



PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: A. BOURRIE, RPP, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

**NOTED: R. FORWARD, MBA, M.Sc., P. ENG.
GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: GROWING THE GREENBELT – PROPOSED STUDY AREA

DATE: FEBRUARY 26, 2018

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with information related to City staff's comments to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs related to the Proposed Study Area for Growing the Greenbelt.

In summary, staff reviewed the proposed Growing the Greenbelt Study Area Map and related documentation released December 2017. Staff's response to the Ministry is:

"The City recognizes the importance of protecting Ontario's water resources and understands the role that the Greenbelt plays to achieve that objective. However, the City is of the opinion that as the only designated Urban Growth Centre in the Simcoe Area, Barrie should not be within the Study Area for expansion of the Greenbelt and should not be identified as an external connection."

The formal letter (Appendix "A") goes on to provide additional supporting comments and questions may be directed to Andrea Bourrie, Director of Planning and Building Services at x4485.

BACKGROUND

Province is currently consulting on a study area for potential Greenbelt expansion (in the outer ring of the GGH), including discussion on:

- Approach to identifying important features for protecting water;
- Process followed for mapping the study area based on location of these features; and
- Other factors to be considered when mapping a proposed Greenbelt boundary.

The Consultation period runs (Dec 7, 2017 to March 7, 2018) and has included open house meetings (January 31, 2018 was in Barrie) and technical meetings with municipalities, conservation authorities and stakeholders, and Indigenous engagement meetings (February 1, 2018 was in Barrie).

The province is not currently consulting on a proposed new boundary; however, the province indicates that they will consult further before making any changes to the Greenbelt area.

In identifying a study area, the main guiding principle has been described as "protecting water features under pressure from urban development".

MMA, together with partner ministries, (MOECC, MNDM, MNRF, OMAFRA, MTO) undertook a technical process including:

- Analyzed water data and growth forecasts, narrowed focus to western outer ring where population growth is highest
- Met with conservation authorities, municipalities and stakeholder groups to identify and assess data
- Looked at "features and functions" with focus on:
- Recharge (what happens to water at, near or below the surface, for example rainwater soaking into soil);
- Discharge (release of water, e.g., from the ground or from a watershed).



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The process identified three key features as “building blocks”:

- Moraines
- Coldwater streams
- Wetland

Based on general locations of moraines, cold water streams and wetlands in the outer ring, “building blocks” data were layered to identify high concentrations of features using watersheds and catchment areas as the basis.

Characteristics of the study area include:

- Conceptual and not a proposed boundary;
- Incorporates a minimum 1 km buffer around water features;
- Limited to the boundaries of the GGH;
- To be refined through consultation and feedback;
- Comprises seven geographic areas;
- Includes the urban sections of river corridors flowing through the study area that could be considered for addition to the Greenbelt as urban river valleys.

Portions of the south end of Barrie, specifically in the post 2031 areas of the Secondary Plan Areas, have been identified as part of the Proposed Study Area.

APPENDIX

Appendix “A” – Letter to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs re: Growing the Greenbelt – Proposed Study Area.

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THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF BARRIE
PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
"Committed to Service Excellence"

February 14, 2018

Protecting Water
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
777 Bay Street, 13th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Dear Minister Mauro:

Re: Growing the Greenbelt – Proposed Study Area

The City of Barrie has reviewed the proposed Growing the Greenbelt Study Area Map and related documentation released December 2017. The City recognizes the importance of protecting Ontario's water resources and understands the role that the Greenbelt plays to achieve that objective. However, the City is of the opinion that as the only designated Urban Growth Centre in the Simcoe Area, Barrie should not be within the Study Area for expansion of the Greenbelt and should not be identified as an external connection.

Further comments are outlined below:

1. The City is a designated Growth Centre with a requirement under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 to accommodate 253,000 people and 129,000 jobs by 2041. 40% of that growth will occur within the City's Greenfield areas;
2. The Province is already making a major investment in the City of Barrie to expand GO Transit Services to improve connections to the GTA;
3. There should be a buffer around the City of Barrie that would allow for consideration of future growth in immediately adjacent communities, should future demand and servicing prove appropriate;
4. Any development that may be prohibited in parts of Simcoe County due to a future expansion of the Greenbelt should be directed to the City of Barrie, as the area's Urban Growth Centre, thereby make use of existing and planned infrastructure;
5. The City of Barrie has completed an extensive Natural Heritage System study as part of planning completed for the Salem and Hewitt's Secondary Plan Areas. As such key natural features such as the Hewitt's and Lover's Creek corridors are being protected; and
6. Given MOECC's upcoming LID policies, Greenbelt expansion areas that are proposed based solely on recharge don't need to be considered for Greenbelt expansion.

Thank you for giving the City the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Growing the Greenbelt Study Area. Please contact the undersigned at extension 4485 with any questions or to request additional information.

Sincerely,



Andrea Bourrie, RPP
Director of Planning and Building Services

ET/js