

## Simcoe County Targeted For New Growth Province Pushing Leapfrog Development

The Ministry of Infrastructure has prepared an amendment to its Places to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe that will see major new residential, industrial and commercial development in Simcoe County north of Ontario's Greenbelt.

We have until January 26th, 2011 to provide comments to the Ministry. This primer lays out the basic context and issues, however a full submission will be prepared and available for review. Details about submitting comments are included below.

### **This is what leap-frog growth and urban sprawl looks like.**

#### **Background**

- 2005 – Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing approves the Greenbelt Plan to sustain the countryside and protect good agricultural lands in the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- 2005 – Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Renewal approves Places To Grow: A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to ensure that planning is done in a “rational and strategic way”
- 2008 – Ministry of Environment approves Lake Simcoe Protection Plan “to protect and restore the ecological health of the Lake Simcoe watershed.”
- 2009 – Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure prepares the Simcoe Area: A Strategic Vision for Growth
- 2010 – Ministry of Infrastructure prepares Proposed Amendment #1 to the Growth Plan to steer growth into the Simcoe Area

#### **The Issue:**

The Ministry of Infrastructure has released for public consultation the Proposed Amendment # 1 to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the Amendment). In effect the Amendment paves the way for the population of the Simcoe Area to increase by about 230,000 to 677,000 and employment to 254,000 people by 2031. Townships like New Tecumseth and Bradford West Gwillimbury are expected to double in population by 2031. Two new employment areas are identified in greenfield agricultural lands along Highway 400 north of the Greenbelt.

#### **What's Wrong with this?**

The purpose of the Greenbelt and Growth Plans was to stop continuous urban sprawl by focusing growth in existing urban areas that are fully serviced or to lands that are adjacent to serviced lands to avoid the “greenbelt leapfrog” effect – basically to stop designating new areas for urban development that would require huge capital investment of new water pipes, new sewage pipes and new roads. The Growth Plan laid out a vision for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to the year 2031 that focused on long-term prosperity and quality of life in the Greater Toronto Area. The Growth Plan was recognized with a prestigious award by the American Planning Association for its innovative long-term vision for Ontario's most populous region.

This Amendment undermines and completely contradicts the vision for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and turns back the clock by opening up the whole of Simcoe County to fragmented urban planning: instead of focusing all new growth to Barrie (an existing urban centre with existing infrastructure), the province envisions that each municipality will have a piece of the pie: Bradford West Gwillimbury – urban node and new strategic employment area; Innisfil – close to double the population and new employment area; Adjala-Tosorontio – limited new residential and employment growth; New Tecumseth – double the population.

Much of this new growth will take place within the Lake Simcoe Watershed – a watershed indentified as a “watershed in distress” that required provincial intervention only two years ago with the enactment of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan. Of course with new urban growth comes the need for either new infrastructure or upgrades and extensions to existing services. Due to the sensitive nature of Lake Simcoe, growth under this Amendment will require massive pipeline projects to address the constraints of this watershed. The environmental impacts and costs of the infrastructure required to service this growth has not been examined, reversing the sustainable planning process.

**In summary:**

New growth is being proposed in a watershed that is highly sensitive to the impacts of urban development (stormwater runoff, waste water effluent, water-taking, construction of underground pipes), would require huge new capital investment of new water and wastewater pipes, roads and highways and in small rural municipalities that do not have either the capacity or the experience to plan, operate or maintain this scale of infrastructure.

**How to Submit Comments:**

There are two ways individuals and organizations should submit comments to the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) concerning this redirection of growth in Ontario.

**Directly through the EBR website:**

<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTExmJqX&statusId=MTY2OTI0&language=en>

**or by Mail to:**

Tija Dirks  
Director, Ministry of Energy, Ontario Growth Secretariat  
Growth Policy, Planning and Analysis  
777 Bay Street, Floor 4, Toronto Ontario M5G 2E5  
Phone: (416) 325-1210

