
MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 7-2019

**Subject: Niagara Region's draft comments: Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan
(ERO 013-4504, 013-4505, 013-4506, 013-4507)**

Date: February 20, 2019

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Isaiah Banach, Manager, Long Range Planning

On January 15, 2019, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) released a proposed amendment to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017 (the "Growth Plan").

The Growth Plan plays a significant role in Regional planning; it directs where and how municipalities grow. The *Planning Act, 1990* requires all municipal planning decisions to conform with the Growth Plan.

The deadline to provide comments to the Province on the proposed amendment is February 28, 2019. The Region is preparing a submission, with input from local planning Directors and Managers.

Attached to this memo is Regional staff's preliminary comments. At the time of writing, these comments are draft; they were developed to share with local staff, which was done on February 8, 2019. On February 14, 2019, a roundtable meeting was held with planning Directors and Managers.

The following are some of the key comments arising from the Region's initial review of the amended Growth Plan:

- The amendment proposes new Natural Heritage System policies and applies the Region's mapping to those policies. If implemented, this would lead to conflicts, mainly in the Region's rural areas. We will suggest ways to resolve the conflict until the new Regional Official Plan is adopted at which time the problem will be resolved permanently.
- New provincially significant employment zones are proposed in the GTA, although none are proposed in Niagara. Staff suggest that Niagara be granted the authority to designate provincially significant employment zones in the Gateway Economic Zone, without amending the Growth Plan.
- Prioritizing transit-supportive land use permissions for parcels adjacent to or near higher order transit facilities.

- Clarifying number of jobs and scale of employment uses where terms 'similar' and 'significant' are referenced.
- Improving economic competitiveness by enabling uses ancillary to the principle use of major goods movement facilities on adjacent or nearby lands.

Prior to February 28, 2019, the Region, with input from local planning staff, will update the draft material for submission. In addition to comments on the draft Growth Plan, the submission will include a copy of the Region's Coordinated Plan Review comments, initially submitted to the Province in 2016. The Province requested that comments provided to the previous parliament be resubmitted for their consideration.

Further details on the proposed amendment to the Growth Plan can be viewed on the MMAH website and the Environmental Registry of Ontario:

- <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page20926.aspx>.
- <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4504>;
- <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4505>;
- <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4506>;
- <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4507>.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Isaiah Banach

Manager, Long Range Planning
Planning & Development Services
Niagara Region

Attachment:

- Niagara Region's preliminary draft comments: Amendment 1 to the Growth Plan

Table 1: Comments on proposed amendment policy

Amendment Policy #	Growth Plan text as modified through Amendment Text = removed ; <u>Text</u> = added ; Text = retained	Draft: Niagara Region’s comments to Province Text = removed; <u>Text</u> = added; Text = retained; Text = Region revision	Comments provided by local municipal partners
2.2.1 MANAGING GROWTH			
2.2.1.2	<p>2. Forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan will be allocated based on the following:</p> <p>a. the vast majority of growth will be directed to settlement areas that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. have a delineated built boundary;ii. have existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems; andiii. can support the achievement of complete communities; <p>b. growth will be limited in settlement areas that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. are undelineated built-up areas<u>rural settlements</u>;ii. are not serviced by existing or planned <i>municipal water and wastewater systems</i>; oriii. are in the <i>Greenbelt Area</i>; <p>c. within <i>settlement areas</i>, growth will be focused in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. <i>delineated built-up areas</i>;ii. <i>strategic growth areas</i>;iii. locations with existing or planned transit, with a priority on <i>higher order transit</i> where it exists or is planned; andiv. areas with existing or planned <i>public service facilities</i>; <p>d. development will be directed to <i>settlement areas</i>, except where the policies of this Plan permit otherwise;</p> <p>e. development will be generally directed away from <i>hazardous lands</i>; and</p> <p>f. the establishment of new <i>settlement areas</i> is prohibited.</p>	<p>Regional staff support the proposed change.</p>	
2.2.1.4	<p>4. Applying the policies of this Plan will support the achievement of complete communities that:</p> <p>a. feature a diverse mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, and convenient access to local stores, services, and public service facilities;</p> <p>b. improve social equity and overall quality of life, including human health, for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes;</p> <p>c. provide a diverse range and mix of housing options, including second units and affordable housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes and incomes;</p> <p>d. expand convenient access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. a range of transportation options, including options for the safe, comfortable and convenient use of active transportation;ii. public service facilities, co-located and integrated in community hubs;	<p>The Region has two of comments on these changes:</p> <p>First, replacing terms “low-carbon communities” and “net-zero communities” with “environmentally sustainable communities” will lead to misalignment between the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, and Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), as the Greenbelt Plan and NEP still reference “low-carbon communities” and “net-zero communities”. References in the Greenbelt Plan and NEP should be consistent.</p> <p>Second, in our view, the Growth Plan should retain the language in Policy 2.2.1.4.e relating to site design and urban design standards.</p> <p>The application of urban design standards are essential to the realisation of vibrant, livable, and healthy communities in the Growth Plan area. Urban design guidelines attract investment, and demonstrate how forms of development can work within the varied contexts found in Niagara, and raise investors’ confidence.</p>	

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	<p>iii. an appropriate supply of safe, publicly-accessible open spaces, parks, trails, and other recreational facilities; and</p> <p>iv. healthy, local, and affordable food options, including through urban agriculture;</p> <p>e. ensure the development of high-quality<u>provide for a more</u> compact builtform, an attractive and <u>a</u> vibrant public realm, including public open spaces, through site design and urban design standards;</p> <p>f. mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, build<u>improve</u> resilience, <u>and</u> reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute towards the achievement of low-carbon communities to environmental sustainability; and</p> <p>g. integrate green infrastructure and <u>appropriate</u> low impact development.</p>	<p>In our view, these terms should be specifically itemized as a method for achieving complete communities in the Growth Plan.</p>	
2.2.1.6	<p>6. Based on a land needs assessment undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.1.5, some upper- and single-tier municipalities in the <i>outer ring</i> will determine that they have <i>excess lands</i>. These municipalities will:</p> <p>a. determine which lands will be identified as <i>excess lands</i> based on the hierarchy of <i>settlement areas</i> established in accordance with policy 2.2.1.3; and</p> <p>b. prohibit <i>development</i> on all <i>excess lands</i> to the horizon of this Plan; <u>and</u></p> <p>c. <u>where appropriate, use additional tools to reduce the land that is available for development, such as those set out in policies 5.2.8.3 and 5.2.8.4.</u></p>	<p>Regional staff request clarification on the proposed phrase “use additional tools” in Policy 2.2.1.6.c.</p> <p>The Region prefers that it be able to identify the tools – rather than the Province – in order to address site-specific conditions. Regional staff would support the inclusion of language to clarify that intent.</p>	
2.2.2 DELINEATED BUILT-UP AREAS			
2.2.2.1	<p>1. By the year 2031, and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 60 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper-or single-tier municipality will be within the delineated built-up area.</p> <p><u>1. 2.</u> By the time the next <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> is approved and in effect, and each year until 2031, a<u>for each year thereafter, the applicable minimum intensification target is as follows:</u></p> <p>a. <u>A minimum of 60 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within each of the City of Hamilton and the Regions of Peel, Waterloo and York will be within the delineated built-up area;</u></p> <p>b. <u>A</u> minimum of 50 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper-or single-tier municipality<u>of the Cities of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Orillia</u></p>	<p>Regional staff support this change. Since the target are minimums, it allows the Region to identify a higher number if determined to be appropriate.</p>	

