



WESTON  
CONSULTING

planning + urban design

## **Places to Grow Amendment 1**

The Province has released the first amendment to the Places to Grow Plan. This Amendment extends the Plan to the County of Simcoe, City of Barrie and the City of Orillia. The Amendment focuses on four key areas:

- Identifying areas for growth and intensification;
- Allocating population and employment growth;
- Establishing the process for determining the amount of land required to accommodate this growth; and
- The creation of Strategic Employment Areas along the Hwy 400 corridor and other areas.

### **Growth in Simcoe County**

The Simcoe County Official Plan, approved by Council in 2008, allocated growth across the municipalities based on the County's policy objectives. These growth allocations were modified by the Province in the previously released 'Vision' document for Simcoe County and have been refined again in the Places to Grow Amendment 1.

Amendment 1 focuses growth on several 'Urban Nodes' established in Barrie, Orillia, Midland/Penetanguishene, Collingwood, Alliston, and Bradford. Population and Employment growth forecasts for these areas have been increased in the Amendment. The remaining municipalities have seen their growth forecasts lowered.

Once these growth forecasts are adopted, the County will work with each municipality to determine the amount of land required to accommodate these forecasts. This effort will be undertaken under the policy framework provided in the Amendment and will likely require a more intense form of development.

Municipalities will be required to establish 'interim settlement area boundaries' that delineate the land required to meet the growth forecasts. It is anticipated that there will be excess land within the existing settlement areas to accommodate the growth forecasts.

This policy approach will concentrate future development and growth on the urban nodes and could reduce development opportunities in the other municipalities. Existing municipalities with reduced forecasts will likely end up with designated land outside of the 'interim settlement area boundary' that will not be developable until after the 2031 timeframe. This could have a significant impact on existing landowners.

## **Strategic Employment Areas**

The Amendment establishes four Strategic Employment Areas in Bradford, Innisfil, Rama, and at the Simcoe Regional Airport. These Strategic Employment Areas are a departure from the requirements of the Places to Grow Act as they are not adjacent to existing settlement areas. Instead, they reflect the unique opportunities provided by the existing transportation infrastructure for the establishment and growth of Employment opportunities.

## **Next Steps**

The Province has established regulations that will help it monitor all planning applications in the Amendment area to ensure that the vision established in the Amendment is adhered to. Also, the Province has recently decided that additional consultation is required. They have asked the Provincial Development Facilitator to work with the Simcoe municipalities to review the growth numbers and determine how to manage the over-supply of land. Recommendations are to be made to the Minister by November 1, 2011.

## **How does this affect our clients?**

WCGI continues to monitor the effects of changes to the Places to Grow Plan and to advise our clients on the most appropriate actions to take in the best interests of their property.

If you have a question on how this amendment may affect your lands, please contact us to discuss.

Mr. Kurt Franklin, Vice President, WCGI

Article written by Kurt Franklin, Vice President, Weston Consulting

You can reach Kurt at:

Email: [kfranklin@westonconsulting.com](mailto:kfranklin@westonconsulting.com)

Tel.: (905)-844-8749 ext. 224

