlines how to calculate future “community land area need” and “employment area land need”. If Council is interested in reading the full discussion paper can be found at the link below:

[http://www.placestogrow.ca/images/pdfs/LNA/en/proposed\\_methodology\\_EN.pdf](http://www.placestogrow.ca/images/pdfs/LNA/en/proposed_methodology_EN.pdf)

#### **COMMENTS:**

This methodology when approved will dictate how the County and local tiers calculate the amount of land they will need for development through 2041. According to the Provincial listing of this methodology: “The results of that land needs assessment will then be used to inform the work of municipalities in applying the policies of the Growth Plan to update their own official plans. This is known as the municipal comprehensive review process.”

The County has advised Minto it will include the relevant “hierarchy of settlement areas” and establish parameters for future growth and boundary expansions within its next five year

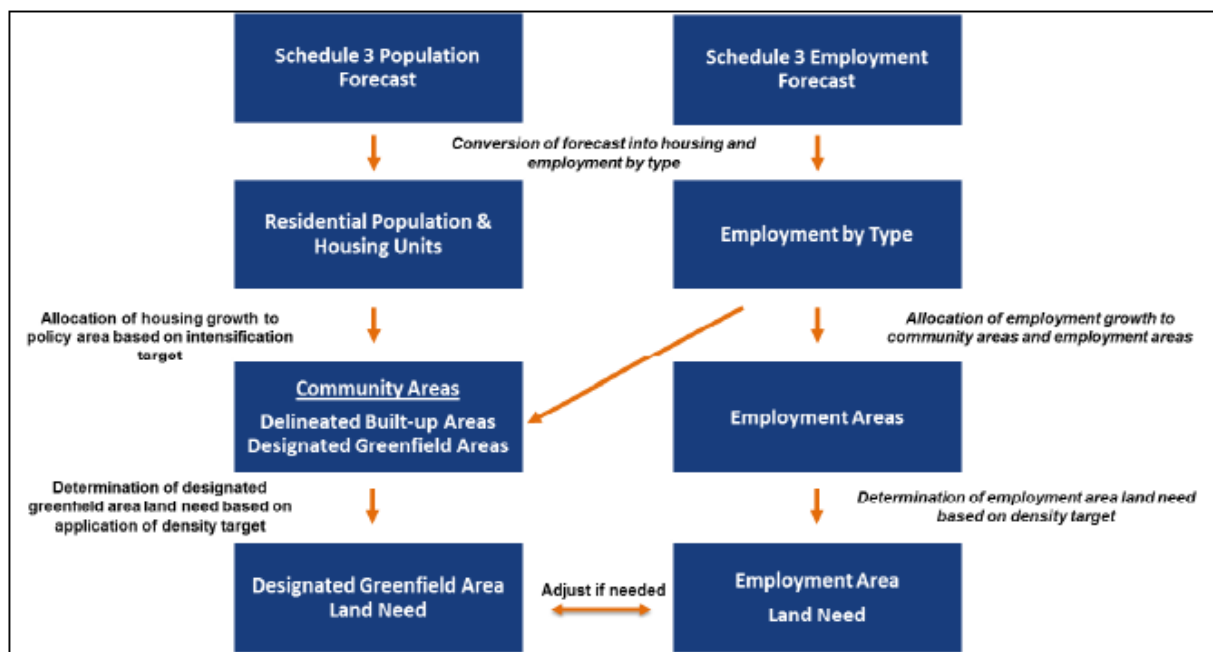
review of the official plan scheduled for 2019-20. Local tiers like Minto are to have specific growth policies within one year of the County approval. However, the methodology goes beyond the Five Year Review process, which the Province has input on, by imposing specific regimented way of assessing growth and space needs as in the following excerpt:

To support these minimum targets, the Growth Plan requires that certain tests must be met in order to justify need for any settlement area boundary expansions. Municipalities are required to demonstrate, among other matters, that there are insufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth to the Growth Plan horizon through intensification in delineated built-up areas and in designated greenfield areas based on the respective minimum intensification and density targets for each of these policy areas.