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	<u>and Peterborough and the Regions of Durham, Halton and Niagara</u> will be within the <i>delineated built-up area</i> ; <u>and</u> c. <u>The City of Kawartha Lakes and the Counties of Brant, Dufferin, Haldimand, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Wellington will, through the next <i>municipal comprehensive review</i>, each establish the minimum percentage of all residential development occurring annually that will be directed within the <i>delineated built-up area</i>, based on maintaining or improving upon the minimum intensification target contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan.</u>		
2.2.2.3	<u>3. 4.</u> All municipalities will develop a strategy to achieve the minimum intensification target and <i>intensification</i> throughout <i>delineated built-up areas</i> , which will: a. encourage <i>intensification</i> generally to achieve the desired urban structure; b. identify the appropriate type and scale of development and transition of built form to adjacent areas; a. e. identify <i>strategic growth</i> areas to support achievement of the intensification target and recognize them as a key focus for development; b. <u>identify the appropriate type and scale of development in strategic growth areas and transition of built form to adjacent areas;</u> c. <u>encourage intensification generally throughout the delineated built-up area;</u> d. ensure lands are zoned and development is designed in a manner that supports the achievement of <i>complete communities</i> ; e. prioritize planning and investment in <i>infrastructure</i> and <i>public service facilities</i> that will support <i>intensification</i> ; and f. be implemented through official plan policies and designations, updated zoning and other supporting documents.		
2.2.2.4	<u>4. 5.</u> For <u>Councils of</u> upper- and single-tier municipalities, council may request an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.2.2 through the next <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> <u>1</u> where it is demonstrated that this target cannot be achieved and that the alternative target will: a. maintain or improve on the minimum intensification target in the official plan that is approved and in effect; b. be appropriate given the size of the <i>delineated built-up area</i>; <u>location and capacity of the <i>delineated built-up area</i>.</u> c. account for existing <i>infrastructure</i>, <i>public service facilities</i>, and capital planning; d. account for existing planning approvals and other related planning studies;		

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	<p>e. consider the actual rate of intensification being achieved annually across the upper or single tier municipality;</p> <p>f. support diversification of the total range and mix of housing options in delineated built-up areas to the horizon of this Plan, while considering anticipated demand;</p> <p>g. account for lands where development is prohibited or severely restricted; and</p> <p>h. support the achievement of complete communities.</p> <p>6. For upper and single tier municipalities in the outer ring, council may request an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.2.1 through a municipal comprehensive review where it is demonstrated that target cannot be achieved and that the alternative target is appropriate given the criteria in policy 2.2.2.5.</p>		
2.2.2.5	<p>5. 7. The Minister may permit an alternative to the target established in policies 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.2. If council does not make a request or the Minister does not permit an alternative target, the targets established in policies 2.2.2.1 and 2.2.2.2 will apply accordingly.</p>		
2.2.4 TRANSIT CORRIDORS AND STATION AREAS			
2.2.4.4	<p>4. For upper and single tier municipalities, council may request an alternative to a particular major transit station area, the Minister may approve a target that is lower than the applicable target established in policy 2.2.4.3 through a municipal comprehensive review, where it is <u>has been</u> demonstrated that: a. this target cannot be achieved because:</p> <p>a. i. development is prohibited by provincial policy or severely restricted on a significant portion of the lands within the delineated area; or</p> <p>ii. planning for the relevant minimum density target established in policy 2.2.4.3 would be premature given the potential for redevelopment of the existing built form within the horizon of this Plan;</p> <p>b. the alternative target would: <u>there are a limited number of residents and jobs associated with the built form, but a major trip generator or feeder service will sustain high ridership at the station or stop.</u></p> <p>i. support the achievement of a more compact built form, where appropriate;</p> <p>ii. maximize the number of potential transit users within walking distance of the station;</p> <p>iii. increase the existing density of the area;</p> <p>iv. be appropriate given the existing design of streets and open spaces, levels of feeder service and the range of densities across the transit network; and</p>		

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	v. —not preclude planning for the minimum density targets established in policy 2.2.4.3 in the future; and		
2.2.4.5	5. c. where there are four or more <u>Notwithstanding policies 5.2.3.2 b) and 5.2.5.3 c), upper- and single-tier municipalities may delineate the boundaries of major transit station areas within the upper- or single-tier municipality along the same priority transit corridor or subway line, the average of the targets established and identify minimum density targets for those major transit station areas will meet or exceed the applicable minimum density target established in policy 2.2.4.3. For the purposes of this policy, Union Station will be excluded in advance of the next municipal comprehensive review, provided it is done in accordance with subsections 16(15) or (16) of the Planning Act, as the case may be.</u> 5. The Minister may permit an alternative to the targets established in policy 2.2.4.3. If council does not make a request or the Minister does not permit an alternative target, the targets established in policy 2.2.4.3 will apply.		
2.2.4.10	10. Lands adjacent to or near to existing and planned <i>frequent transit</i> should be planned to be <i>transit-supportive</i> and supportive of <i>active transportation</i> and a range and mix of uses and activities.	<p>Regional staff requests the inclusion of additional provisions to Section 2.2.4.10 to accommodate site-specific conditions when implementing <i>transit-supportive</i> uses for lands adjacent to or near <i>higher order transit</i> facilities.</p> <p>In order to truly fulfill this vision, the Growth Plan must include and grant priority to <i>transit-supportive</i> land use permissions for parcels adjacent to or near <i>higher order transit</i> facilities.</p> <p>In 2018, Metrolinx announced its new 'Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Market Driven Strategy' approach for the design and construction of transit stations. This strategy is intended to implement transit infrastructure through leveraging Metrolinx's network and real estate assets to attract municipal and private investment for improved station function.</p> <p>The Region recognizes the appetite for Metrolinx's new TOD approach for existing and future potential GO Station sites in Niagara. However, not all <i>higher order transit</i> facility sites are conducive to accommodating this TOD approach. Reasons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an absence of Metrolinx or municipally-owned assets on/or near the facility site;• incompatible land use permissions on parcels adjacent to facility sites; and,• inability to accommodate TOD element and/or uses due to limitations caused by site size and/or restrictions. <p>The Region supports the Province's vision to expand the role of <i>higher order transit</i> to help attain <i>complete communities</i> and encourage a</p>	

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		<p>more evenly distributed <i>modal share</i> through improved <i>multimodal</i> connections and <i>transit service integration</i>. To enable transit-supportive development, it is recommended that Policy 2.2.4.10 be revised as highlighted below:</p> <p>Recommended Policy Revision (Policy 2.2.4.10) <u>To support the optimization of transit investment across the GGH, lands adjacent to or near existing and planned <i>frequent transit</i> or <i>higher order transit</i> facilities, including those within the Greenbelt Plan area, where such lands have been approved through a municipal class environmental assessment,</u> should be planned to be transit-supportive and supportive of active transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) <u>provide <i>transit-supportive</i> uses that enable opportunities for improved <i>transit service integration</i>;</u>b) <u>facilitate <i>multimodal</i> connections that encourage a more evenly distributed <i>modal share</i>;</u>c) <u>support <i>active transportation</i>; and</u>d) offer a range and mix of uses and activities. <p>It is the Region's opinion that these additional provisions for implementing <i>transit-supportive</i> uses around <i>higher order transit</i> facilities will improve the viability of public private partnership opportunities in Niagara sought through Metrolinx's TOD Market Driven Strategy. Further, it will improve the ability for municipalities to achieve the guiding principles of the Growth Plan through creating integrated and more complete communities.</p> <p>If the Region's proposed revision to Policy 2.2.4.10 is implemented within the amended Growth Plan, the Region requests that a complimentary policy revision be made within the Greenbelt Plan should it be amended.</p>	
2.2.5 EMPLOYMENT			
2.2.5.5	<p>5. Upper and single tier municipalities, in consultation with lower tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, will each develop an employment strategy that:<u>Municipalities should designate and preserve lands within <i>settlement areas</i> located adjacent to or near <i>major goods movement facilities and corridors</i>, including major highway interchanges, as areas for manufacturing, warehousing and logistics, and appropriate associated uses and ancillary facilities.</u></p> <p>a. establishes a minimum density target for all <i>employment areas</i>, measured in jobs per hectare, that reflects the current and anticipated type and scale of employment that characterizes the <i>employment areas</i> and aligns with policy 2.2.5.1;</p>		

