

STAFF REPORT: Planning



REPORT TO: Mayor & Members of Council
MEETING DATE: May 05, 2008
REPORT NO.: PL.08.49
SUBJECT: Growing the Greenbelt
PREPARED BY: Peter Tollefsen
Director of Planning

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Planning Staff Report No. PL.08.49, “Growing the Greenbelt”, for information purposes.

B. Background

The Greenbelt was created in February, 2005 by the Province of Ontario. It protects environmentally sensitive and agricultural land around the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has developed some draft criteria for public consideration in order to accommodate potential requests to grow the greenbelt.

The attached booklet provides some background information about the Greenbelt and its creation and outlines draft criteria that could be used by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to consider municipal requests to expand the existing Greenbelt. Comments are requested which is the purpose of this report.

The Town of The Blue Mountains is outside the Growth Plan Area, however, the Niagara Escarpment Plan is considered Greenbelt Plan Area.

Draft Expansion Criteria:

1. Municipal Request – Requests for growing the Greenbelt from regional, county and single-tier municipal governments will be considered.

Comment: A request for growing the Greenbelt from a lower tier municipal government should be considered.

2. Embraces Greenbelt Purpose – The Greenbelt establishes its main purpose through the vision and goals. Proposed expansions to the Greenbelt must recognize its key role in guiding land use planning in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and seek to maintain this purpose.

Comment – A request should demonstrate that the proposed expansion supports the Greenbelt Plan’s Vision for a diverse range of activities associated with rural communities, tourism, recreation and resource uses.

3. Additions to the Greenbelt – Greenbelt additions should be logical extensions to its existing area. New lands to be added should be easily connected and not create isolated patches.

Comment – Greenbelt additions should be extensions to the existing areas. The boundaries of any extension area could be defined by a natural feature boundary as well as political and property line boundaries.

4. Connections to Greenbelt Systems – The Protected Countryside was built using a provincial-scale “systems approach”.

Comment – A request should indicate that it has worked with organizations such as Conservation Authorities to determine these connections as well as other groups such as agricultural organizations and local environmental interest groups (i.e. the Blue Mountain Watershed Trust).

5. Complement Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan – The Growth Plan sets a framework for managing growth and revitalizing existing urban communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Comment – What about Municipalities outside the Growth Plan Area?

6. Timing and Relationship to Other Provincial Initiatives – There are a number of provincial initiatives affecting the Greater Golden Horseshoe including broader transportation/transit planning, protection of water resources and planning for future growth.

Comment – none.

These comments will be forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

C. Strategic Plan

1. *Managing growth to ensure the ongoing health and prosperity of the community.*

D. Budget Impact Statement

NIL

E. Attachment

1. Growing the Greenbelt booklet, February 2008

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Tollefsen, Director of Planning
26 Bridge Street – PO Box 310
Thornbury, ON NOH 2P0
P: 519-599-3131 ext.247
F: 519-599-3018
E: ptollefsen@thebluemountains.ca