The targets referenced in the excerpt refer to density targets set in the growth plan. The methodology clarifies that following the County five year review and before 2031 fifty percent of all new residential development is to occur in built up areas and 60% by 2041.

The methodology forces all upper and lower tier municipalities to calculate and assess growth in the exact same way, essentially a “one size fits all” solution dictated by the Province. The following attempts to summarize the methodology outlined in the 135 page discussion paper:

**Figure 2: Proposed Methodology - general approach**



To expand the Palmerston Settlement area boundary a couple of hundred acres will require the same methodology and analysis as it would to expand thousands of acres in the City of Toronto, Cambridge or Waterloo. Expansion of these settlement areas (past and future) has, and will have, more impact on the natural environment, traffic gridlock, downtowns, and loss of agricultural land than many urban boundary changes in small town rural Ontario.

Without getting into complicated details of the methodology, Council may wish to make general comment as to the need for such a regimented approach, the potential lack of flexibility it causes, and how the initiative takes away planning decisions from local communities and centralizes it entirely in Queen's Park. At the very least the Province should consider exempting municipalities under 15,000 population from the regimented methodology provided the intent of the Growth Plan is maintained through the Five Year review process directed by a local planning authority (in Minto's case Wellington County).

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

The cost of the centralized planning program in the Growth Plan will be significant to developer, local and upper tier municipalities, particularly when settlement areas are expanded. Expanding the Palmerston Settlement Area Boundary will require investment in consulting expertise to navigate the new methodology, and other policy requirements, if no relief is provided. Development will take more time resulting in higher development costs and increase house prices. Local Council decision making is eroded by the Growth Plan, associated documents and the methodology in favour of regimented centralized planning.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council receives the C.A.O. Clerk's February 13, 2018 report Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and that the following resolution be filed in response to the Environmental Bill of Rights posting regarding the Discussion Paper: Proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe:

**That Town of Minto Council requests the Province of Ontario not approve the Proposed Methodology for Lands Needs Assessment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and that it remain as a guiding document only;**

**That municipalities in the outer ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe under 15,000 population be exempt from the methodology, or that specific exemptions be included for settlement area expansions in the outer ring where the urban area will have a population under 5,000 people in 2041, provided growth targets set in the Five Year Official Plan review are met consistent with Provincial Policy; and**

**That Council express its concern about loss of local decision making in rural Ontario created by the Growth Plan, associated documents and methodology and resulting centralized Provincial control, particularly as it pertains to minor settlement area expansion in rural areas far from the Greater Golden Horseshoe.**

Bill White MCIP RPP  
C.A.O. Clerk

# Summary of the Proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has released the Proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and is seeking your feedback by February 28, 2018.

## Overview

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest growing regions in North America. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (the "Growth Plan") was put in place to help manage this growth.

The Growth Plan's policies will help develop *complete communities*, curb sprawl, protect the natural environment, support economic development, and ensure that land to accommodate population and employment growth will be available when needed, now and in the future.

A guiding principle of the Growth Plan is to increase population and job densities to make efficient use of land and infrastructure, and support the viability of transit. To guide how and where to grow, the Growth Plan sets minimum density and intensification targets for parts of municipalities such as existing urban areas, *major transit station areas*, and new suburbs.

To implement the Growth Plan, municipalities are required to use a common provincial methodology for calculating the amount of land that they will need for development until 2041. This calculation is known as a land needs assessment. Using this methodology will help ensure that municipalities are using land efficiently and in accordance with provincial forecasts and targets. If the land needs assessment shows that more land is needed, municipalities will determine the location of that land through subsequent planning.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is now seeking feedback on the assessment methodology. Once submissions and comments are received and considered, the province will issue a final land needs assessment methodology.

## Developing the Proposed Methodology

The proposed methodology was developed by the province to respond to recommendation 18 of the 2015 **report from the advisory panel**, chaired by David Crombie, which was appointed to support a review of four provincial land use plans for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

## Why a standard methodology?

In the past, approaches to land needs assessment and the reporting of results varied by municipality. Assessments were typically prepared to demonstrate how an official plan would meet the 2006 Growth Plan's density and intensification targets, and to justify the need to expand urban boundaries (*settlement areas*). Differing approaches were used to meet the Growth Plan's policy objectives, with mixed results, and many were the subject of extensive litigation at the Ontario Municipal Board.