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	b. identifies opportunities for the intensification of employment areas on sites that support active transportation and are served by existing or planned transit; and c. will be implemented through a municipal comprehensive review, including official plan policies and designations and zoning by laws.		
2.2.5.6	6. Upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, will designate all <i>employment areas</i> , including any prime employment areas , in official plans and protect them for appropriate employment uses over the long-term. <u>For greater certainty, employment area designations may be incorporated into upper- and single-tier official plans by amendment at any time in advance of the next municipal comprehensive review.</u>	Regional staff support this change.	
2.2.5.7	7. Municipalities will plan for all <i>employment areas</i> within settlement areas, with the exception of any prime employment areas , by: a. prohibiting residential uses and ; <u>b.</u> limiting other <i>sensitive land uses</i> that are not ancillary to the primary employment use; <u>c.</u> b. prohibiting major retail uses or establishing a size or scale threshold for any <i>major retail</i> uses that are permitted and prohibiting <u>any major retail</u> uses that would exceed that threshold; and <u>d.</u> c. <u>integrating providing an appropriate interface between employment areas with and</u> adjacent non-employment areas and developing vibrant, mixed-use areas and innovation hubs, where appropriate to maintain land use compatibility.	Regional staff support this change, as the term 'prime employment' was confusing and difficult to implement. Regional staff requests that proposed phrase "appropriate interface" in Policy 2.2.5.7.d be reconsidered. As an example, if an area were to be identified by a municipality as Class 4 under the MOE's NPC-300 Guideline, thus allowing higher sound level limits, that may not be considered an "interface" between employment areas and adjacent areas. Regional staff suggest adding the phrase "or mitigation" after "appropriate interface" to address this concern.	
2.2.5.8	8. Municipalities may identify employment areas located adjacent to or near major goods movement facilities and corridors, including major highway interchanges, as prime employment areas and plan for their protection for appropriate employment uses over the long-term by: The development of sensitive land uses, major retail uses or major office uses will avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on industrial, manufacturing or other uses that are particularly vulnerable to encroachment. a. prohibiting residential, institutional, and other sensitive land uses; b. prohibiting retail and office uses that are not associated with or ancillary to the primary employment use; and c. planning for freight supportive land use patterns.	Regional staff support this change.	
2.2.5.9	9. The conversion of lands within <i>employment areas</i> or prime employment areas to non-employment uses may be permitted		

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	only through a <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> where it is demonstrated that: a. there is a need for the conversion; b. the lands are not required over the horizon of this Plan for the employment purposes for which they are designated; c. the municipality will maintain sufficient employment lands to accommodate forecasted employment growth to the horizon of this Plan; d. the proposed uses would not adversely affect the overall viability of the <i>employment area</i> or prime employment area or the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan; and e. there are existing or planned <i>infrastructure</i> and <i>public service facilities</i> to accommodate the proposed uses.		
2.2.5.10	10. For greater certainty, the redesignation of an <u>Notwithstanding policy 2.2.5.9, until the next municipal comprehensive review, lands within existing employment</u> area <u>areas may be converted</u> to a designation that permits non-employment uses is considered a conversion and may occur only through a municipal comprehensive review undertaken in accordance with <u>provided the conversion would:</u> <u>a. satisfy the requirements of policy 2.2.5.9 a), d) and e); and</u> <u>b. maintain a significant number of jobs on those lands.</u>	Regional staff generally support this change; however, requests clarification from the Province in relation to the phrase “significant number of jobs” in Policy 2.2.5.10.b. Regional staff request that the Region – rather than the Province – be able to identify what it considered a significant number of jobs. What may be considered “significant” in all or part of the Niagara may be different than other municipalities in the GTAH, thus a universal application of this phrase would not be appropriate. Additionally, Regional staff request the Province to clarify that an amendment to an upper-tier official plan is not required during instances where employment areas are not yet identified in the official plan.	
2.2.5.11	11. Any change to an official plan to permit new or expanded opportunities for <i>major retail</i> in an <i>employment area</i> may <u>only</u> occur only through a municipal comprehensive review undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.5.9 <u>or 2.2.5.10</u> .		
2.2.5.12	<u>12. The Minister may identify provincially significant employment zones to support co-ordination of planning for jobs and economic development at a regional scale and will require their protection through appropriate official plan policies and designations. Policy 2.2.5.10 will not apply to any part of an employment area within a provincially significant employment zone.</u>	Regional staff note that the proposed amendment does not identify any parts of Niagara as “provincially significant employment zones”. At a future time, the Region may desire to identify all or part of the areas with the Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre as provincially significant employment zones. These areas exist only in Niagara, and currently are subject to policy 2.2.4.15: <i>In recognition of the importance of cross-border trade with the United States, this Plan recognizes a Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre near the Niagara-United States border. Planning and economic development in these areas will support economic diversity</i>	

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		<p><i>and promote increased opportunities for cross-border trade, movement of goods, and tourism.</i></p> <p>Regional staff request the Province to grant the Region the ability to identify all or some of the Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre as provincially significant employment zones without amendment to the Growth Plan. Niagara's expanding role in the Greater Golden Horseshoe is driving the need for the Region to continuously identify and protect existing and emerging employment areas along <i>major goods movement facilities and corridors</i>. Granting the Region this ability enables the opportunity to advance responsiveness to market demands, as well as improve efficiency through reducing the costs and time associated to a provincial plan amendment process. Staff recommend that proposed Policy 2.2.5.12 be revised as highlighted below:</p> <p><u>12. "The Minister may identify provincially significant employment zones to support co-ordination of planning for jobs and economic development at a regional scale and will require their protection through appropriate official plan policies and designations. Lands in the Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre may be identified as provincially significant employment zones without amendment to this Plan, at the request of the Region of Niagara. Policy 2.2.5.10 will not apply to any part of an employment area within a provincially significant employment zone."</u></p>	
2.2.5.13	<p><u>13. Upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, will establish minimum density targets for all employment areas within settlement areas that:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>a. are measured in jobs per hectare;</u><u>b. reflect the current and anticipated type and scale of employment that characterizes the employment area to which the target applies;</u><u>c. reflects opportunities for the intensification of employment areas on sites that support active transportation and are served by existing or planned transit; and</u><u>d. will be implemented through official plan policies and designations and zoning by-laws.</u>		
2.2.5.14	<p><u>14. Outside of employment areas, the redevelopment of any employment lands should retain space for a similar number of jobs to remain accommodated on site.</u></p>	<p>Similar to the comments provided for Policy 2.2.5.10 above, Regional staff request that the Region – rather than the Province – be able to identify what it considered a similar number of jobs. What may be considered "similar" in all or part of the Region may be different than other municipalities in the GTAH, thus a universal application would not be appropriate.</p>	
2.2.5.16	<p><u>16.</u> 13. Existing office parks will be supported by:</p>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. improving connectivity with transit and <i>active transportation</i> networks;b. providing for an appropriate mix of amenities and open space to serve the workforce;c. planning for <i>intensification</i> of employment uses;d. <u>ensuring that the introduction of any non-employment uses, if appropriate, would be limited and would not negatively impact the primary function of the area;</u> ande. approaches to transportation demand management that reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicle use.		
2.2.6 HOUSING			
2.2.6.1	<p>1. Upper- and single-tier municipalities, in consultation with lower-tier municipalities, the Province, and other appropriate stakeholders, will each develop a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. <u>support</u> housing strategy that a supports choice through the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, as well as the other policies of this Plan by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. identifying a diverse range and mix of housing options and densities, including second units and <i>affordable</i> housing to meet projected needs of current and future residents; andii. establishing targets for <i>affordable</i> ownership housing and rental housing;b. <u>identifies</u> mechanisms, including the use of land use planning and financial tools, to support the implementation of policy 2.2.6.1 a);c. aligns<u>align land use planning</u> with applicable housing and homelessness plans required under the Housing Services Act, 2011; andd. will be implemented<u>implement policy 2.2.6.1 a), b) and c)</u> through official plan policies and designations and zoning by-laws.		
2.2.6.2	<p>2. Notwithstanding policy 1.4.1 of the PPS, 2014, in preparing a housing strategy in accordance with<u>implementing</u> policy 2.2.6.1, municipalities will support the achievement of <i>complete communities</i> by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. planning to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan;b. planning to achieve the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan;c. considering the range and mix of housing options and densities of the existing housing stock; andd. planning to diversify their overall housing stock across the municipality.		

