

NORTHERN ONTARIO and the PPS

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Four Points

- The 'good planning' principles of Smart Growth in the PPS work for southern Ontario, and presume growth.
- Southern Ontario will grow by 3.8 million in the next 24 years, while Northern Ontario is projected to grow by 3,900 persons, perhaps.
- Policies of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario over-ride PPS policies, and the Minister has order powers.
- Eight recommendations are proposed to improve the PPS for northern municipal flexibility and growth.

Smart Growth policies and the PPS

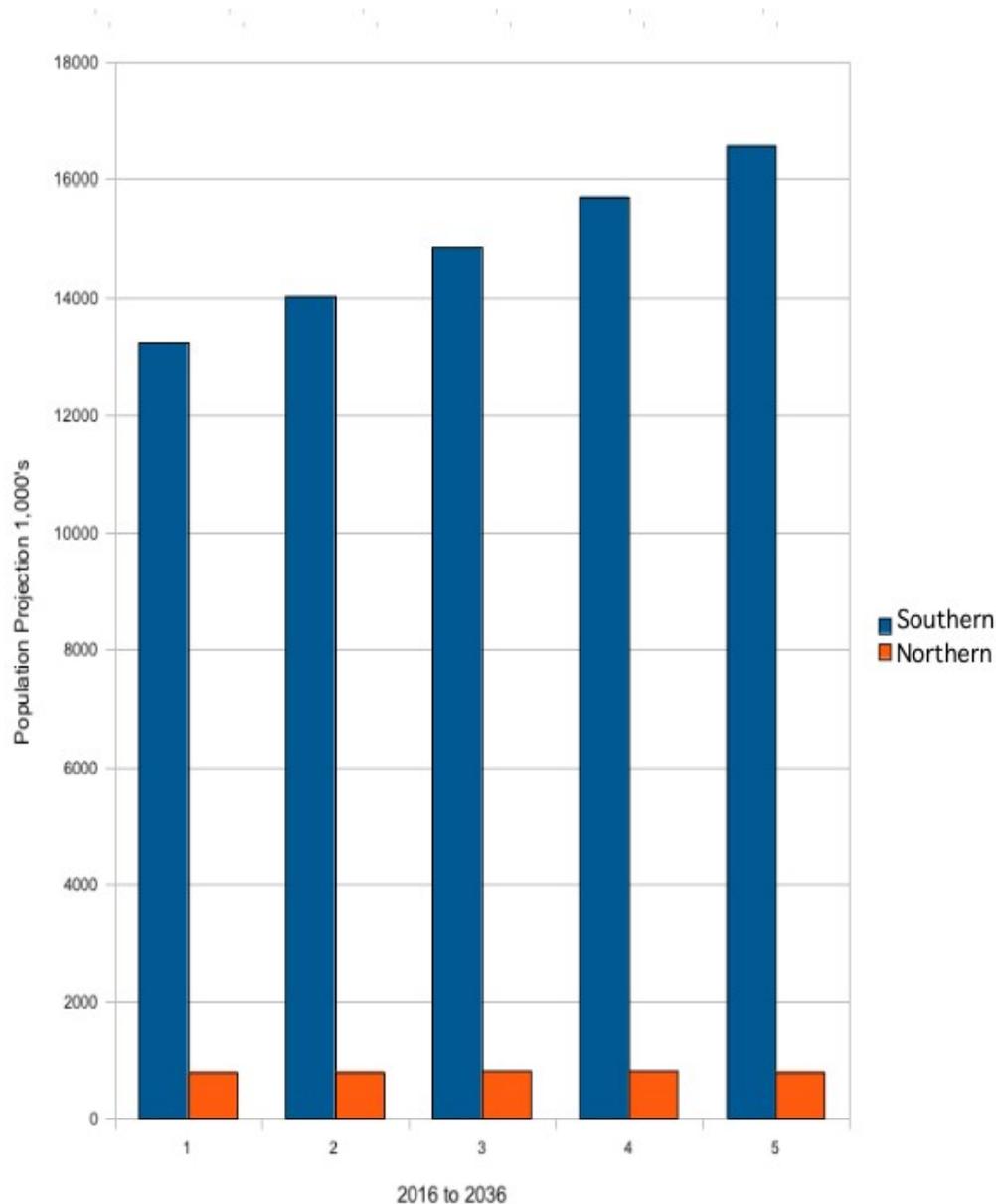


“Without properly managing growth, communities will continue to experience the negative aspects associated with rapid growth, such as increased traffic congestion, deteriorating air and water quality, and the disappearance of agricultural lands and natural resources.”

