

The Corporation of the Town of Ajax

GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE



Thursday, May 21, 2015

In-Camera at 1:45 p.m.

Open Meeting at 2:00 p.m.

River Plate Room, Town Hall

65 Harwood Avenue South

PRESENTATIONS

Alternative formats available upon request by contacting:

accessibilityajax@ajax.ca or 905-619-2529 ext. 3347

Anything in **blue** denotes an attachment/link. By clicking the links on the agenda page, you can jump directly to that section of the agenda. To manoeuvre back to the agenda page use the **Ctrl + Home** keys simultaneously

6. Presentations / Discussion

- 6.1 [2015-2018 Community Action Plan](#), C. McLardie, Manager of Strategic Communications
- 6.2 [Province's Co-ordinated Review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan](#), B. Hodgins, Senior Policy Planner
- 6.3 [Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015 \(Bill 73\)](#)
[EBR Registry Number: 012-3651](#), K. Heritage, Policy Planning Coordinator

Town Of Ajax

Community Action Plan 2015-2018



Highlights:

- Reshaped to focus on priorities and supporting initiatives/actions
- Builds off successes of previous three plans
- Incorporates input from Council, staff and community (total of 4,300+ votes received)
- Includes:
 - 4 Strategic Objectives
 - 21 Priorities
 - 102 Initiatives/Actions

1



Strategic Development & Economic Prosperity

6

Priorities

44

Supporting
Initiatives/
Actions

Priorities

- Facilitate **job creation** and retention to ensure a variety of employment opportunities.
- Continue to redevelop **Ajax Downtown** into a more vibrant and prosperous destination.
- Improve **traffic flow, gridlock** and **safety** for all users of public roads, trails, bike lanes and sidewalks.
- Work with the Region of Durham to improve **transit** and connections within Ajax.
- Continue to explore and capitalize on **tourism** opportunities.
- Identify **housing** needs to accelerate proposals that satisfy gaps.

2

Excellence in Service Delivery & Governance

6 Priorities & 21 Supporting Initiatives/Actions

Priorities

- Ensure **tax** rates remain reasonable and competitive.
- Seek **fair representation** for Ajax on Regional Council.
- Ensure that **staff resources** support corporate priorities.
- Support effective **customer service, communications and outreach**.
- Improve **accountability and transparency**.
- Review and update **winter maintenance program**.

3



**Strong Sense
of Community**

4 Priorities & 16 Supporting Initiatives/Actions

Priorities

- Implement new strategies and partnerships to support **seniors**.
- Continue to implement the Town's **Diversity and Community Engagement Plan**.
- Expand **youth** career programming and services.
- Develop and engage **volunteers**.

4

Leader in Environmental Sustainability

5

Priorities

21

Supporting
Initiatives/
Actions

Priorities

- Improve the Town's maintenance program to support a **Clean Ajax**.
- Implement innovative approaches to manage **stormwater** runoff.
- Work with partners to improve **water quality** along the Ajax shoreline and watersheds.
- Ensure **ecologically significant areas** such as the **Greenbelt** are protected.
- Continue to advance initiatives which address **climate change and sustainability**.

Next Steps:

- Plan will be unveiled to residents in June
- Mayor Parish to host Virtual Town Hall meeting in June
- Staff to provide Year 1 Status Update in January 2016

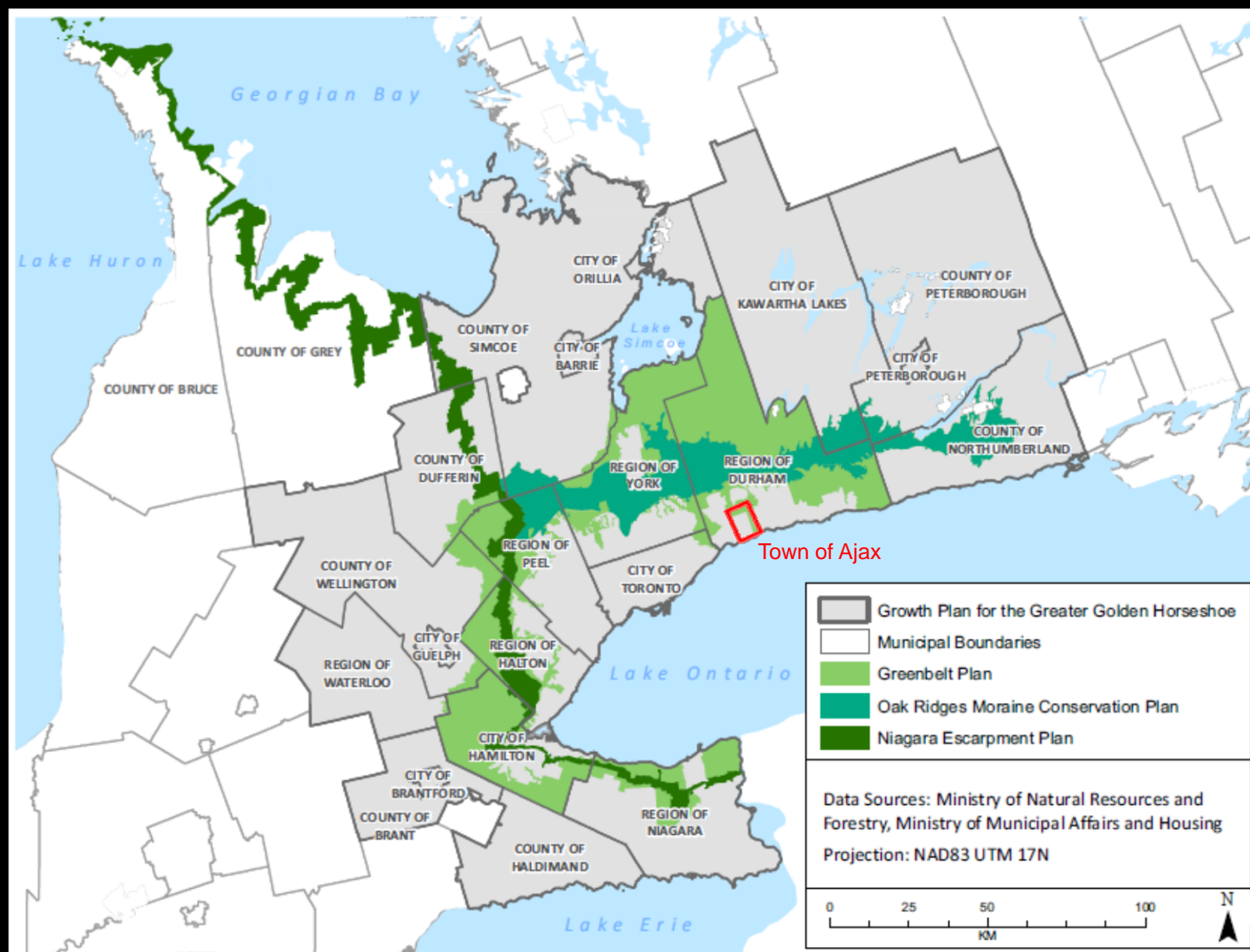
Province's Co-ordinated Review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan