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2.2.6.5	5. When a <i>settlement area</i> boundary has been expanded through a municipal comprehensive review in accordance with the policies in subsection 2.2.8, the new <i>designated greenfield area</i> will be planned based on the housing strategy developed in accordance with policies 2.2.6.1 and 2.2.6.2.		
2.2.7 DESIGNATED GREENFIELD AREAS			
2.2.7.2	The <u>minimum density target applicable to the designated greenfield area</u> of each upper- or <u>and</u> single-tier municipality will be planned <u>is as follows:</u> a. <u>The City of Hamilton and the Regions of Peel, Waterloo and York will plan</u> to achieve within the horizon of this Plan a minimum density target that is not less than 8 <u>60 residents and jobs combined per hectare;</u> b. <u>The Cities of Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Orillia and Peterborough and the Regions of Durham, Halton and Niagara will plan to achieve within the horizon of this Plan a minimum density target that is not less than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare; and</u> c. <u>The City of Kawartha Lakes and the Counties of Brant, Dufferin, Haldimand, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe and Wellington will plan to achieve within the horizon of this Plan a minimum density target that is not less than 40 residents and jobs combined per hectare.</u>	Regional staff support this change. Since the target are minimums, it allows the Region to identify a higher number if determined to be appropriate.	
2.2.7.4	4. For Councils of upper- and single-tier municipalities in the inner ring, policy 2.2.7.2 does not apply to <u>may request an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.7.2 where it is demonstrated that the target cannot be achieved and that the alternative target will support the diversification of the total range and mix of housing options and the achievement of a more compact built form in designated greenfield areas identified in official plans that are approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017. Where policy 2.2.7.2 does not apply to the horizon of this Plan in a manner that is appropriate given the characteristics of the municipality and adjacent communities.</u> a. the minimum density target contained in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan that is approved and in effect as of that date will continue to apply to these lands until the next municipal comprehensive review is approved and in effect. Until that time: i. the density target will continue to be measured across all lands that were subject to the original target that is approved and in effect; and		

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	<p>ii. the municipality will document actions taken to increase the planned density of these lands, where appropriate;</p> <p>b. through the next <i>municipal comprehensive review</i>, these lands will be planned to achieve within the horizon of this Plan, a minimum density target that will:</p> <p>i. be measured in accordance with policy 2.2.7.3;</p> <p>ii. constitute an increase in the planned density of the lands over which it is measured; and</p> <p>iii. not be less than 60 residents and jobs combined per hectare;</p> <p>c. council may request an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.7.4 b) iii) through the next <i>municipal comprehensive review</i>, where it is demonstrated that the alternative target will:</p> <p>i. not be less than the minimum density target in the official plan that is approved and in effect;</p> <p>ii. reflect documented actions taken to increase planned densities in accordance with policy 2.2.7.4 a) ii);</p> <p>iii. achieve a more <i>compact built form</i> that supports existing or planned transit and <i>active transportation</i> to the horizon of this Plan;</p> <p>iv. account for existing and planned <i>infrastructure, public service facilities</i>, and capital planning;</p> <p>v. account for lands built and planning matters that are approved and in effect;</p> <p>vi. support the diversification of the total range and mix of housing options in <i>designated greenfield areas</i> to the horizon of this Plan, while considering the community character; and</p> <p>vii. support the achievement of <i>complete communities</i>; and</p> <p>d. the Minister may permit an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.7.4 b). If council does not make a request or if the Minister does not permit an alternative target, the target established in policy 2.2.7.4 b) applies to these lands.</p> <p>5. For upper and single-tier municipalities in the <i>outer ring</i>, the minimum density target for <i>designated greenfield areas</i> contained in the applicable official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to apply until the next <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> is approved and in effect.</p> <p>6. For upper and single-tier municipalities in the <i>outer ring</i>, council may request an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.7.2 through a <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> where it is demonstrated that the target cannot be achieved and that the alternative target:</p> <p>a. will maintain or improve on the minimum density target in the official plan that is approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017;</p>		

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	b. will achieve a more compact built form to the horizon of this Plan that is appropriate given the characteristics of the municipality and adjacent communities; and c. is appropriate given the criteria identified in policy 2.2.7.4 c), with the exception of policies 2.2.7.4 c) i and vii.		
2.2.7.5	5. 7. The Minister may permit an alternative to the target established in policy 2.2.7.67.2. If council does not make a request or the Minister does not permit an alternative target, the target established in policy 2.2.7.2 will apply.		
2.2.8 SETTLEMENT AREA BOUNDARY EXPANSIONS			
2.2.8.3	<p>3. Where the need for a <i>settlement area</i> boundary expansion has been justified in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2, the feasibility of the proposed expansion will be determined and the most appropriate location for the proposed expansion will be identified based on the <u>comprehensive application of all of the policies in this Plan, including the</u> following:</p> <p>a. there are <u>is sufficient capacity in</u> existing or planned <i>infrastructure and public service facilities</i> to support the achievement of complete communities;</p> <p>b. the infrastructure and public service facilities needed would be financially viable over the full life cycle of these assets, based on mechanisms such as asset management planning and revenue generation analyses;</p> <p><u>c. the proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent and stormwater master plans or equivalent, as appropriate;</u></p> <p>c. the proposed expansion would align with a water and wastewater master plan or equivalent that has been completed in accordance with the policies in subsection 3.2.6;</p> <p>d. the proposed expansion would align with a stormwater master plan or equivalent that has been completed in accordance with the policies in subsection 3.2.7;</p> <p>d. e. watershed planning or equivalent has demonstrated that the proposed expansion, including the associated <u>water, wastewater and stormwater</u> servicing, would not negatively impact <u>be planned and demonstrated to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential negative impacts on watershed conditions and</u> the <i>water resource system</i>, including the <i>quality and quantity of water</i>;</p> <p>e. f. key hydrologic areas and the Natural Heritage System <u>for the Growth Plan</u> should be avoided where possible;</p> <p>g. for settlement areas that receive their water from or discharge their sewage to inland lakes, rivers, or groundwater, a completed environmental assessment for new or expanded services has identified how expanded water and wastewater</p>	<p>Regional staff request the Province be consistent with proposed amendment Policy 4.2.1.3 and the application of undertaking 'watershed planning or equivalent'.</p> <p>Regional staff support the inclusion of water and wastewater master plans or equivalent and stormwater plans or equivalent, in proposed Policy 2.2.8.3.c. In the Region's view, this policy should also specify Transportation Master Plans, as they are an essential component of growth planning. Staff suggest the following text be included to Policy 2.2.8.3.c as highlighted below:</p> <p><u>c. "the proposed expansion would be informed by applicable water and wastewater master plans or equivalent, and stormwater master plans or equivalent, and Transportation Master Plans or equivalent, as appropriate."</u></p>	

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	<p>treatment capacity would be addressed in a manner that is fiscally and environmentally sustainable;</p> <p><u>f.</u> h. <i>prime agricultural areas</i> should be avoided where possible. An agricultural impact assessment will be used to determine the location of the expansion<u>To support the <i>Agricultural System</i>, alternative locations across the upper- or single-tier municipality will be evaluated, prioritized and determined</u> based on avoiding, minimizing and mitigating the impact on the <i>Agricultural System</i> and evaluating and prioritizing alternative locations across the upper- or single-tier municipality in accordance with the following:</p> <p>i. expansion into <i>specialty crop areas</i> is prohibited;</p> <p>ii. reasonable alternatives that avoid <i>prime agricultural areas</i> are evaluated; and</p> <p>iii. where <i>prime agricultural areas</i> cannot be avoided, lower priority agricultural lands are used;</p> <p><u>g.</u> i. the <i>settlement area</i> to be expanded is in compliance with the <i>minimum distance separation formulae</i>;</p> <p><u>h.</u> j. any adverse impacts on agricultural operations and on the <i>agri-food network</i> from expanding <i>settlement areas</i> would be avoided or, if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated as determined through an agricultural impact assessment;</p> <p><u>i.</u> k. the policies of Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS are applied;</p> <p><u>j.</u> l. the proposed expansion would meet any applicable requirements of the Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation, Niagara Escarpment, and Lake Simcoe Protection Plans and any applicable source protection plan; and</p> <p><u>k.</u> m. within the Protected Countryside in the <i>Greenbelt Area</i>:</p> <p>i. the <i>settlement area</i> to be expanded is identified in the Greenbelt Plan as a Town/Village;</p> <p>ii. the proposed expansion would be modest in size, representing no more than a 5 per cent increase in the geographic size of the <i>settlement area</i> based on the <i>settlement area</i> boundary delineated in the applicable official plan as of July 1, 2017, up to a maximum size of 10 hectares, and residential <i>development</i> would not be permitted on more than 50 per cent of the lands that would be added to the <i>settlement area</i>;</p> <p>iii. the proposed expansion would support the achievement of <i>complete communities</i> or the local agricultural economy;</p> <p>iv. the proposed uses cannot be reasonably accommodated within the existing <i>settlement area</i> boundary;</p>		

