

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE APRIL 4 2005**

### **"PLACES TO GROW, BETTER CHOICES. BRIGHTER FUTURE. – DRAFT GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE" ONTARIO MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL - FEBRUARY 2005**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning recommends:

1. THAT the City of Vaughan advise the Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Municipal Affairs and Housing that the recently released, "Places to Grow - Better Choices. Brighter Future. – Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" contains proposed policies that infringe upon long standing areas of local jurisdiction in land use planning; and,
2. THAT the respective Ministers be advised that in consideration of the above, the City of Vaughan strongly objects to those portions of the Draft Growth Plan that enter into established areas of local planning interest; and,
3. THAT, in consideration of the short time made available to municipalities to review and comment on "Places to Grow - Better Choices. Brighter Future. – Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe", the City of Vaughan requests additional time be made available in order to prepare a proper response/comments; and,
4. THAT the Region of York be requested to withhold any comments to the province on the "Places to Grow –Better Choices. Brighter Future. – Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" until such time as the City of Vaughan, and other local municipalities in York Region have had an opportunity to jointly discuss and determine their respective responses to the "Draft Plan" document.
5. THAT the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the Regional Municipality of York be advised of the above concerns of the City of Vaughan and be requested to provide sufficient additional time for municipalities to respond with a proper response.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary comments and advice to Council with respect to the provincial document, "Places to Grow – Better Choices. Better Future. – Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe", February 2005.

#### **Background**

In June of 2004 the Ontario Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal released a Discussion Paper entitled, "Places to Grow, Better Choices, Brighter Future – A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" On October 13, 2004 Staff reported to the Committee of the Whole Working Session with a number of conclusions on the "Places to Grow" Growth Plan Discussion Paper document. The Committee comments from that meeting formed the basis for the recommendations to the October 25, 2004 meeting of Council. Council's direction was subsequently sent to the Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Region of York, for their consideration (Attachment 1).

It should also be noted that previous to the release of the "Places to Grow" document, three Consultation Discussion Papers respecting planning reform in Ontario were released by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Discussion Paper #1 - "Planning Act Reform and Implementation Tools; Discussion Paper #2 - "Provincial Policy Statement: Draft Policies"; and,

Discussion Paper #3 - "Ontario Municipal Board Reform". Council considered a Staff Report on these documents also on October 25, 2004.

Further, during this period, MMAH also enacted the Greenbelt Protection Act to freeze development within the "Greenbelt Study Area. The Greenbelt Act came into effect on February 24, 2005, and the Greenbelt Plan was finalized on February 28, 2005. Both are effective retroactively to December 16, 2004. The revised Provincial Policy Statement was released on March 2, 2005.

On February 16, 2005 the Ontario Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal released the "Places to Grow - Better Choices. Brighter Future. – Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" (Attachment 2) prepared by the Ministry following receiving input on the 2004 Discussion Paper. The ministry requested that municipalities provide their comments by April 18, 2005.

It is the "Draft Growth Plan" that is the subject of this Staff Report.

### **Analysis**

Staff has been able to complete a preliminary review of the "Draft Growth Plan" document within the time frame requested by the province. However, staff feels strongly that a thorough review, including important consultation with other local municipalities and York Region, is essential for such an important provincial planning document. Additional time will be needed to carry out this detailed review.

The Draft Growth Plan proposes a vision and strategy for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe to the year 2031. Staff review of the document to date indicates that the Draft Growth Plan addresses many of the concepts presented in the earlier Discussion Paper and adds a number of new initiatives. The Draft Growth Plan is more complex than the Discussion Paper and is structured into eight main sections followed by a Glossary, Schedules (primarily maps) and Appendices. The main sections are, "where and how to grow", "infrastructure to support growth", "sub-area growth strategies", "implementation", and, "a provincial multi-year infrastructure strategy". There is also a section on "the role of the citizen" dealing with public consultation and information.

Much of the Draft Growth Plan may be supportable and contains useful policy for the coordination for infrastructure delivery. However, it also, unacceptably, enters into policy areas that have long been the established responsibility of local municipal land use planning. This is of particular concern considering the Draft Growth Plan, "would derive its authority from the proposed 'Places to Grow Act' and, if passed, through an Order in Council made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under that act. Section 14 of the proposed act states that planning decisions made by municipalities, the Province and other authorities would conform to (the Growth Plan prepared under the Act). Official plans of municipalities located within the growth plan shall also conform to this growth plan." (pp 9 & 10, Draft Growth Plan)

To illustrate the potential implications of this strategy, staff would draw Council's attention to the section on "sub-area growth strategies", Section 5.

The concept of sub-area growth plans uses the approach of partnerships and collaboration to achieve the vision in the Growth Plan. These plans are to be prepared by the province with the participation of Regional and local municipalities and other agencies. However, the Province does not clarify whether only the province can initiate such plans or whether or not local municipalities will be able to initiate sub-area growth plans. In any event, sub-area growth plans concept appears to be inserting the province into established areas of local land use planning jurisdiction. For this reason, the City of Vaughan should make its opposition to provincial involvement at such a local scale. Rather, the Province should support the establishment of plans at the wide provincial/regional scale in support of Regional and local municipality initiatives.

Other sections of the Draft Growth Plan contain policies respecting provincial policy control over changes to urban boundaries, land use designations in employment areas and the establishment of population and employment targets for municipalities.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council.

### **Conclusion**

The Growth Plan, should it become legislation, has the potential to provide a better match of infrastructure with growth. However, as currently structured, it enters into several areas that have been long established as, and are appropriately, the responsibility of local municipalities. These sections of the draft document require more detailed review by the City and will require change.

In consideration of the relatively short time available to Staff to prepare comments on the Draft Growth Plan, the City should reserve the opportunity to provide additional comments to the Region and the Province.

The recommendation of this report should be adopted and forwarded to the Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal and Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Region of York for their consideration.

### **Attachments**

1. October 25, 2004 Staff Report and Council Direction on "Places to Grow" Discussion Paper, June 2004 - **Councillors Only**
2. "Places to Grow - Better Choices. Brighter Future - Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, February 2005 - **Councillors only**

### **Report prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

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