Staff Presentation to General Government Committee
May 21, 2015



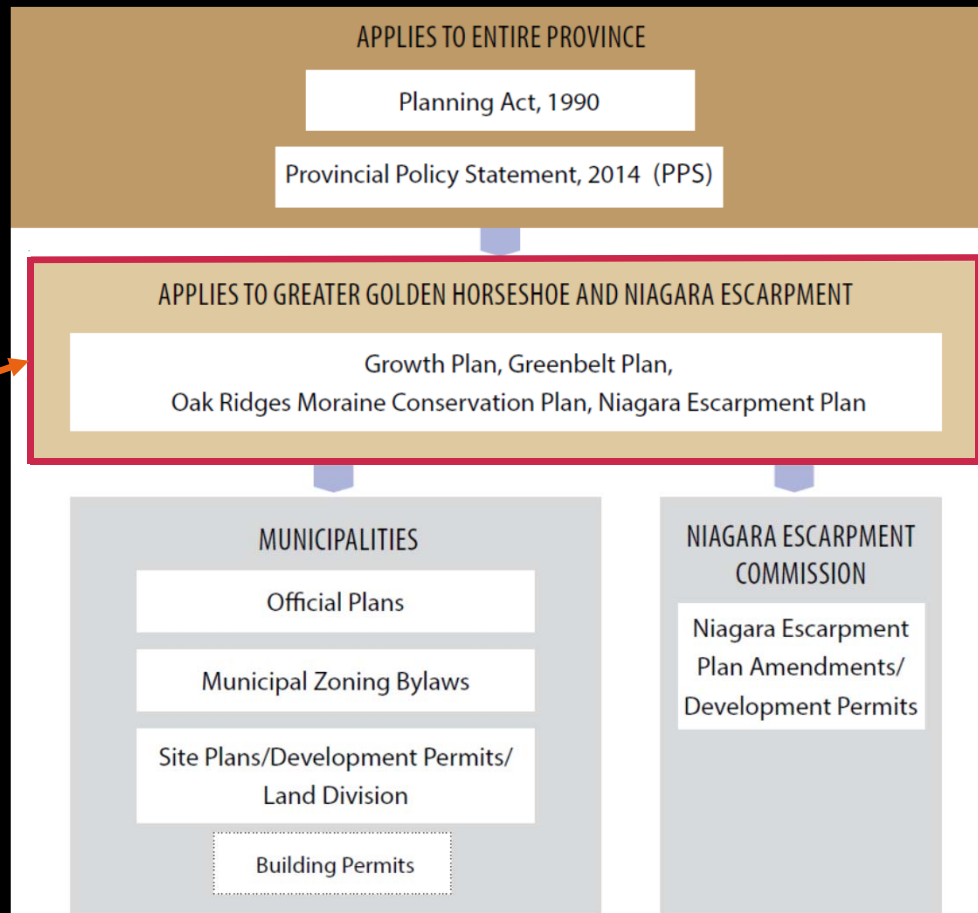
Purpose of this staff report

- Provide comments/recommendations to Province about the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan, as the two Plans apply directly to Ajax



Current Hierarchy of Provincial Land Use Planning Legislation, Policy and Plans

Province's Co-ordinated Review



At this time

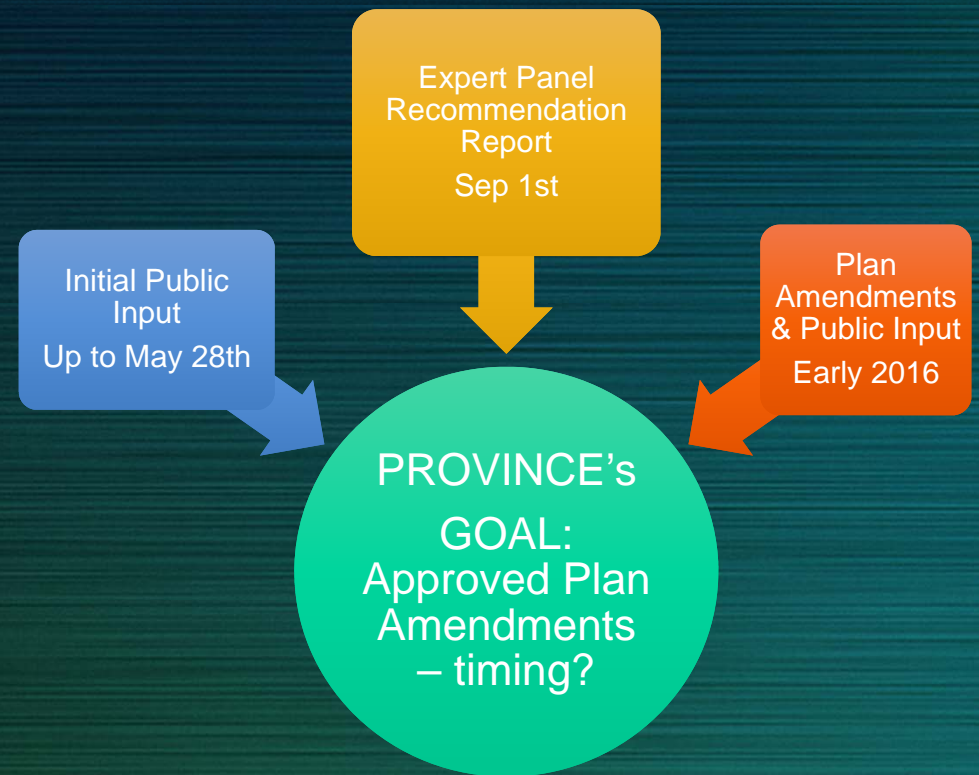
- Province is consulting (90-day comment period ends May 28th) – Environmental Bill of Rights Registry Posting 012-3256