Source:

Growth Plan for the Golden Horseshoe Area

Geography Matters



Southern Ontario will grow by 3,800,000 persons in the next 24 years.

Northern Ontario is projected to grow by 3,900 persons.

Geography Matters

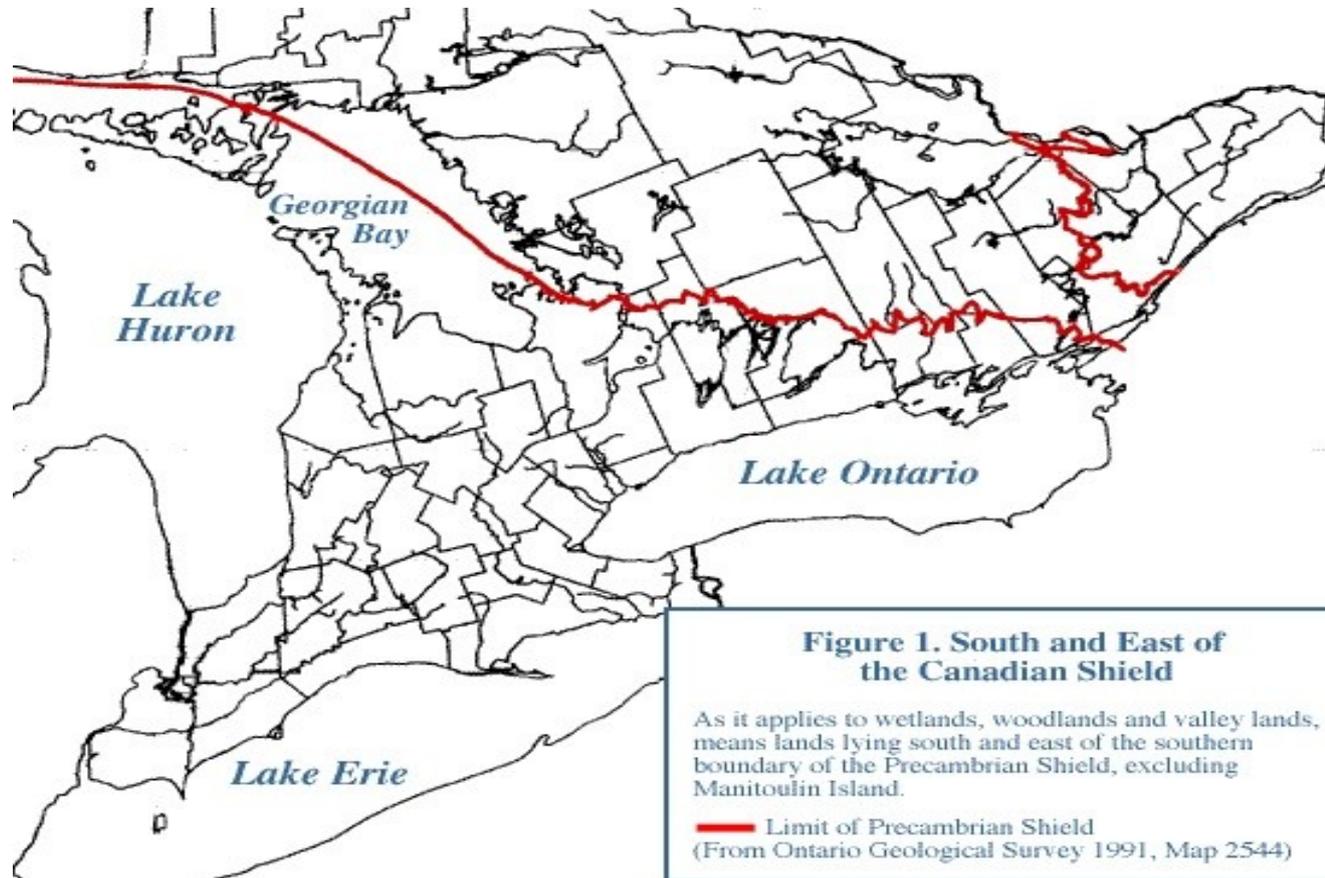
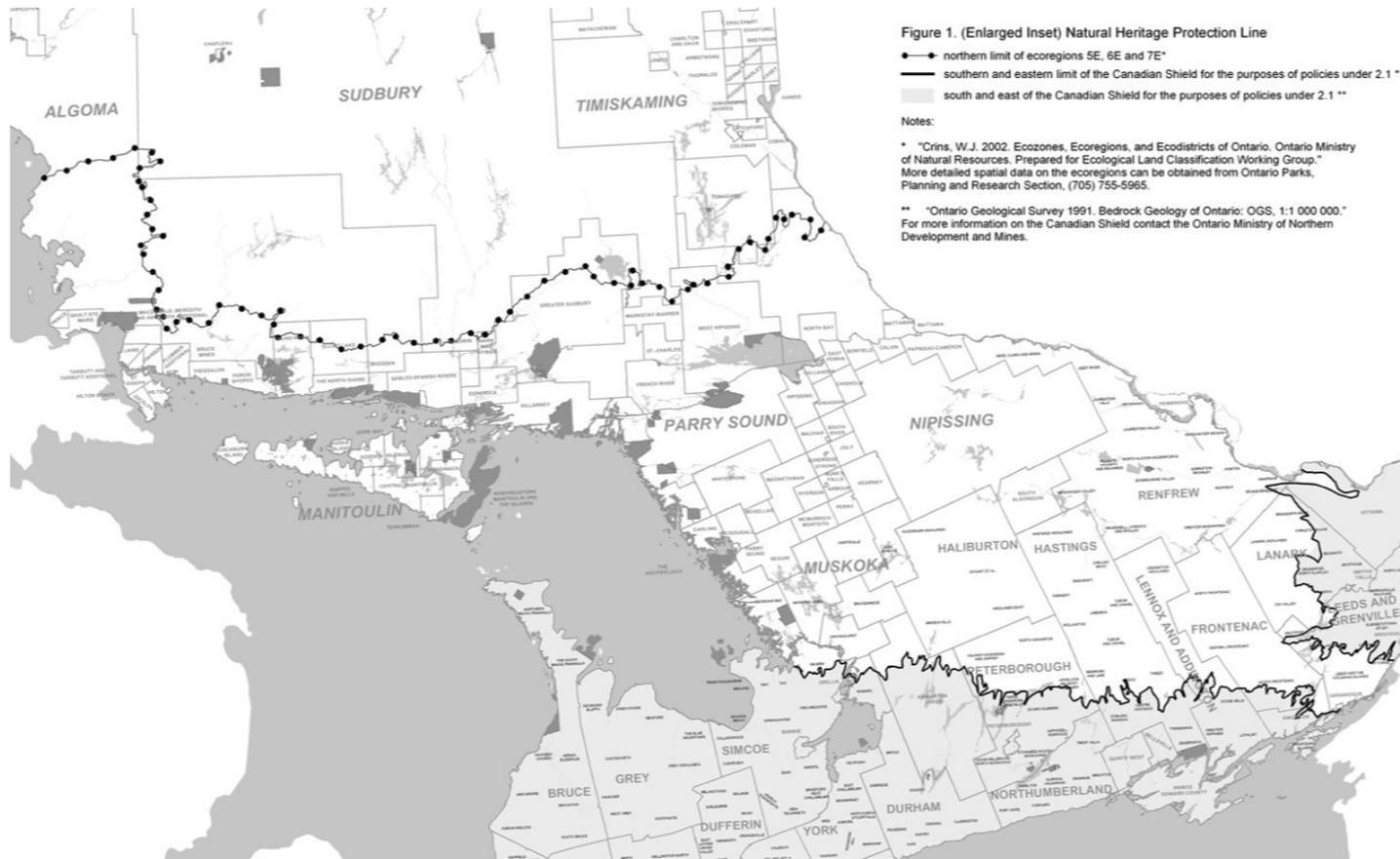


Figure 1 of the 1995 PPS demarcates the one line that identifies the south and east limits of the Canadian Shield. The province determined that based on over-riding differences in basic geology, surface morphology and ecosystems, a different standard of protection would be applied to wetlands, woodlands and valley lands to the north of this line.