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	<p>v. the proposed expansion would be serviced by existing <i>municipal water and wastewater systems</i> without impacting future <i>intensification</i> opportunities in the existing <i>settlement area</i>; and</p> <p>vi. expansion into the Natural Heritage System that has been identified in the Greenbelt Plan is prohibited.</p>		
2.2.8.4	<p>4. Upper and single tierNotwithstanding policy 2.2.8.2, municipalities in the outer ring that have identified excess lands in accordance with policy 2.2.1.6, may undertake amay adjust <u>settlement area boundary expansion only through boundaries outside of a municipal comprehensive review where it is demonstrated that, provided:</u></p> <p><u>a. there would be no net increase in land within settlement areas;</u></p> <p><u>b. the adjustment would support the municipality's ability to meet the intensification and density targets established pursuant to this Plan;</u></p> <p><u>c. the location of any lands added to a settlement area will satisfy the applicable requirements of policy 2.2.8.3;</u></p> <p><u>d. the affected settlement areas are not rural settlements or in the Greenbelt Area; and</u></p> <p><u>e. a. the settlement area to be expanded has been identified as a focus for growth in the hierarchy established in accordance with policy 2.2.1.3 and the expansion will:</u>which lands would be added is serviced by <u>municipal water and wastewater systems</u> and there is sufficient reserve <u>infrastructure capacity to service the lands.</u></p> <p><u>i. be contiguous to the existing</u></p>	<p>The Region has several comments on this section:</p> <p>First and most importantly, Policy 2.2.8.4.d creates unintended consequences in Niagara. The use of "Greenbelt Area", by definition, includes lands in the Niagara Escarpment Plan area (NEP). Niagara has several settlement areas within the NEP that would be prohibited from adjusting its boundaries even when doing so would otherwise be permitted by the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which has the authority to designation lands Escarpment Urban Area for this purpose.</p> <p>It is important to the Region that it be able to approve adjustments consistent with the Commission's decision.</p> <p>The Region suggests the following change to Policy 2.2.8.4.d as highlighted below:</p> <p><u>d. "the affected settlement areas are not rural settlements or in the Greenbelt Plan Area, except for those lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan designated as Niagara Escarpment Plan Urban Area; and"</u></p> <p>Second, proposed Policy 2.2.8.4 is unclear whether boundary adjustments can be made that relate to multiple settlement areas within the Region. The Region has 27 settlement areas. It may be appropriate to limit settlement adjustments to the same settlement areas to restrict the ability to adjust lands that have different geographies and land needs.</p> <p>Third, in proposed Policy 2.2.8.4.e., the Region suggests the proposed phrase "<u>which lands would be added is serviced...</u>" be revised as highlighted "<u>which lands would be added is serviced, or is planned for services...</u>" to address instances where services are planned but not yet provided.</p> <p>Fourth, Regional staff requests clarification on whether "no net increase in land" means developable land.</p>	
2.2.8.5	<p><u>a. Notwithstanding policy 2.2.8.2, and 5.2.4.3, a settlement area boundary;</u>and</p>	<p>Similar to the Region's comments to Policy 2.2.8.4 above, the Region suggests the proposed phrase "<u>which lands would be added is serviced...</u>" be revised as highlighted "<u>which lands would be added is</u></p>	

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	<p>ii. not contain any lands that will be identified as excess lands expansion may occur in advance of a municipal comprehensive review, provided:</p> <p><u>a. the lands that are added will be planned to achieve at least the minimum density target in policy 2.2.7.2 or policy 2.2.5.13, as appropriate;</u></p> <p><u>b. development is prohibited on all excess lands to the horizon of this Plan in accordance with the location of any lands added to a settlement area will satisfy the applicable requirements of policy 2.2.48.63;</u></p> <p><u>c. an area of land that has been identified as excess lands and is greater in size than the proposed expansion is removed from settlement areas by redesignation and settlement area boundaries are amended accordingly, such that the overall quantum of excess lands is reduced; the affected settlement area is not a rural settlement or in the Greenbelt Area;</u></p> <p><u>d. where appropriate, the municipality has used additional tools to reduce the land that is available for development, such as those set out in policies 5.2.8.3 and 5.2.8.4; and the settlement area is serviced by municipal water and wastewater systems and there is sufficient reserve infrastructure capacity to service the lands; and</u></p> <p><u>e. all requirements of policies 2.2.8.2 and 2.2.8.3 have been satisfied. For the purposes of policy 2.2.8.2 a), excess lands will be considered to be not available; the additional lands and associated forecasted growth will be fully accounted for in the land needs assessment associated with the next municipal comprehensive review.</u></p>	<p><u>serviced, or is planned for services...</u> to address instances where services are planned but not yet provided.</p>	
2.2.8.6	<p><u>6. For a settlement area boundary expansion undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.8.5, the amount of land to be added to the settlement area will be no larger than 40 hectares.</u></p>	<p>Regional staff requests the Province to clarify Policy 2.2.8.6 to specify whether the 40 hectare limit is applicable to <i>each</i> of Niagara's 27 settlement areas, or rather a cumulative total of across all settlement areas.</p> <p>Additionally, Regional staff requests the Province to clarify whether the phrase "amount of land" means developable land.</p>	
2.2.9 RURAL AREAS			
2.2.9.7	<p><u>7. Notwithstanding policy 2.2.8.2, minor adjustments may be made to the boundaries of rural settlements outside of a municipal comprehensive review, subject to the following:</u></p> <p><u>a. the affected settlement area is not in the Greenbelt Area;</u></p> <p><u>b. the change would constitute minor rounding out of existing development, in keeping with the rural character of the area;</u></p> <p><u>c. confirmation that water and wastewater servicing can be provided in an appropriate manner that is suitable for long-term; and</u></p>	<p>Regional staff support these changes to improve the ability to make boundary adjustments outside of the MCR process. This is consistent with the Region's submission shared with the Province during the 2015-2017 Coordinated Plan Review.</p> <p>However, similar to the Region's comment to Policy 2.2.8.4 above, the Region is concerned with the use of the term "Greenbelt Area". By definition this includes lands in the NEP, and several of Niagara's NEP rural areas have had recent or deferred designation changes. The</p>	

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	<u>d. Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS are applied.</u>	<p>Region requires the ability to update regional mapping to reflect the Commission's direction.</p> <p>Regional staff suggest the following change to Policy 2.2.9.7.e as highlighted below:</p> <p>a. <u>"the affected settlement area is not in the Greenbelt Area, except for those lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan designated as Niagara Escarpment Plan Urban Area."</u></p> <p>Further, Regional staff suggest that Policy 2.2.9.7.c should be expanded to clarify that water and wastewater services includes private on-site and/or municipal services. Staff recommend proposed Policy 2.2.9.7.c be revised as highlighted below:</p> <p>c. <u>"confirmation that private on-site and/or municipal water and wastewater servicing can be provided in an appropriate manner that is suitable for long-term; and"</u></p>	
INFRASTRUCTURE			
3.2.1 INTEGRATED PLANNING			
3.2.1.2	<p>2. Planning for new or expanded <i>infrastructure</i> will occur in an integrated manner, including evaluations of long-range scenario-based land use planning, <u>environmental planning</u> and financial planning, and will be supported by infrastructure master plans, asset management plans, community energy plans, watershed planning, environmental assessments, and other relevant studies where appropriate, and should involve:</p> <p>a. leveraging <i>infrastructure</i> investment to direct growth and development in accordance with the policies and schedules of this Plan, including the achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan;</p> <p>b. providing sufficient <i>infrastructure</i> capacity in <i>strategic growth areas</i>;</p> <p>c. identifying the full life cycle costs of <i>infrastructure</i> and developing options to pay for these costs over the long-term; and</p> <p>d. considering the impacts of a changing climate.</p>		
3.2.4.3	<p>3. Municipalities will provide for the establishment of priority routes for goods movement, where feasible, to facilitate the movement of goods into and out of <i>employment areas</i>, including prime employment areas, and other areas of significant commercial activity and to provide alternate routes connecting to the provincial network.</p>		
3.2.6 WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS			

