

777 Bay St 13th Flr
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Telephone: (416) 585-6014
Fax: (416) 585-6870

Office of the Chair

777, rue Bay 13^e étage
Toronto ON M5G 2E5
Téléphone: (416) 585-6014
Télécopieur: (416) 585-6870

Bureau du Président



Greenbelt Council

Conseil de la
ceinture de verdure

December 11, 2018

Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Re. Greenbelt Council Report #2

Dear Minister Clark,

It is my pleasure to send you the Greenbelt Council's second progress report as we proceed through our work program.

Also, I thank you for the participation of staff both from the ministry and from your office in the most recent Greenbelt Council meeting.

Sincerely,

David Crombie
Chair, Greenbelt Council

Copies to:
Laurie LeBlanc, Deputy Minister
Greenbelt Council members
Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation CEO Ed McDonnell
Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario
Greater Golden Horseshoe stakeholders

Greenbelt Council for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
Report #2 (December 2018)

Continuing its practice to distribute progress reports after each meeting, this is the second report of the Greenbelt Council. It communicates our work in considering matters of public interest with respect to Ontario's Greenbelt and the implementation of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*.

Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario (RPCO) met with the Greenbelt Council at its meeting November 28. They expressed significant support for the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan. However, they noted issues with respect to implementation, interpretation, and leadership roles. Throughout the conversation, it was stressed that good planning outcomes require trust and effective communication between the Province, its municipalities, and other stakeholders, as well as coordination with the development industry.

RPCO members provided the Greenbelt Council with an overview and insights into the RPCO July 31 letter to senior Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff recommending certain improvements to land use planning associated with the provincial plans. Core recommendations focused on the following matters:

1. More flexible plan interpretation & implementation
2. MMAH mandate clarification
3. A central & single provincial point of contact
4. Policy implementation guidance - to provide direction in critical areas
5. Accurate, reliable mapping
6. Practical application of policies
7. Recognition of planning initiatives underway.

The conversation was frank and productive. Some of the highlights are as follows.

Active consultation cannot be over emphasized. Council heard that the affected communities are very different and thus the plans need to have mechanisms to address the varying local context, while ensuring the integrity of the plans is maintained. This requires effective dialogue with provincial staff to ground truth the plans. One example raised was the Natural Heritage System and Agricultural System Mapping, both of which must address local nuances to be useful. Another was the standard application of a 500-metre study area for all Major Transit Areas, despite an often unsuitable local geography.

There was a discussion about the possibility of using softer language for certain parts of the plan other than "conformity." There was agreement that if such an approach was even to be considered, it must not, in any manner, undermine the Growth Plan. Given the very long-term nature of infrastructure planning and investment, RPCO also raised concerns with any proposal to substantially change the plan's targets.

RPCO indicated that many municipalities have not actively progressed with their official plan conformity exercises. Many have delayed proceeding with their conformity exercises over the past year and a half because they are concerned the policy context will change and their work will be rendered redundant. Zoning conformity has also been substantially delayed, awaiting this updated policy conformity work. There was agreement that municipalities and the development industry urgently need clarity from the province in confirming the legislated provincial planning framework, how the planning framework in the Growth Plan is to be implemented and whether any additional changes are contemplated.

Provincial staff need to provide guidance and policy interpretation, and to solve problems, and in this context, it is very important that provincial ministries communicate with each other. Policies must be aligned across ministries in order to be effective. Given the nature of ministry mandates and priorities, this is, unfortunately, often not the case. To address this ongoing concern, RPCO indicated it has urged the Province to develop an administrative “platform” that would have the resources and mandate to deal with issues, as they arise, and have the power to address them in a timely manner.

Greenbelt Council Subcommittees

The Monitoring and Review Committee reported that it has prepared a draft framework for a monitoring and review program. The draft draws on the various expertise of the committee members and their professional experiences.

The Education and Outreach Committee has defined a number of actions to educate various audiences on the plans. Based on recent events, it will focus on promoting a better understanding of the four plans across diverse stakeholder groups and the general public, demonstrating their features, advantages and interrelationships. For example, we will be mapping the relationships among the elements of the plans to illustrate the importance of the Greenbelt to the economy.

Both committees plan to meet in January to finalize their drafts before presenting them for consideration to the Greenbelt Council at its January 23 meeting.