<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTI0MTlw&statusId=MTg2ODMz&language=en>

- Interested parties should submit comments directly to Province:
 - Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing, Ontario Growth Secretariat, Land Use Planning Review, 777 Bay St., Suite 425, Toronto M5G 2E5
 - www.Ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview
 - landuseplanningreview@Ontario.ca

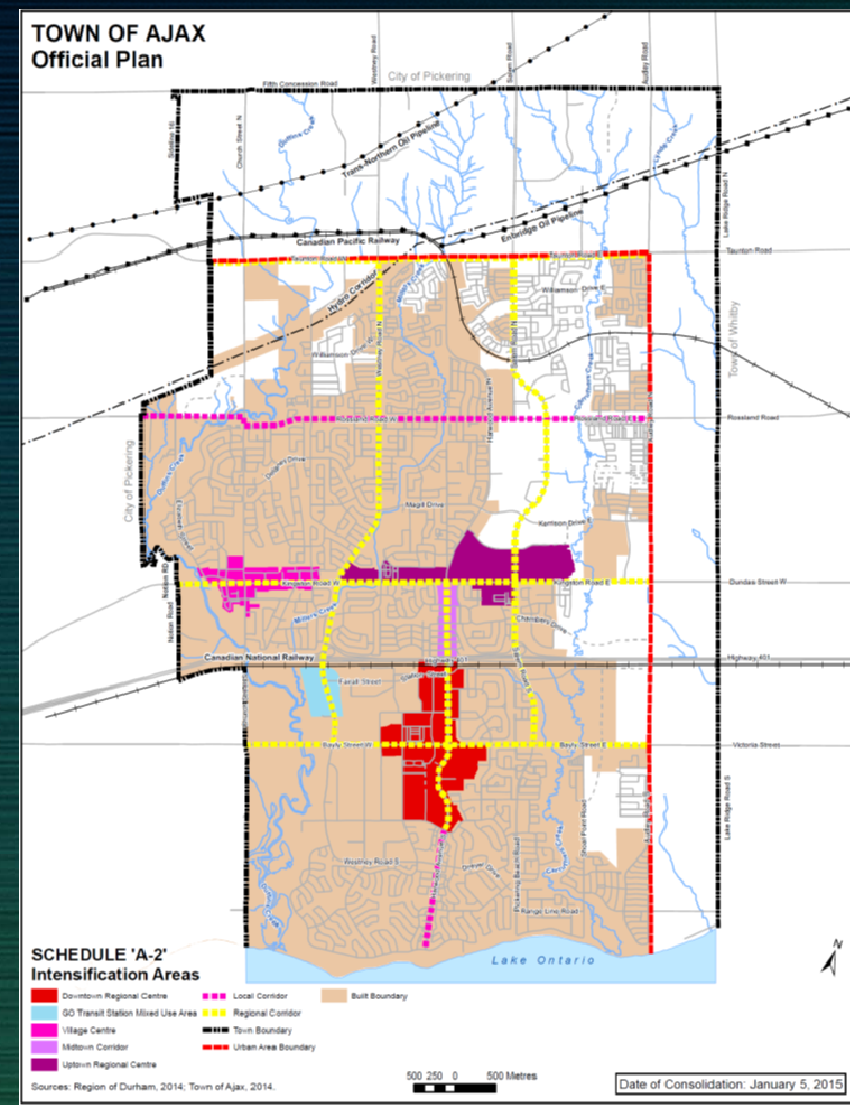
Province's Timing is Expeditious

- May 28/15 – Complete first round of public input
- Sep 1/15 – Receive Recommendation Report from Expert Advisory Panel chaired by David Crombie
- Early 2016 - Release Potential Plan Amendments, last round of public input
- Timing of Plan Amendments being approved and coming into effect - unknown



Ajax Official Plan Conforms to the Growth Plan

- Amendments from Town's Comprehensive Official Plan Review adopted in Jun/10:
 - Amendment 41 - Identified Intensification Areas within our fixed Urban Area Boundary and inserted applicable policies
 - Amendment 42 - Refined permitted Employment Area uses and added Urban Design policies to ensure high quality Built Environment within our Urban Area
- Majority came into effect November 2014, confirmed there is ample land within our existing Urban Area to accommodate forecasted population/employment growth (from Growing Durham) to 2031

