

Planning for Employment in the GGH

SUMMARY AND STAFF COMMENTS

Section	Provincial Proposal/Idea/Opinion	York Region Comments
4.1	Proactive Planning for Employment Need for a Provincial Vision for employment/identify trends and employment shifts.	Agree. There needs to be an emphasis on creating high quality jobs. Investment in research facilities, post-secondary education and a focus on high value added sectors is key.
4.2	Coordinated Data and Information on Employment Lands Need region-wide data collection and sharing. Develop terminology/methods for collecting data that is consistent between municipalities in the GGH.	Agree. Only three municipalities in the GGH collect employment information regularly (York, Toronto, Mississauga). MPIR have been talking to York staff with a view to using York's Annual Employment Survey as a model for the GGH.
	Develop a clear and consistent picture of the GGH's employment real land availability.	Agree. Vacant land inventories often include lands that are not really available due to uncertain highway routing and availability (e.g. Highway 427 and 404), land ownership issues, no available services, etc.
	Develop a new approach for determining future employment land needs.	Agree. The nature of employment is quickly evolving. A flexible long term perspective to protecting employment land is required.
5.1	Design and Form of Employment Areas Address issues that hinder more compact and well-designed employment areas. Utilize existing, and develop new tools and incentives to support better urban form and design in employment areas.	Agree.
5.2	Institutional Uses Ensure institutional uses are located in a way that promotes the objectives of the Growth Plan. Address factors such as building code restrictions, separation distance requirements, and current funding formulas that currently contribute to inefficient placement of public institutions.	Agree. A great deal of employment growth over the next 25 years will occur in the health, education and other institutional sectors. These uses will help strengthen and focus the development of Regional Centres. Major public institutions should occur in Regional Centres and Regional Corridors in order to be adjacent to Region's VIVA transit system. The Province should examine its funding formulas for hospitals, schools, social housing, etc. to ensure incentives are included for the location in Centres and Corridors.

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5.3	Office Uses	
	Direct major office development to urban growth centres, major transit station areas, or areas with existing frequent transit service or existing or planned higher order transit service. Explore the various tools, such as fiscal and policy incentives, that can be used to support the proper placement of major office.	Agree. Major office uses (>100,000 sqFt) often locate in areas not accessible by transit. Major office uses can act as anchors for Regional Centres and other urban nodes.
	Develop guidelines to support better planning for office uses, such as supporting transit services and minimizing the fragmentation of large contiguous employment lands.	Agree. Other office uses (<100,000 sqFt) should, where possible, be clustered into office nodes with viable transit service.
5.4	Retail Activities	
	Support better design and placement of retail activities, so to create more complete communities and protect employment lands better suited for other economic activities.	Agree. Shopping centres and large format retail ("big box" retail) should be carefully located and planned. These uses require extensive areas of land that need to be included in land budget calculations.
5.5	Industrial Activities, Warehousing, and Logistics	
	Develop criteria to identify employment areas that should be set aside for industrial, warehousing, and logistics uses, such as lands next to major transportation networks.	Agree. As Southern Ontario moves to more of a "Distribution Economy", these uses need to be carefully planned for. Large warehouse, logistics and transportation uses require extensive area, access to 400 series highways/rail, and an efficient goods movement strategy. They usually have a lower number of workers per hectare. There are only a few areas in York Region where uses of this type could be located.
6.1	Maximizing the Potential of Existing Employment Areas	
	Develop new tools and incentives to overcome barriers and promote the re-use of older employment lands and strategic locations within existing urban areas. Support the redevelopment of brownfields.	Agree. A recent Planning and Development Committee report identified the opportunity for intensification and redevelopment of employment areas.
6.2	Optimizing Access to the Transportation Network	
	Give priority to transit investments that support large employment nodes of major office and employment activities. Continue to use highway investments to support efficient goods movement.	Agree. In order to make Regional Centres and Corridors successful, significant Provincial investment in transit is required. Similarly, investment in 400 series highways is required, including Highway 427, 404 and the Bradford Bypass. Early identification and protection of routes for Highway 427 and the West GTA Corridor is required.

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6.3	Water, Wastewater, and Other Services	Agree. York Region's updated Master Plans for Water, Wastewater and Transportation will be 40-50 year plans for the ultimate urban form of the Region. Similarly, the Province must allow for the long term identification and protection of future employment areas.
7	Planning for the Future	
	Identify strategic employment areas, and provide support to these areas through infrastructure investment, policy and tools, and/or real estate management.	Agree.
7.1	Proposed Criteria for Provincially Strategic Employment Areas	
	Inter-regional economic significance; significant scale and cluster of employment activity; close proximity to major infrastructure; proximity to major markets; support overarching growth management objectives of the Growth Plan; Skilled Labour Force; Research and Development; innovative and forward-looking; and, Multi-Level Collaboration.	Agree in principle. York Region needs to provide for the creation of 350,000 jobs in keeping with Provincial forecasts. The Region has three unique large scale employment areas that need to be recognized as strategic in nature. These three zones are: the office/high tech area of Markham/Richmond Hill, the manufacturing, transportation and logistics power house in Central and West Vaughan, and the emerging employment area in Newmarket, East Gwillimbury and the Keswick area. Each of these areas are the centre of economic zones in the Region that will provide for better live/work relationships in the various parts of the Region. Note: The Provincial paper only identifies the Highway 404/407 area in the Town of Markham.
7.2	Proposed Future Strategic Employment Areas	
	Work with stakeholders to support established and new strategic employment areas. Perform further examination and consultation with stakeholders to possibly identify strategic employment areas over a time period longer than the current twenty-year planning horizon.	Agree. The Province should allow for some mechanism that permits for the identification and protection of employment lands beyond the twenty-year maximum planning horizon in the Growth Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement. This could take the form of a "Future Employment" designation, perhaps containing careful phasing and sequencing policies. The Region considers the three major future employment areas of: Richmond Hill/Markham, Central and West Vaughan, and East Gwillimbury as essential strategic areas. Further, it is Regional Council's policy that lands adjacent to Highway 404 in the Greenbelt may have to be considered for employment uses at the ten-year review of the Greenbelt Plan.