

Greenbelt Council Conseil de la ceinture de verdure

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Greenbelt Council

Conseil de la
ceinture de verdure

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

Re: Regional Economic Roadmap for Recovery

Dear Minister Clark,

It is my pleasure to share with you the Greenbelt Council's 15th progress report.

As the Greenbelt Council has noted in previous reports, a coherent regional policy framework is essential for directing public investment and economic development at the Greater Golden Horseshoe level. Furthermore, such a framework must incorporate critical employment lands information and sound research and analysis from a regional perspective. This was the focus of Council's September 24, 2020 meeting when Marcy Burchfield, Council member and VP of the Economic Blueprint Institute (EBI), presented the recently released report, [*Shaping our Future: a Playbook for rebooting and reimagining Ontario's Innovation Corridor*](#) ("Playbook").

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the EBI, the data and research arm of the Toronto Region Board of Trade, in partnership with Toronto Global (an organization that works with all levels of government to assist international companies wishing to do business in the Toronto region) and Deloitte Canada, convened municipal, business, innovation, and academic leaders to determine the economic and financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Toronto region and to develop a roadmap for recovery. The four-month process resulted in the September release of the Playbook.

The Playbook identifies three transformations to our economy, regional infrastructure, and governments, and 10 critical actions that will strengthen and prepare the Innovation Corridor to

become a high-growth, more equitable, and integrated economic zone. These include, among others, developing a regional economic strategy that is matched by a skills agenda that aligns with in-demand jobs and the future of work, expanding affordable and high-capacity broadband, creating a regional affordable housing strategy, and making transportation systems seamless throughout the region by 2025.

The Playbook introduces a first cut regional economic structure developed from research and analysis undertaken by EBI prior to the pandemic. This analysis took an indepth look into the economic activities that occur on employment lands, including provincially-significant employment zones (“PSEZs”), to better inform policy-making and infrastructure planning. The resulting economic structure can form the basis of a regional economic development strategy that is a necessary component of economic recovery.

A key recommendation and quick win identified in the Playbook is for the Province to take the lead and work with municipalities, business, and innovators to standardize annual employment surveys across the region in order to provide the essential data needed for effective economic planning. More consistent and timely data on the economic activities that take place in and outside of employment lands would provide a solid foundation for advancing the PSEZ policy framework and supporting the competitiveness of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which contributes over two-thirds of the Province’s gross domestic product. Furthermore, Council’s advice is that the Province undertake substantive consultation to inform such a policy framework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Crombie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "C".

David Crombie
Chair, Greenbelt Council

Copies to:
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister
Greenbelt Council members
Ed McDonnell, CEO, Greenbelt Foundation
Greater Golden Horseshoe stakeholders