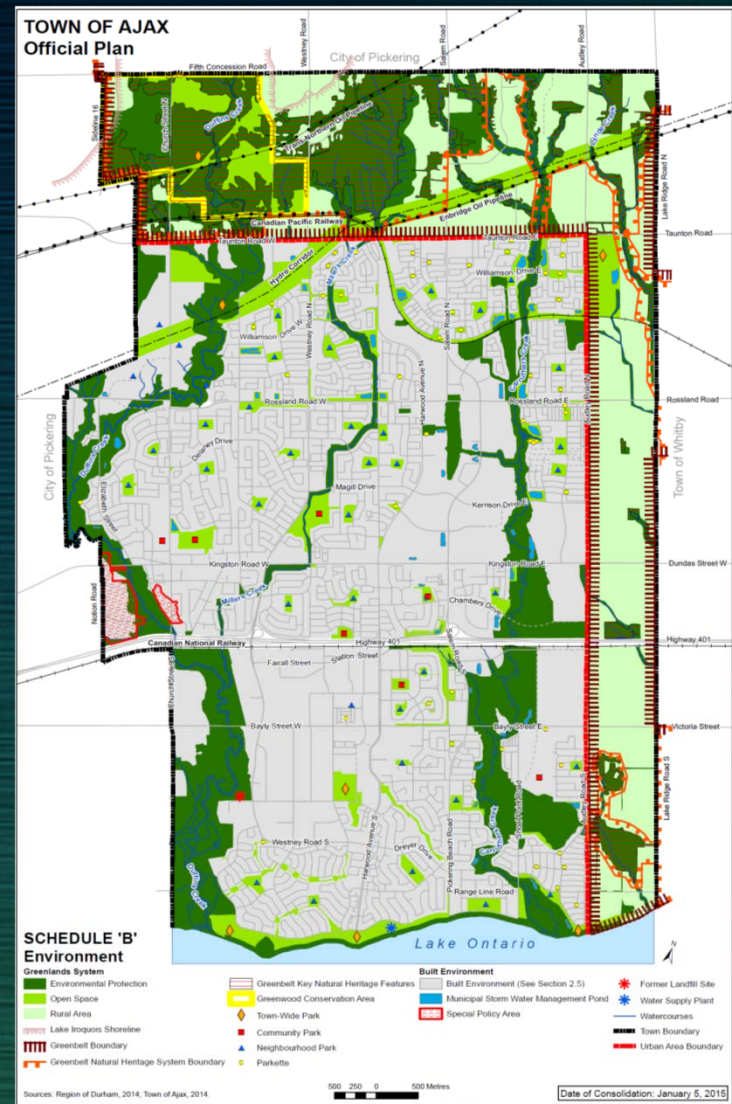


Simplify the Growth Plan

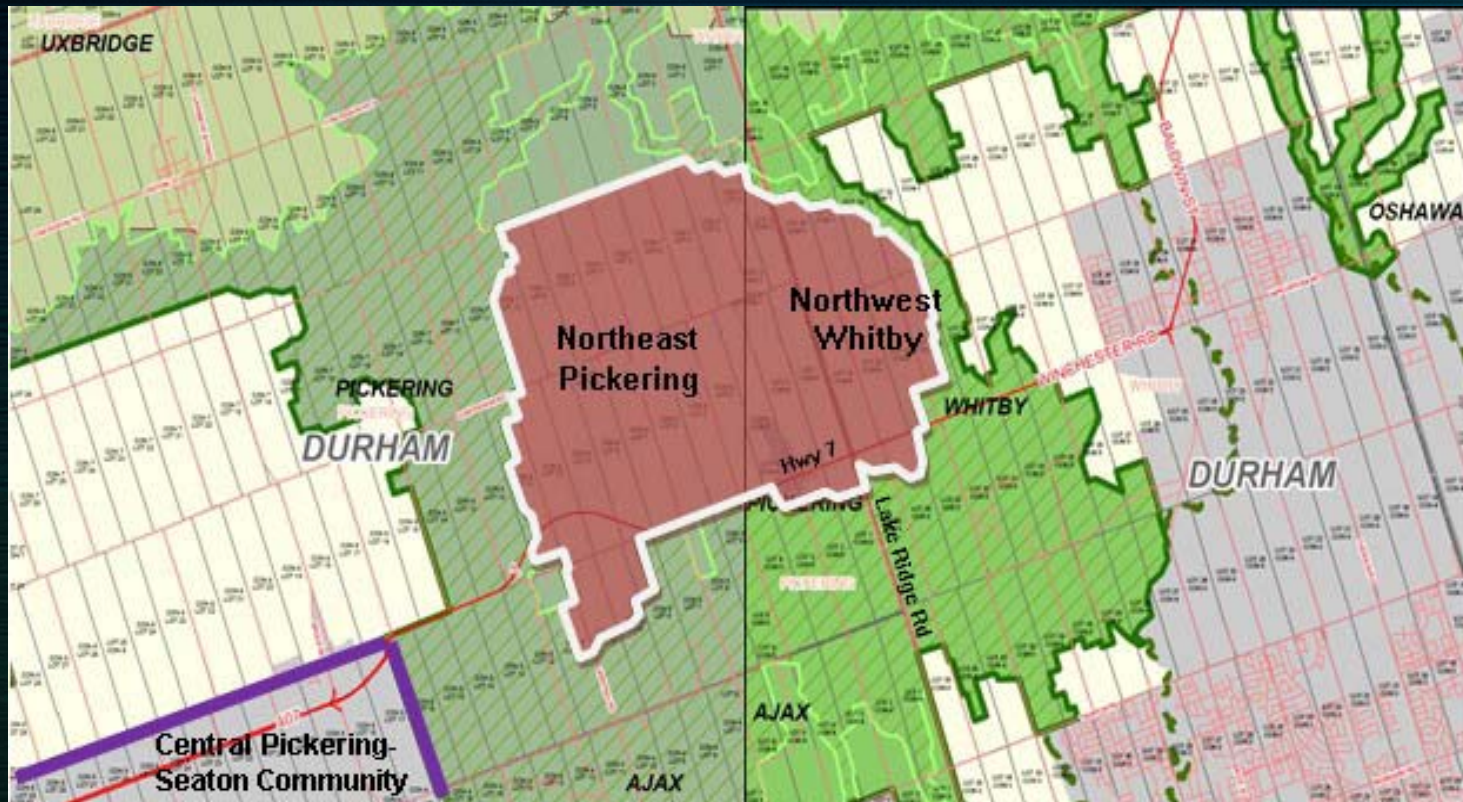
- It's complex, technical and difficult to understand. Assessing its performance in Ajax would be a challenge, as Amendments 41 and 42 came into effect 6 months ago. Staff recommend that the Province:
 - Simplify the language and give clear instructions (e.g., how to establish/monitor planned densities for people & jobs) to reduce need/costs for consulting expertise
 - Better explain the Built Boundary, and how the Plan protects against future urban area expansions (e.g. Northeast Pickering/Northwest Whitby “whitebelt” area)
 - Explain how planned densities for jobs per hectare are to be calculated/monitored
 - Define employment land conversion (ongoing applications to permit commercial uses; ongoing differences of opinion among various experts)
 - Merge Growth Plan (where urbanization is to occur) with the Greenbelt Plan (where urbanization is not to occur), harmonize their principles, policies, definitions, maps

