



Reviewing What's New at the Province

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Representatives from the Province recently reported back to the Building Industry on (a) the review of the Population and Employment Forecasts contained in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), and (b) the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) Review.

In terms of the Growth Plan, the forecasts, along with the requirement that municipalities adopt a standard of 50 persons and jobs combined per hectare in designated greenfield areas, have been among the most controversial provisions. Many consultants in the industry feel that this is “pie in the sky” economics. We are representing a number of land owners and developers who have been caught in the cross hairs of this policy. Notwithstanding the controversy, the Province is pleased with the progress of the Growth Plan, reporting that 67% of new residential units built in the GGH between June 2009 and June 2010 were located in the existing “built-up area” and that the recent data from the 2011 federal census supports the population and employment forecasts contained in the Growth Plan(s). The Province promises to take a closer look at the census data but we do not expect any real changes to the forecasts. Thus the Ontario Municipal Board hearings on the Growth Plan conformity exercises being undertaken by regional and local municipalities will continue to rely on the existing forecasts as ground zero.

On the PPS Review, the Province continues to receive a large number of submissions from a full range of stakeholders. The focus on many of these has been on the economic impacts of growth, greater recognition of regional differences, the promotion of healthy and sustainable communities, and greater environmental protections and transportation options. The building industry has been vocal on the need for less barriers to development and intensification, more flexibility in conversion of employment lands and the need for critical infrastructure. The Province will face challenges in balancing these diverse needs and desires. Given the importance of the PPS as the most critical tool in evaluating development, we encourage you to provide your submissions on changes to the PPS to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We are pleased to assist you in this regard.

We will continue to monitor and keep you posted on these and other provincial developments. ■