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3.2.6.2	2. <i>Municipal water and wastewater systems and private communal water and wastewater systems</i> will be planned, designed, constructed, or expanded in accordance with the following: a. opportunities for optimization and improved efficiency within existing systems will be prioritized and supported by strategies for energy and water conservation and water demand management; b. the system will serve growth in a manner that supports achievement of the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan; c. a comprehensive water or wastewater master plan or equivalent, informed by <i>watershed planning</i> <u>or equivalent</u> has been prepared to: i. demonstrate that the effluent discharges and water takings associated with the system will not negatively impact the <i>quality and quantity of water</i> ; ii. identify the preferred option for servicing growth and development, subject to the hierarchy of services provided in policies 1.6.6.2, 1.6.6.3, 1.6.6.4 and 1.6.6.5 of the PPS, 2014, which must not exceed the assimilative capacity of the effluent receivers and sustainable water supply for servicing, ecological, and other needs; and iii. identify the full life cycle costs of the system and develop options to pay for these costs over the long-term. d. in the case of <i>large subsurface sewage disposal systems</i> , the proponent has demonstrated attenuation capacity; and e. plans have been considered in the context of applicable inter-provincial, national, bi-national, or state-provincial Great Lakes Basin agreements or provincial legislation or strategies.		
3.2.6.4	4. Municipalities that share an inland water source or receiving water body will co-ordinate their planning for potable water, stormwater, and wastewater systems based on <i>watershed planning</i> <u>or equivalent</u> to ensure that the <i>quality and quantity of water</i> is protected, improved, or restored.	Regional staff requests the Province to clarify what constitutes as an "equivalent" to watershed planning, and whether there will be any additional guidance provided through future documents.	
3.2.7.1	1. Municipalities will develop <i>stormwater master plans</i> or equivalent for serviced <i>settlement areas</i> that: a. are informed by <i>watershed planning</i> <u>or equivalent</u> ; b. protect the <i>quality and quantity of water</i> by assessing existing stormwater facilities and systems; c. characterize existing environmental conditions; d. examine the cumulative environmental impacts of stormwater from existing and planned development, including an assessment of how extreme weather events will exacerbate these impacts and the identification of appropriate adaptation strategies;		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">e. incorporate appropriate <i>low impact development</i> and <i>green infrastructure</i>;f. identify the need for stormwater retrofits, where appropriate;g. identify the full life cycle costs of the stormwater <i>infrastructure</i>, including maintenance costs, and develop options to pay for these costs over the long-term; andh. include an implementation and maintenance plan.		
3.2.7.2	<p>2. Proposals for large-scale <i>development</i> proceeding by way of a secondary plan, plan of subdivision and, vacant land plan of condominium or site plan will be supported by a <i>stormwater management plan</i> or equivalent, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. is informed by a <i>subwatershed plan</i> or equivalent;b. incorporates an integrated treatment approach to minimize stormwater flows and reliance on stormwater ponds, which includes appropriate <i>low impact development</i> and <i>green infrastructure</i>;c. establishes planning, design, and construction practices to minimize vegetation removal, grading and soil compaction, sediment erosion, and impervious surfaces; andd. aligns with the <i>stormwater master plan</i> <u>or equivalent</u> for the <i>settlement area</i>, where applicable.		
PROTECTING WHAT IS VALUABLE			
4.2.1 WATER RESOURCE SYSTEMS			
4.2.1.1	<p>1. Municipalities<u>Upper- and single-tier municipalities</u>, partnering with <u>lower-tier municipalities and</u> conservation authorities as appropriate, will ensure that <i>watershed planning</i> is undertaken to support a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the <i>quality and quantity of water</i> within a <i>watershed</i>.</p>		
4.2.1.2	<p>2. Water resource systems will be identified, informed by watershed planning and other available information, and the appropriate designations and policies will be applied in official plans to provide for the long-term protection of <i>key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas</i>, and their functions.</p>	Regional staff observe that water resource systems would no longer need to be identified in official plans with appropriate policies. Regional staff request that clarification be provided to indicate that water resource systems mapping will be identified and associated policy be applied within official plans.	
4.2.1.3	<p><u>3. Watershed planning or equivalent will inform:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>a. the identification of water resource systems;</u><u>b. the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the quality and quantity of water;</u>c. 3. Decisions<u>decisions</u> on allocation of growth and;<u>d. planning for water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure will be informed by applicable watershed planning.</u>	Regional staff support this change.	
4.2.1.4	<p><u>4. Planning for large-scale development in designated greenfield areas, including secondary plans,</u> will be informed by a <i>subwatershed plan</i> or equivalent.</p>	Regional staff support this change.	

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4.2.1.5	<u>5. 4.</u> Municipalities will consider the Great Lakes Strategy, the targets and goals of the Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015, and any applicable Great Lakes agreements as part of <i>watershed planning</i> and coastal or waterfront planning initiatives.		
4.2.2 NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM			
4.2.2.1	1. The Province will map a <u>A Natural Heritage System for the GGH</u> <u>Growth Plan has been mapped by the Province</u> to support a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to planning for the protection of the region's natural heritage and biodiversity. The <i>Natural Heritage System</i> mapping will exclude <u>for the Growth Plan excludes</u> lands within <i>settlement area</i> boundaries that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017.		
4.2.2.4	4. The <u>Provincial mapping of the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan does not apply until it has been implemented in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan. Until that time, the policies in this Plan that refer to the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan will apply outside settlement areas to the natural heritage systems</u> identified in official plans that are <u>were</u> approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the relevant official plan until .	<p>The Region has serious concerns with this policy. In our view, NHS mapping and policies should not apply until they have been implemented through the applicable upper- or single-tier Official Plan. Proposed amendments to S. 4.2.2.4 will have the unintended and effect of rendering most of rural Niagara undevelopable.</p> <p>Regional staff <u>fully support</u> of the <i>first</i> part the proposed change to policy 4.2.2.4, which delays implementation of the Growth Plan Natural Heritage System (NHS) mapping until completion of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process and new Regional Official Plan.</p> <p>However, Regional staff <u>do not support the second part of the proposed change to policy 4.2.2.4</u>, which applies Growth Plan NHS policies to the previously identified Regional NHS outside of settlement areas - until such time as the new Regional Official Plan is completed. As proposed, this change would present significant implementation issues across the Region.</p> <p>Regional staff note that proposed Policy 4.2.2.4 would adversely impact Niagara. Other GTA municipalities may have mapping that is more closely aligned to provincial plan provisions. In Niagara's case, implementing provincial NHS policy with its own mapping would unreasonably hamper growth.</p> <p>Specifically, when designing NHS mapping, policies are created in conjunction with mapping to complement each other. It is not appropriate to apply policies to a mapped system they were not designed for. Further, the primary tool used by most municipalities to implement the policies of their NHS is an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) or similar. EIS guidelines are created with specific consideration of the policies of that municipalities' Official Plan. By overriding the well established EIS process, municipalities would be left without a way to</p>	