Ajax Official Plan Conforms to the Greenbelt Plan

- In Jun/10, Council also adopted Amendment 38:
 - Added Greenbelt Plan policies/maps as component of stronger, ecosystem-based Environment policy framework
 - Greenbelt applies to rural area (north of Taunton Rd/east of Audley Rd)
 - Greenbelt extends into Northeast Pickering and Northwest Whitby (headwaters of Carruthers Creek, East Duffins Creek and Lynde Creek watersheds)
- Amendment 38 came into effect in Dec/11; Reinforced our existing Protected Countryside policies, prevented applications to urbanize rural area and, in turn, reduced staff and OMB costs and preserved the rural area



Close Northeast Pickering/Northwest Whitby “Gap” in Greenbelt Plan



~2,300 hectares of fields, forest and prime agricultural land

Protect Northeast Pickering/ Northwest Whitby from Urbanization

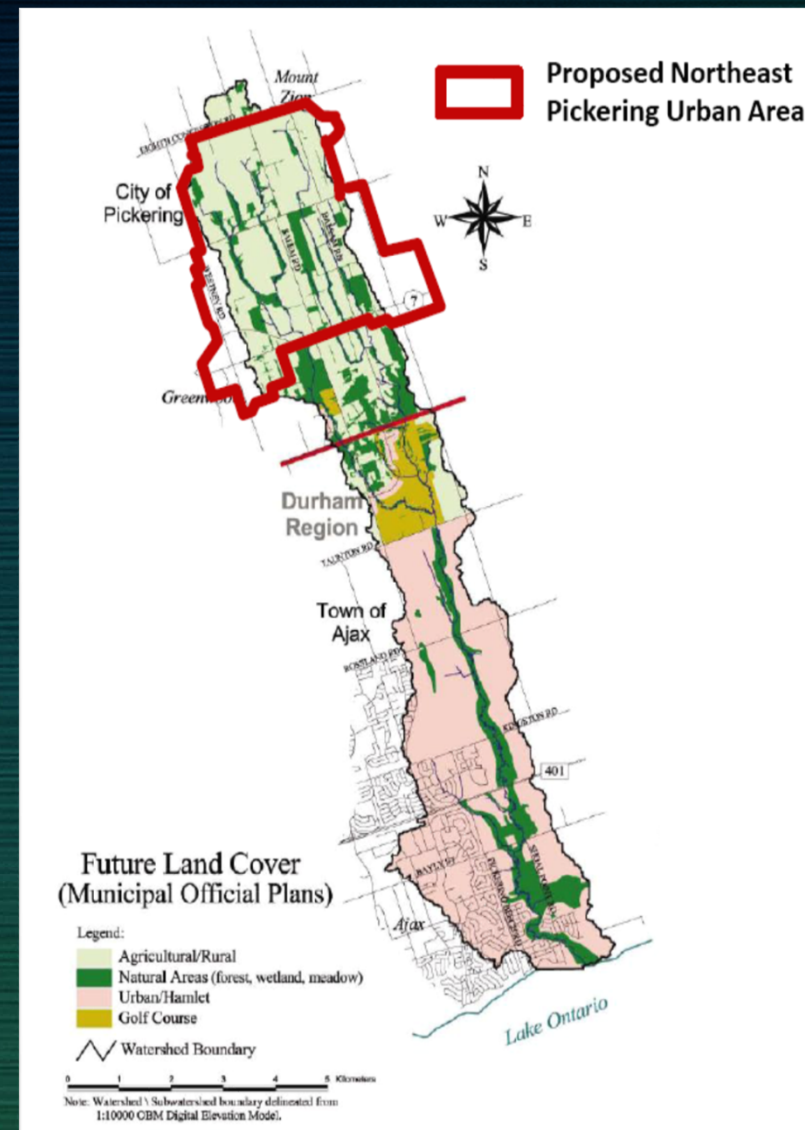
Oak Ridges Moraine

Greenbelt

- Staff recommend that the Province:
 - Incorporate the entire area into the Greenbelt Plan through this Co-ordinated Review
 - Or else may become another urban area, isolated from other urban areas by Greenbelt
 - If not incorporated, leapfrogging of urban uses into this “gap” in the Greenbelt may occur
 - By adding area to Greenbelt, protect Carruthers Creek headwaters from urban uses