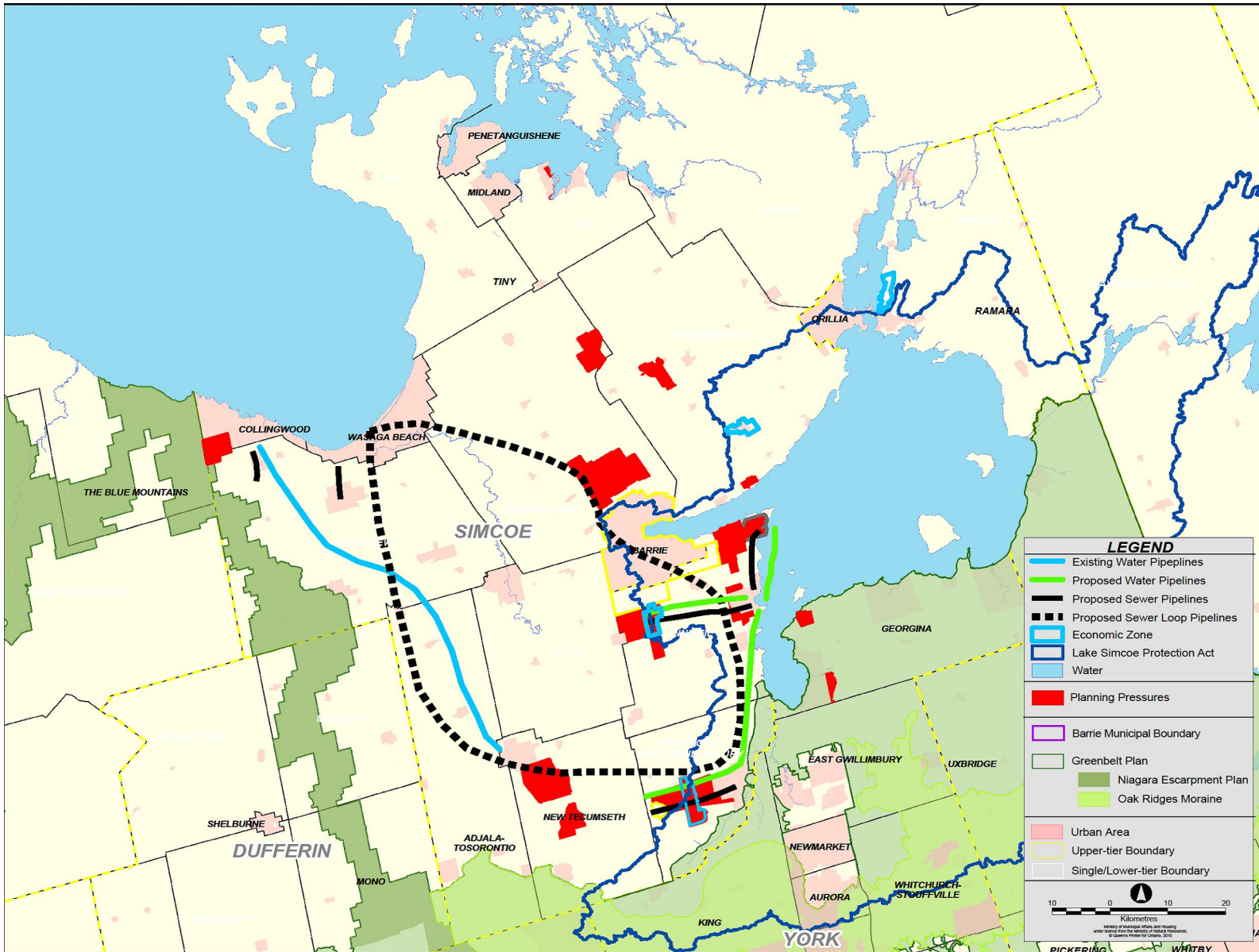
**Opportunity to Express Opinion: Attend Ministry of Infrastructure Presentation**

Thursday, January 13, 2011  
2:00-4:30pm  
MacLaren Art Centre, Rotary Education Room  
37 Mulcaster Street  
Barrie, Ontario

RSVP by January 10, 2011, to Nicole LeBrun at [Nicole.Lebrun@ontario.ca](mailto:Nicole.Lebrun@ontario.ca).

For more information on the Proposed Amendment and the technical briefing, visit [www.ontario.ca/placestogrow](http://www.ontario.ca/placestogrow)

# Proposed Growth Areas and Supporting Water & Sewer Infrastructure: Simcoe Area



## Proposed Amendment No 1: Simcoe Area Growth Plan

Myths	Facts
Growth needed in Simcoe due to land constraints in GTAH	GTAH has 85,000 acres of greenfield land designated as urban (adjacent to or nearby existing infrastructure, necessary to service growth; only 15% of this 'whitebelt' actually has planned development up to 2031 Vision and intent of Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe will be undermined putting into question the 2031 long term plans of other municipalities within GGH
Simcoe Area Strategy needed to manage growth in Simcoe	Simcoe Strategy subverts the intent of provincial policy by allowing leapfrog development across the Greenbelt
Proposed Amendment will protect Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga watersheds	Proposed Amendment contravenes best practices underpinning Lake Simcoe Protection Plan by approving land use designations before undertaking environment assessments on supporting infrastructure
The Province had to approve new industrial lands in Simcoe to "save" 2,500 jobs from moving out of Ontario	Toromont says not true but who knows? Metrus Development and Geranium Corp are major landowners in Simcoe County
The process has been and continues to be open, transparent and consultative	Secret negotiations via the provincial facilitator supplanted the Ontario Municipal Board Hearing The consultative period spans the municipal election (with new councils sworn in during month of December) and over the Christmas break

### Other Facts:

#### Ecological

- Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga River are too small and slow moving to ever be capable of sustainably accommodating substantial urbanization.
- Likewise, they have limited assimilative and water-taking capacity and there are more demands than can be accommodated and yet no body or framework to consider cumulative impact analysis and allocation of the resource.
- The Proposed Amendment ignores the Inter-governmental Action Plan (IGAP) by continuing to approve development when it identified Lake Simcoe will continue to experience significant degradation without upwards of \$160 million in remediation just from existing approved development.
- Incongruent with Lake Simcoe Protection Act and Plan.

## Planning

- Represents leap-frogging of Greenbelt and local communities.
- Undermines Growth Plan and overall 50-year vision for central Ontario.
- Gives special treatment to Simcoe, allowing County to by-pass Growth Plan policies; will suck growth away from other areas that must comply with Growth Plan.
- Ignores Inter-governmental Action Plan by perpetuating the approval of land use designations in the absence of confirmed sewer and water.
- Represents non-contiguous development within the County as a whole with multiple pipeline proposals extending many kilometres from Lake Simcoe west to Highways 400 and 27.
- Relies on small, rural municipalities to plan, operate and maintain these major pipeline systems.
- It ignores the significant land supply already in the basin.

## Agriculture

- Destabilizes a major agricultural region.
- Creates several “no mans lands” through the configuration of the proposed employment areas where agriculture will wane leading to new pressures to “fill in” the gaps.

For more information please contact:

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