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		<p>effectively implement NHS policies. Additionally, it would be likely that for areas outside of the mapped Growth Plan NHS, after the MCR process is complete, the policies for natural systems and features could change again. This creates unnecessary uncertainty and confusion in the planning process.</p> <p><u>If</u> the Provincial NHS <i>policies</i> <u>must</u> apply now, a transition regulation must be developed to permit certain exemptions. Alternatively, should the policies apply now, exemptions should be made for minor variances, consents and site plan applications submitted within a defined period of time.</p> <p><u>Additionally</u>, given that the proposed changes to the Growth Plan are similar to the Greenbelt Plan, particularly as it relates to natural heritage, it is recommended that a section similar to Section 5.2.1 of the Greenbelt Plan be included within the Growth Plan. This would have the effect of recognizing existing development approvals and allow for them to be implemented. It is also recommended that Sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 of the Greenbelt Plan be incorporated in some manner in the Growth Plan to recognize existing uses and existing lots of record.</p> <p>These additions would have the effect of allowing for the Region to plan for the future in developing a new comprehensive NHS instead of being mired in multiple discussions on the impacts of mapping on current approvals and lots of record, which will become a major issue and require significant resources to resolve.</p>	
4.2.2.5	<p><u>5. Upper- and single-tier municipalities, may refine provincial mapping of the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan at the time of initial implementation in their official plans. For upper-tier municipalities, the initial implementation of provincial mapping may be done separately for each lower-tier municipality. After the Natural Heritage System has been issued.5. In implementing the Natural Heritage System, upper- and single-tier municipalities may, for the Growth Plan has been implemented in official plans, further refinements may only occur</u> through a municipal comprehensive review, refine provincial mapping with greater precision in a manner that is consistent with this Plan.</p>	<p>Regional staff support changes to proposed Policy 4.2.2.5, specifically in regards to the removal of the phrase 'in a manner that is consistent with this plan'. It is staff's interpretation that this allows for greater flexibility in refinements to the Growth Plan NHS mapping through the MCR process. Previously, it had been suggested that the Province may provide guidelines for the refinement of Provincial NHS mapping. Regional staff request that the Province re-confirm its intent to prepare this type of guideline, and when it should be expected. Many municipalities are currently undertaking natural environment work as part of the MCR process and require this certainty to continue to move forward with their work programs.</p>	
4.2.2.6	<p>6. Beyond the <i>Natural Heritage System</i> <u>for the Growth Plan</u>, including within <i>settlement areas</i>, the municipality:</p> <p>a. will continue to protect any other <i>natural heritage features</i> <u>and areas</u> in a manner that is consistent with the PPS; and</p> <p>b. may continue to protect any other <i>natural heritage system</i> or identify new systems in a manner that is consistent with the PPS.</p>		

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4.2.2.7	7. If a <i>settlement area</i> is expanded into <u>to include</u> the <i>Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan</i> in accordance with the policies in subsection 2.2.8, the portion that is within the revised <i>settlement area</i> boundary will: a. be designated in official plans; b. no longer be subject to policy 4.2.2.3; and c. continue to be protected in a manner that ensures that the connectivity between, and diversity and functions of, the <i>natural heritage features and areas</i> will be maintained, restored, or enhanced.	Regional staff requests the Province to clarify in Policy 4.2.2.7 that the Region has the ability to refine the NHS during instances of settlement area expansions. This clarification would align with the intent of proposed amendment Policy 4.2.2.5.	
4.2.6 AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM			
4.2.6.1	1. The Province will identify an <u>An</u> <i>Agricultural System</i> for the GGH. 2. Prime agricultural areas; has been identified by the Province.		
4.2.6.2	<u>2. Prime agricultural areas</u> , including <i>specialty crop areas</i> , will be designated in accordance with mapping identified by the Province and these areas will be protected for long-term use for agriculture.		
4.2.6.3	3. Where <i>agricultural uses</i> and non-agricultural uses interface outside of <i>settlement areas</i> , land use compatibility will be achieved by avoiding or where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the <i>Agricultural System</i> . Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed. <u>Where appropriate, this should be based on an agricultural impact assessment.</u>		
4.2.6.8	8. The <u>Provincial mapping of the agricultural land base does not apply until it has been implemented in the applicable upper- or single-tier official plan. Until that time, prime agricultural areas</u> identified in <u>upper- and single-tier</u> official plans that are <u>were</u> approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017 will continue to be protected in accordance with the official plan until provincial mapping of the Agricultural System has been issued <u>be considered the agricultural land base for the purposes of this Plan.</u>	Regional staff support this change. However, the change would contradict Section 3.1 of Publication 856 "Implementation Procedures for the Agricultural System in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe". Significant components of Publication 856 assist municipalities with implementing the Agricultural System into official plans. Regional staff requests that Publication 856 be updated to reflect proposed changes to Policy 4.2.8.6.	
	9. In implementing the Agricultural System, upper <u>Upper-</u> and single-tier municipalities, may, through a municipal comprehensive review; refine or augment provincial mapping <u>of the agricultural land base at the time of initial implementation in a manner that is consistent with this Plan and</u> any <u>their official plans, based on</u> implementation procedures issued by the Province. <u>For upper-tier municipalities, the initial implementation of provincial mapping may</u>		

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	be done separately for each lower-tier municipality. After provincial mapping of the agricultural land base has been implemented in official plans, further refinements may only occur through a municipal comprehensive review.		
4.2.10 CLIMATE CHANGE			
4.2.10.1	<p>1. Upper- and single-tier municipalities will develop policies in their official plans to identify actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change adaptation goals, aligned with the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015 and the Climate Change Action Plan, 2016<u>other provincial plans and policies for environmental protection,</u> that will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. supporting the achievement of <i>complete communities</i> as well as the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan;b. reducing dependence on the automobile and supporting existing and planned transit and <i>active transportation</i>;c. assessing <i>infrastructure</i> risks and vulnerabilities and identifying actions and investments to address these challenges;d. undertaking stormwater management planning in a manner that assesses the impacts of extreme weather events and incorporates appropriate <i>green infrastructure</i> and <i>low impact development</i>;e. recognizing the importance of <i>watershed planning</i> for the protection of the <i>quality and quantity of water</i> and the identification and protection of hydrologic features and areas;f. protecting the <i>Natural Heritage System</i> <u>for the Growth Plan</u> and <i>water resource systems</i>;g. promoting local food, food security, and soil health, and protecting the agricultural land base;h. providing direction that supports a culture of conservation in accordance with the policies in subsection 4.2.9; andi. any additional policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience, as appropriate, provided they do not conflict with this Plan.		
4.2.10.2	<p>2. In planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the impacts of climate change, municipalities are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. develop strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resilience through the identification of vulnerabilities to climate change, land use planning, planning for <i>infrastructure</i>, including transit and energy, <i>green infrastructure</i>, and <i>low impact development</i>, and the conservation objectives in policy 4.2.9.1;b. develop greenhouse gas inventories for transportation, buildings, waste management and municipal operations; andc. establish municipal interim and long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that support provincial targets and	<p>Regional staff observe that references to working toward “low-carbon communities” and “net-zero communities” in the proposed amendment are replaced with the term “environmentally sustainable communities”. An exception is the reference to low-carbon communities in Policy 4.2.10.2.c. It's unclear whether this is intentional or not. If not, the intention of that policy where the terms have been deleted elsewhere.</p>	

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	reflect consideration of the goal of low-carbon communities and monitor and report on progress made towards the achievement of these targets.		
5.2.2 SUPPLEMENTARY DIRECTION			
5.2.2.1	1. To implement this Plan, the Minister will, in collaboration with other Ministers of the Crown where appropriate, identify, establish, or update the following: a. the <i>delineated built boundary</i> and undelineated built-up areas ; b. the size and location of the <i>urban growth centres</i> ; and c. a standard methodology for land needs assessment; <u>and</u> <u>d. provincially significant employment zones.</u>		
5.2.2.3	<u>3. The Province may review and update provincially significant employment zones, the agricultural land base mapping or the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan in response to a municipal request.</u>	<p>Regional staff requests that proposed Policy 5.2.2.3 be amended to clarify that the request can come from upper- and single-tier municipalities, since they are the authority that typically addresses/ administers the review and update of such items. Regional staff suggest the following changes to Policy 5.2.2.3 as highlighted below:</p> <p><u>3. The Province may review and update provincially significant employment zones, the agricultural land base mapping or the Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan in response to a municipal request from an upper- or single-tier municipality.</u></p> <p>As commented earlier in proposed Policy 2.2.5.12 Regional staff request that the Region be granted the ability to identify all or some of the Gateway Economic Zone and Gateway Economic Centre as provincially significant employment zones without amendment to the Growth Plan.</p>	
5.2.5 TARGETS			
5.2.5.2	2. The minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan or established pursuant to this Plan will be identified in upper- and single-tier official plans. Any changes to the targets established pursuant to this Plan may only occur <u>be implemented</u> through a <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> .		
5.2.5.3	3. For the purposes of implementing the minimum intensification and density targets in this Plan, upper- and single-tier municipalities will, through a <i>municipal comprehensive review</i> , delineate the following in their official plans, where applicable: a. delineated built-up areas; b. urban growth centres; c. major transit station areas; d. other <i>strategic growth areas</i> for which a minimum density target will be established; e. each portion of the designated greenfield area that is subject to a specific density target ; and	Regional staff support this change.	