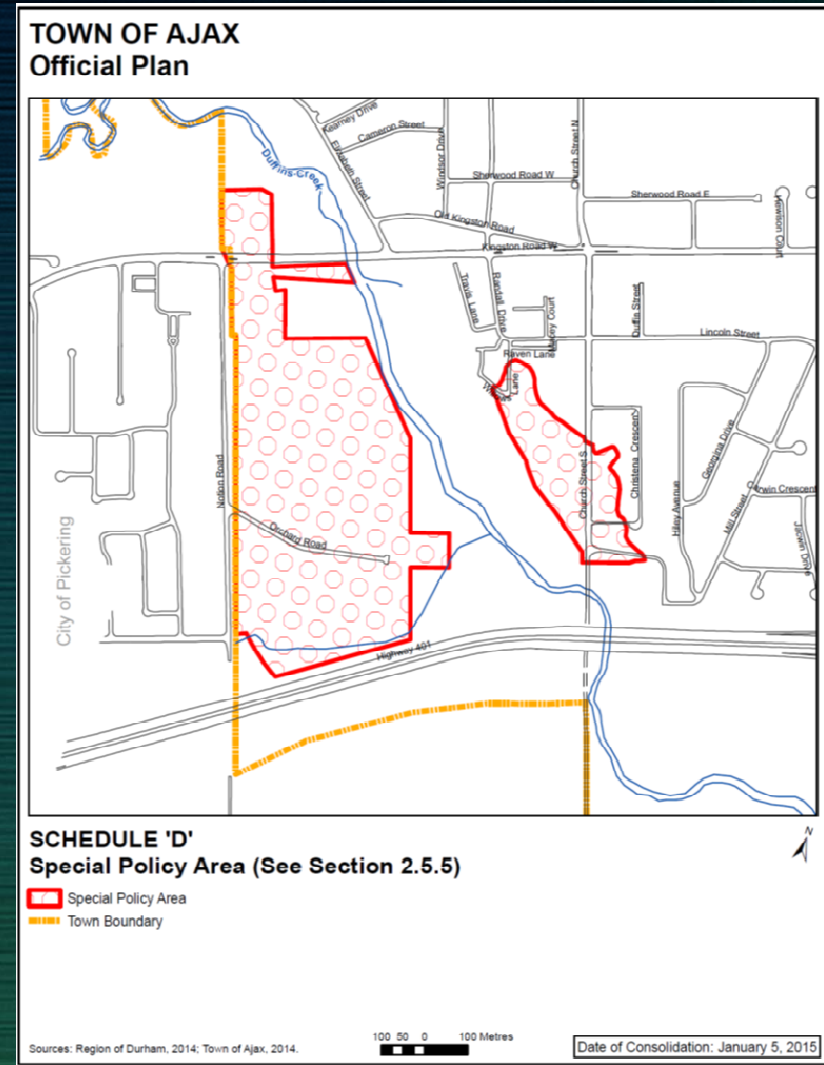
Permanently Protect Fragile Headwaters of Carruthers Creek, East Duffins Creek and Lynde Creek Watersheds

- Surface and ground water provide vital baseflow that sustains natural (coldwater) habitat and water quality
- Middle and upper reaches of Carruthers Creek support/ provide habitat occupied by Endangered Species (Redside Dace minnow)
- Most significant threats are urban/agricultural land uses
- Urban development can alter creeks, cause excessive sediment to enter water and remove riparian vegetation
- Province can demonstrate exemplary stewardship



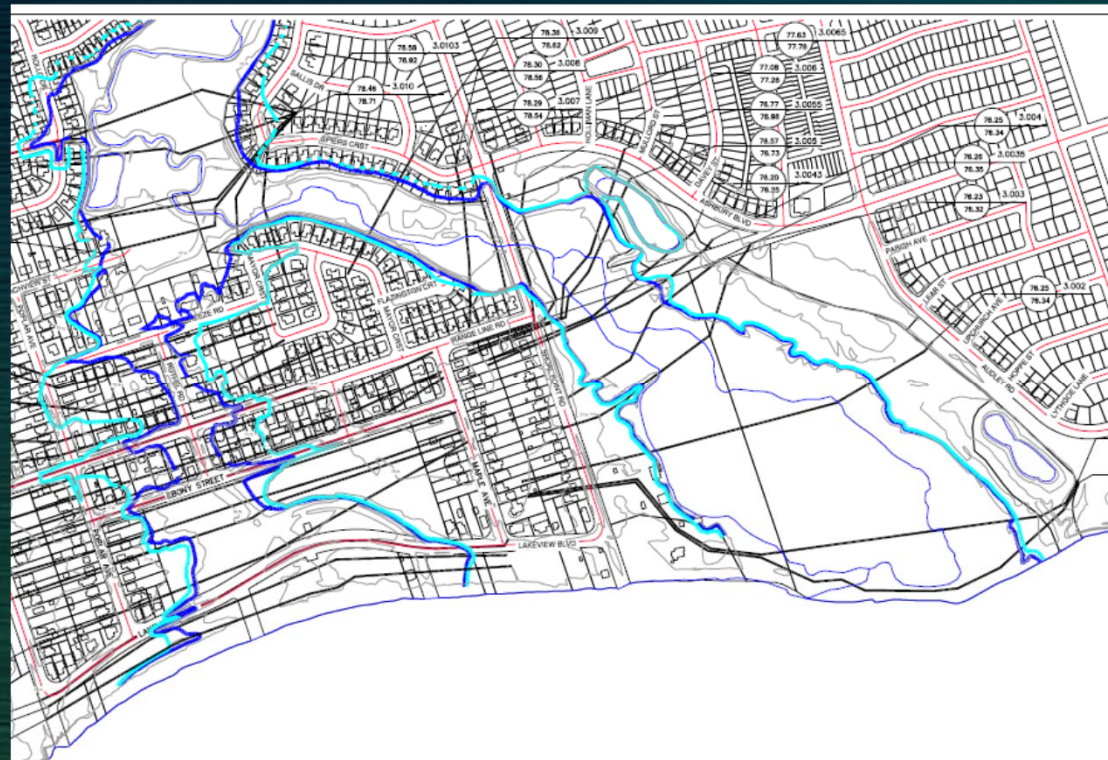
Northeast Pickering Also Drains into Duffins Creek and Pickering Village-Notion Road Special Policy Area

- An existing historic flood risk area in Ajax (and Pickering) confirmed by Province (MMAH and MNRF) during review of Amendment 38 in 2009-2010



Carruthers Creek EA Measured Significant Increases in Flooding Downstream in Ajax from Urban Northeast Pickering

- In 2012, used best flood evaluation techniques with TRCA to determine impacts under Regional Storm (Hurricane Hazel) in South Ajax:
 - Peak water levels would flow faster down tributaries
 - 132% increase in Regional Storm flood levels upstream of Rossland Road
 - Significant increases in 2-year through 100-year storm flooding