Municipalities and other stakeholders have asked for consistency. In response, the new Growth Plan requires the province establish a standard methodology for assessing land needs.

## The impact of land needs assessment

Once the final methodology has been established, it will be used by upper- and single-tier municipalities to determine the amount of land needed to accommodate future growth. It will inform decisions about whether to expand the boundary of urban areas (*settlement area* boundary expansion), or whether sufficient or *excess land* has already been designated.

The results of the land needs assessment will then be used to inform the work of each upper- and single-tier municipality in applying the policies of the Growth Plan to update their own official plans. This is known as the *municipal comprehensive review* process. The geographic location of lands to be developed or redeveloped will be determined by municipalities during the *municipal comprehensive review* process.

The Growth Plan provides municipalities with flexibility to determine how and where they accommodate their local demand for housing and employment. There are many ways to achieve this goal and build *complete communities*. Overall, the region is expected to see a shift towards approaches to housing and employment that uses land and infrastructure more efficiently.



## Steps for land needs assessment

The proposed methodology uses a series of steps to determine the quantity of land needed to accommodate forecasted residential and job growth within upper- and single-tier municipalities in accordance with the Growth Plan's policies. It uses provincial population and employment forecasts and data, such as the national census population and household figures. The full Proposed Methodology for Land Needs Assessment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, available **on the Environmental Registry**, contains more detailed information on these technical requirements.

### Steps to calculate land needs for housing in community areas\*:

(For details, refer to Chapter 3 of the full **Proposed Methodology**.)

1. Determine the number of additional people that will need housing.
2. Determine the number of new housing units required to accommodate these additional people.
3. Allocate housing units to meet Growth Plan requirements over the time period of the Growth Plan horizon (currently to 2041) and for each specific policy area, including:
  - *delineated built-up area*
  - *designated greenfield area*, and
  - rural area.
4. Determine the forecasted population of each policy area during specific time periods.
5. Finally, determine the quantity of land needed to accommodate housing in the "community areas" of *designated greenfield areas*, or the amount of *excess land*.

### Steps to calculate land needs for jobs in community areas and employment areas\*:

(See Chapter 4.)

1. Determine the number of additional jobs to be accommodated over the time period of the Growth Plan horizon (currently to 2041).
2. Determine the distribution of the additional jobs by job type and by location in community areas versus *employment areas*.
3. Allocate "community area" jobs to the *delineated built-up area* and to the *designated greenfield area*, applying Growth Plan requirements, and determine the quantity of land needed to accommodate jobs in the "community areas" of *designated greenfield areas*.
4. Finally, determine the amount of *employment area* land needed, or the amount of *excess land*.

#### \*Land needs are assessed based on two different areas:

**Community areas:** Areas that consist of the *delineated built-up area* and *designated greenfield area*, but not *employment areas*. The vast majority of housing required to accommodate forecasted population, as well as the majority of forecasted jobs will be located in community areas. The jobs in these areas include most office, retail and other jobs.

**Employment areas:** Defined as: "Areas designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic activities including, but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, and associated retail and ancillary facilities." (Provincial Policy Statement, 2014) These are areas that have no housing, but that can include jobs of all types, and where most of the industrial-type buildings will be located. These areas could also include some office, retail and other jobs that provide services to people working in, or are related to the work occurring in the *employment area*.

## How to participate

Comments and suggestions are valued and welcomed on the proposed methodology. Feedback from the consultation will inform a consistent, policy-led approach that can be readily adopted by municipalities across the region.

Following the close of the consultation period, the ministry may modify the proposal, and will issue a final methodology that municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe will then be required to use. All comments and feedback received before the consultation closing date will be taken into consideration.

Learn more by reading the proposed methodology available **on the Environmental Registry**.