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	e. f. excess lands.		
DEFINITIONS			
Designated Greenfield Area	Lands within <i>settlement areas</i> (<u>not including rural settlements</u>) but outside of <i>delineated built-up areas</i> that have been designated in an official plan for development and are required to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan. <i>Designated greenfield areas</i> do not include <i>excess lands</i> .	Regional staff support this change.	
Excess Lands	Lands <u>Vacant, unbuilt but developable lands</u> within <i>settlement areas</i> but outside of <i>delineated built-up areas</i> that have been designated in an official plan for development but are in excess of what is needed to accommodate forecasted growth to the horizon of this Plan.		
Innovation Hub	Innovation Hub Locations that support collaboration and interaction between the private, public and academic sectors across many different economic sectors to promote innovation.		
Low Impact Development	An approach to stormwater management that seeks to manage rain and other precipitation as close as possible to where it falls to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution. It <u>typically</u> includes a set of site design strategies and distributed, small-scale structural practices to mimic the natural hydrology to the greatest extent possible through infiltration, evapotranspiration, harvesting, filtration, and detention of stormwater. <i>Low impact development</i> can include, <u>for example</u> : bio-swales, <u>vegetated areas at the edge of paved surfaces</u> , permeable pavement, rain gardens, green roofs, and exfiltration systems. <i>Low impact development</i> often employs vegetation and soil in its design, however, that does not always have to be the case <u>and the specific form may vary considering local conditions and community character.</u>		
Major Trip Generators	Origins and destinations with high population densities or concentrated activities which generate many trips (e.g., <i>urban growth centres</i> and other downtowns, <i>major office</i> and <i>office parks</i> , <i>major retail</i> , <i>employment areas</i> , community hubs, <u>large parks and recreational destinations</u> , <u>post-secondary institutions</u> and other <i>public service facilities</i> , and other mixed-use areas).		
Major Transit Station Area	The area including and around any existing or planned <i>higher order transit</i> station or stop within a <i>settlement area</i> ; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. <i>Major transit station areas</i> generally are defined as the area within an approximate <u>500 to 800</u> metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk.		
Natural Heritage System	The system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan, comprised <u>A system made up</u> of <i>natural heritage features and areas</i> , and linkages intended to provide connectivity (at the regional or site level) and support natural processes which		

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	are necessary to maintain biological and geological diversity, natural functions, viable populations of indigenous species, and ecosystems. The system can include <i>key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features</i> , federal and provincial parks and conservation reserves, other <i>natural heritage features and areas</i> , lands that have been restored or have the potential to be restored to a natural state, associated areas that support <i>hydrologic functions</i> , and working landscapes that enable <i>ecological functions</i> to continue. (Based on PPS, 2014 and modified for this Plan)		
Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan	<u>Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan</u> <u>The <i>natural heritage</i> system mapped and issued by the Province in accordance with this Plan.</u>		
Office Parks	Employment areas designated in an official plan <u>Areas</u> where there are significant concentrations of offices with high employment densities.		
Prime Employment Area	Prime Employment Area Areas of employment within settlement areas that are designated in an official plan and protected over the long-term for uses that are land extensive or have low employment densities and require locations that are adjacent to or near major goods movement facilities and corridors. These uses include manufacturing, warehousing, and logistics, and appropriate associated uses and ancillary facilities.	Regional staff support this change.	
Rural Settlements	<u>Rural Settlements</u> <u>Existing hamlets or similar existing small settlement areas that are long-established and identified in official plans. These communities are serviced by individual private on-site water and wastewater systems contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development. All settlement areas that are identified as hamlets in the Greenbelt Plan, as rural settlements in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, or as minor urban centres in the Niagara Escarpment Plan are considered rural settlements for the purposes of this Plan, including those that would not otherwise meet this definition.</u>	<p>Regional staff note that the inclusion of the term “Rural Settlements” improves overall policy interpretation; however, some of what the Region considers “rural settlements” were historically serviced or partially serviced by municipal infrastructure. Development in rural settlement areas should not be excluded from connecting to municipal services if they are present.</p> <p>Additionally, Regional staff request the phrase “that are long-established and” be removed, as it is vague and could lead to interpretation issues. Regional staff suggests that the definition for “Rural Settlements” be revised as highlighted below:</p> <p><u>“Existing hamlets or similar existing small settlement areas that are long-established and identified in official plans. These communities are generally serviced by individual private on-site water and wastewater systems contain a limited amount of undeveloped lands that are designated for development. All settlement areas that are identified as hamlets in the Greenbelt Plan, as rural settlements in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, or as minor urban centres in the Niagara Escarpment Plan are considered rural settlements for the purposes of this Plan, including those that would not otherwise meet this definition.”</u></p>	

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Settlement Areas	Urban areas and rural settlement areas <u>settlements</u> within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are: a. built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and b. lands which have been designated in an official plan for development in accordance with the policies of this Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the <i>settlement area</i> may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated. (Based on PPS, 2014 and modified for this Plan)		
Strategic Settlement Employment Areas	Areas that have been identified by the Minister that are to be planned and protected for employment uses that require large lots of land and depend upon efficient movement of goods and access to Highway 400. These are not <i>settlement areas</i> or prime employment areas . Major retail and residential uses are not permitted.		
Subwatershed Plan	A plan that reflects and refines the goals, objectives, targets, and assessments of <i>watershed planning</i> , <u>as available at the time a subwatershed plan is completed</u> for smaller drainage areas, is tailored to subwatershed needs and addresses local issues. <i>A subwatershed plan</i> should: consider existing development and evaluate impacts of any potential or proposed land uses and development; identify hydrologic features, areas, linkages, and functions; identify natural features, areas, and related <i>hydrologic functions</i> ; and provide for protecting, improving, or restoring the <i>quality and quantity of water</i> within a subwatershed. <i>A subwatershed plan</i> is based on pre-development monitoring and evaluation; is integrated with natural heritage protection; and identifies specific criteria, objectives, actions, thresholds, targets, and best management practices for development, for water and wastewater servicing, for stormwater management, for managing and minimizing impacts related to severe weather events, and to support ecological needs. (Greenbelt Plan)		
Undelineated Built-up Areas	Undelineated Built-up Areas Settlement areas for which the Minister has not delineated a built boundary pursuant to this Plan.	Regional staff support this change.	

Table 2: Proposed new policy for the amendment

Topic / Theme	Proposed new policy	Rationale	Comments provided by local municipal partners
Employment uses for lands adjacent to Airports	[to be drafted]	<p>Regional staff seek the Province to include policy that permits employment uses on lands adjacent to or near Airports. To ensure land use compatibility, these lands would have to be related to or secondary to the primary use of the Airport.</p> <p>Regional staff have identified that policy provisions for this ask may best fit within Growth Plan <u>Section 3: Infrastructure to Support Growth</u>.</p> <p>If the Region’s proposed policy is implemented within the amended Growth Plan, the Region requests that a complimentary policy revision be made within the Greenbelt Plan should it be amended.</p>	
Updates to built boundary mapping	[to be drafted]	<p>Regional staff requests the Province to update all built boundary mapping to recognize Niagara’s 27 settlement areas.</p> <p>Regional staff suggest inclusion of a new policy in Growth Plan <u>Section 5.2.7: Schedules and Appendices</u> that grants upper- and single-tier municipalities the ability to update built boundary mapping without amendment to the Growth Plan.</p>	
Coordination between Growth Secretariat and Ministry of Municipal Affairs	[to be drafted]	<p>Regional staff has identified a need for improved coordination between the Growth Secretariat and Ministry of Municipal Affairs when interpreting and implementing provincial policy.</p> <p>The Region recommends including a policy in Growth Plan that provides direction and a clear process when provincial policy interpretation and implementation challenges are encountered.</p>	