Protect Ajax from Urbanization of Northeast Pickering-Northwest Whitby

Oak Ridges Moraine

Greenbelt

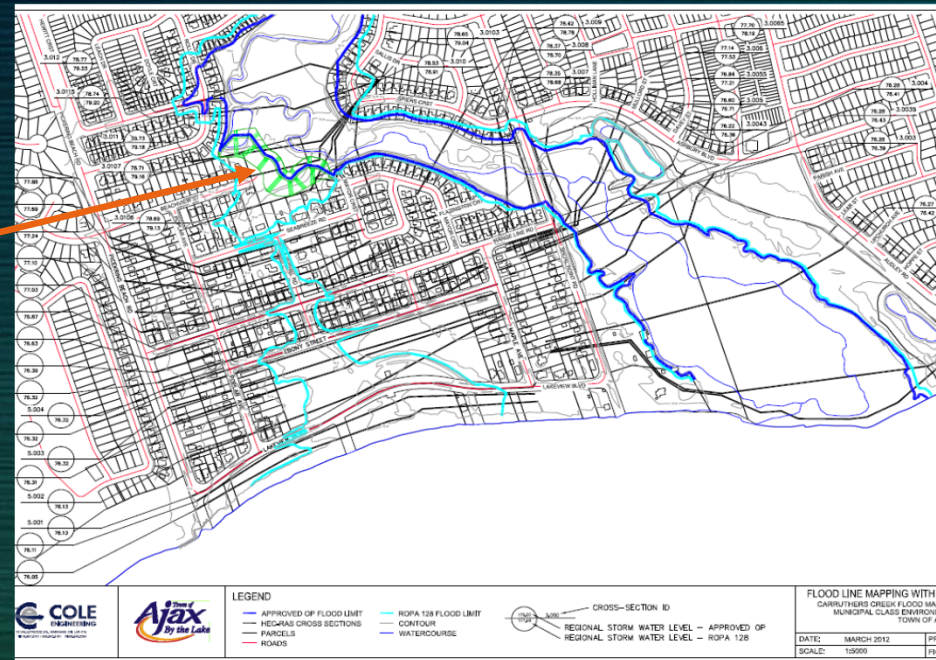
- Staff recommend that should urbanization of this “Gap” in the Greenbelt be approved, Regional conditions of approval must be imposed that require:
 - The design and implementation of protective flood controls up to and including Regional Storm for all future development, including for Durham Region highways and roads
 - Flood protection measures up the Regional Storm (regulatory) flood level downstream of the urban area – at no cost to Ajax

Protect Ajax from Urbanization of Northeast Pickering-Northwest Whitby

- Town and TRCA endorsed a two-part Preferred Alternative to protect Pickering Beach Neighbourhood through Carruthers Creek EA
 1. Installing flood control landform
 2. Lowering the floodplain
- If **revised** landform design is required to protect existing development/infrastructure from increased flood levels from urbanized “Gap”, existing residences and topography constrain the available area

Oak Ridges Moraine

Greenbelt



Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan Update by Durham Region and TRCA

Greenbelt

- DROP Future Urban Area Boundary Expansions Policy 7.3.11 p)
- The Watershed Plan update is one of many considerations in determining future urban areas during comprehensive DROP reviews – in order to protect prime agricultural land and ecological features and functions and prevent downstream impacts, the Northeast Pickering-Northwest Whitby area should be added to the Greenbelt
- Durham Region holds local municipalities responsible for costs of designing, constructing and maintaining flood control and stormwater management infrastructure generated by urban areas, including Regional highways/roads, but does not contribute funds to help offset those costs.

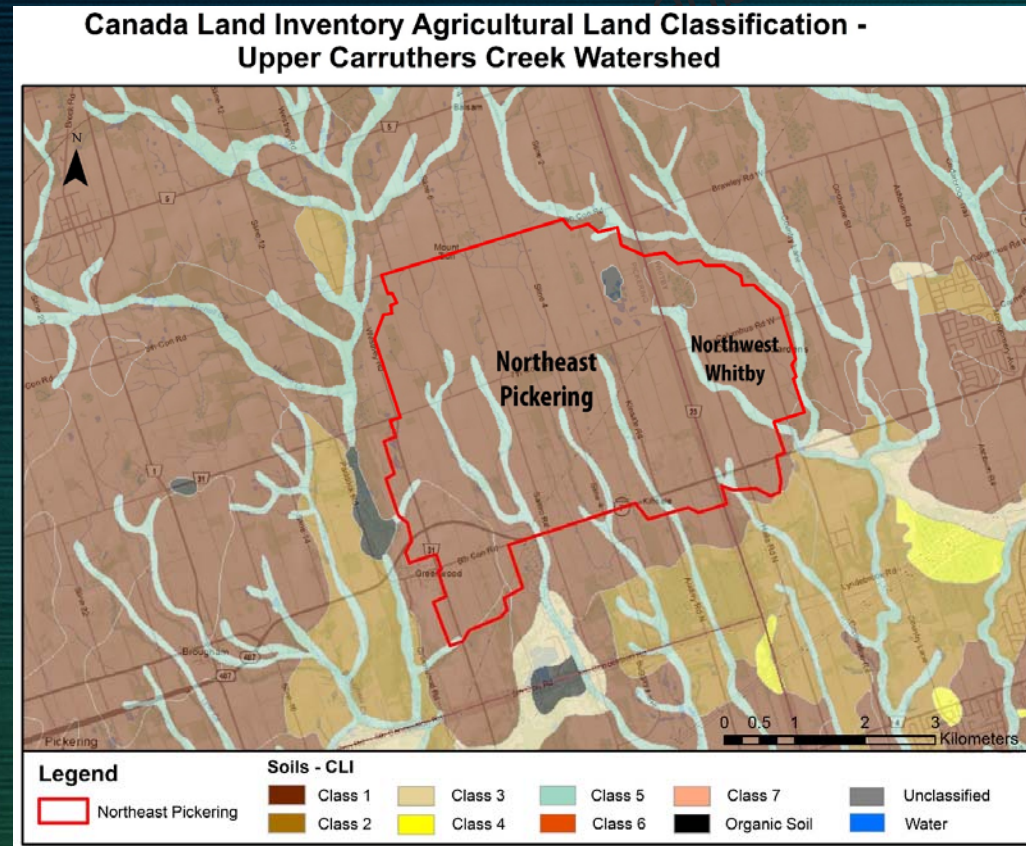
Prevent Future Impacts on Town's Infrastructure, Facilities & Services

Greenbelt

- Potential future impacts due to geographic location relative to Ajax
 - Driving on Town's north-south roads to access Hwy 401 interchanges and GO Station in Ajax
 - Usage of Town's recreation facilities
 - Lower residential density development in "Gap" affecting the Town's efforts to intensify development within Intensification Areas designated in the Ajax Official Plan

Permanently Protect Prime Agricultural Land

- “Gap” characterized almost entirely by prime agricultural land (CLI Class 1)
- Loss of dwindling supply of such land is unacceptable
- Need greater investment in agricultural industry and permanent protection of prime agricultural land capable of producing local food supplies to sustain Ontarians
- Province should support/provide incentives to Ontario’s farmers to grow much more of our food supply on prime agricultural land in Golden Horseshoe



Reasons to Add Entire Northeast Pickering-Northwest Whitby Area to Greenbelt Plan As Part of Co-ordinated Review

- To protect fragile, vital ecological and hydrologic features and functions
- To protect water quality, habitat and existing connections to our Greenlands System
- To prevent loss, fragmentation and redesignation of agricultural land base and ensure agriculture remains the predominant use
- To prevent creation of isolated urban area inflicting pollutants and stresses on ground and surface water, including nearshore Lake Ontario

Reasons to Add Entire Northeast Pickering-Northwest Whitby Area to Greenbelt Plan As Part of Co-ordinated Review

- To prevent increased impacts from flooding, erosion and sedimentation downstream
- To prevent further intrusion of sewer, water and road infrastructure
- To avoid exposing residents, buildings, properties and infrastructure in Ajax (and other municipalities) to increased risks and costs of flood control and mitigation in lower reaches of Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek (beyond those flood risk areas currently defined for the Notion Road-Pickering Village Special Policy Area and in the Carruthers Creek EA)

As Part of Co-ordinated Review, Also Expand Permitted Uses

- Increase range of permitted agriculture, agriculture-related and secondary uses and normal farm practices to enable the agricultural/rural economy to evolve and flourish to feed Ontario's growing population

Conclusions

- Greenbelt Plan has served Town well, by reinforcing our fixed Urban Area Boundary and preserving our Rural Area. Prior to Plan's enactment, Town spent significant funds defending Urban Area Boundary and protecting Rural Area from proposals for urban land uses. Inside Urban Area Boundary, community growth is transitioning from greenfield to more complex, intensified urban uses.
- Province should be strongly urged to add the entire Northeast Pickering-Northwest Whitby area into the Greenbelt Plan through this Co-ordinated Review – It would constitute very good Provincial planning to take such action to Grow the Greenbelt.

Conclusions

- Province should combine Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plan into one, with harmonized principles, policies, definitions and maps, to simplify implementation and interpretation in land use planning documents across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015 (Bill 73)

Staff Presentation to the General Government Committee

May 21, 2015

Background

- Between October 2013 and January 2014 the Province initiated a land use planning and appeal system review (Planning Act and DC Act)
- Town filed a submission on January 10, 2014
 - Planning Act
 - Document Review Cycles
 - Third Party Appeals to Conformity Amendments
 - Appeals of non-decisions
 - OMB process should not be a de novo hearing
 - If denied by a municipality, employment land conversions not appealable to the OMB

Background

- Development Charges Act, 1997
 - All services should be eligible for development charges
 - Eliminate the mandatory 10 % reduction in eligible capital costs
 - Municipalities should be able to adopt forward looking service levels

Bill 73 Proposal

Planning Act

- Document Review Cycles
 - PPS 5 to 10 years
 - New official plan 5 to 10 years, and 5 years thereafter
 - Requirement to confirm or amend employment land designations to be removed
- Planning Advisory Committees
 - Required for upper-tier and optional for lower-tier municipalities
 - Town's Advisory Committees would qualify
- Public Consultation
 - Notice of adoption must contain a brief explanation of the effect, if any, that the written and oral submissions had on the decision

Bill 73

Planning Act

- OMB Appeal Restrictions
 - No global appeals of a council decision to adopt an entire official plan
 - No appeal of an official plan policy that implements Provincial Plans/Acts
 - No unlimited appeals to a non-decision
 - No appeal of an approval authority's opinion that any part of a lower tier municipality's official plan does not conform with the upper tier plan

Bill 73

Planning Act

● Application Moratoriums

- No applications within 2 years of the adoption of a new official plan
- No applications within 2 years of the global replacement of a comprehensive zoning by-law
- No minor variance applications within 2 years of an owner initiated site-specific rezoning unless council declares that the application is permitted
- Regulations can prevent applications to amend a new development permit by-law and related official plan provisions within 5 years of adoption

Bill 73

Planning Act

- Optional Dispute Resolution
 - 180 day decision period for an OPA may be extended by a further 90 days by the applicant or municipality
- Community Planning Permit System
 - Terminology to be changed from Development Permit System to Community Planning Permit System
 - A local municipality may be ordered or directed to establish a development permit system for one or more purposes

Bill 73

Planning Act

● Parkland Conveyance

- Municipality must prepare and make available to the public a parks plan (Ajax Recreation, Parks and Culture Master Plan)
- Payment in lieu of parkland is to be based on the rate of one hectare per 500 proposed dwelling units

Bill 73 Proposal

Development Charges Act

- Ineligible services to be identified in regulations
- Regulations may require municipal councils to consider the use of area specific development charge by-laws
- Transit services no longer subject to the 10% reduction of capital costs
- Municipalities can adopt a 10 year forecast for service levels
- Background studies to include asset management plans and life cycle costing for growth related assets
- Voluntary payments no longer acceptable

Next Steps

- Comment period to end by June 3, 2015
- Bill 73 has received one reading in the Legislature and will be subject to further public review
- Development Charges Working Group to review and possibly suggest further amendments by the end of 2015
- Province to initiate a review of the OMB process in the near future