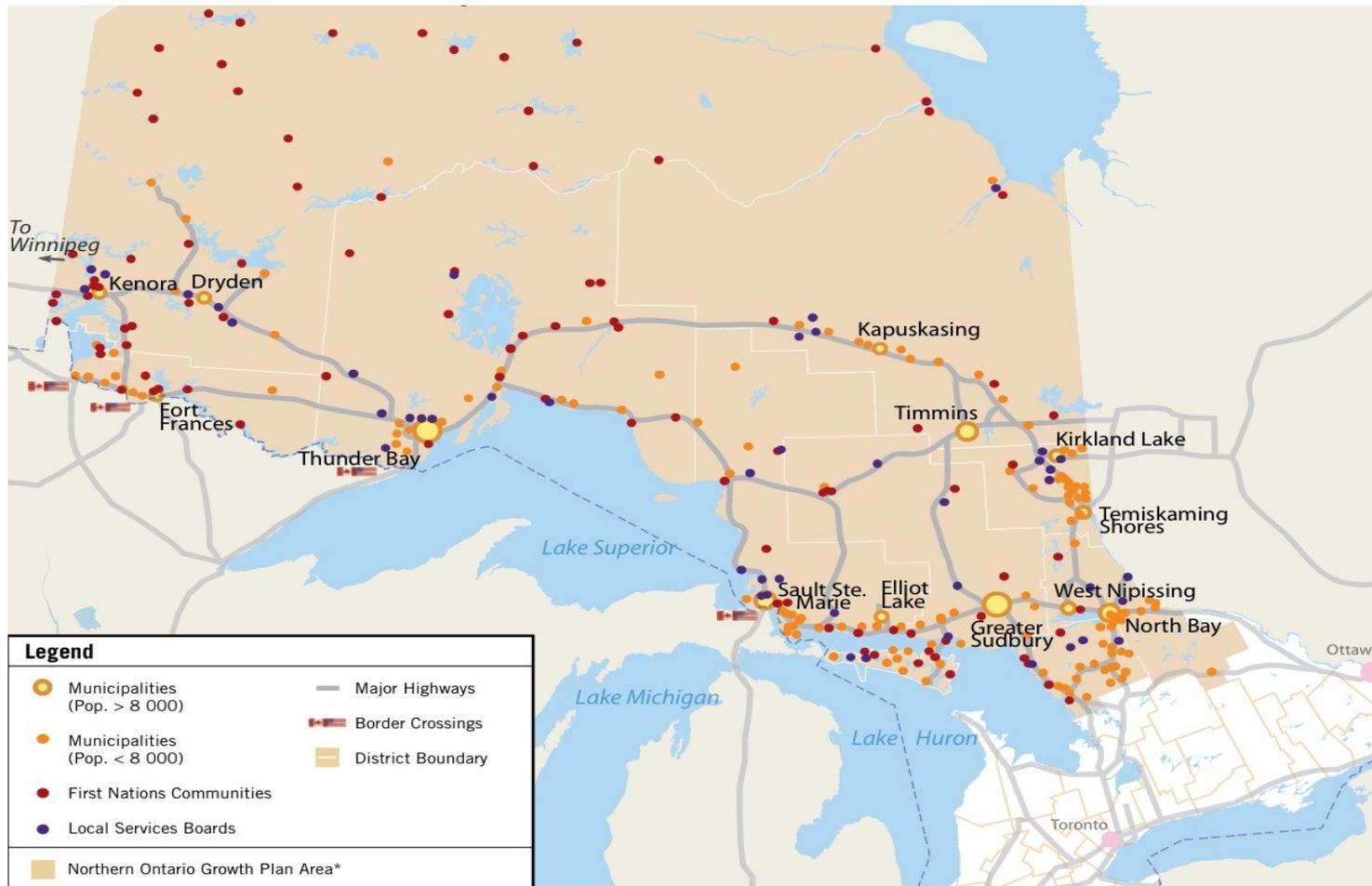
Geography Matters



Recognition of geographic variation went a small step further in the 2005 PPS, when a second line was added to indicate the northern limit of ecosystems 5E, 6E and 7E, for similar environmental protection purposes.

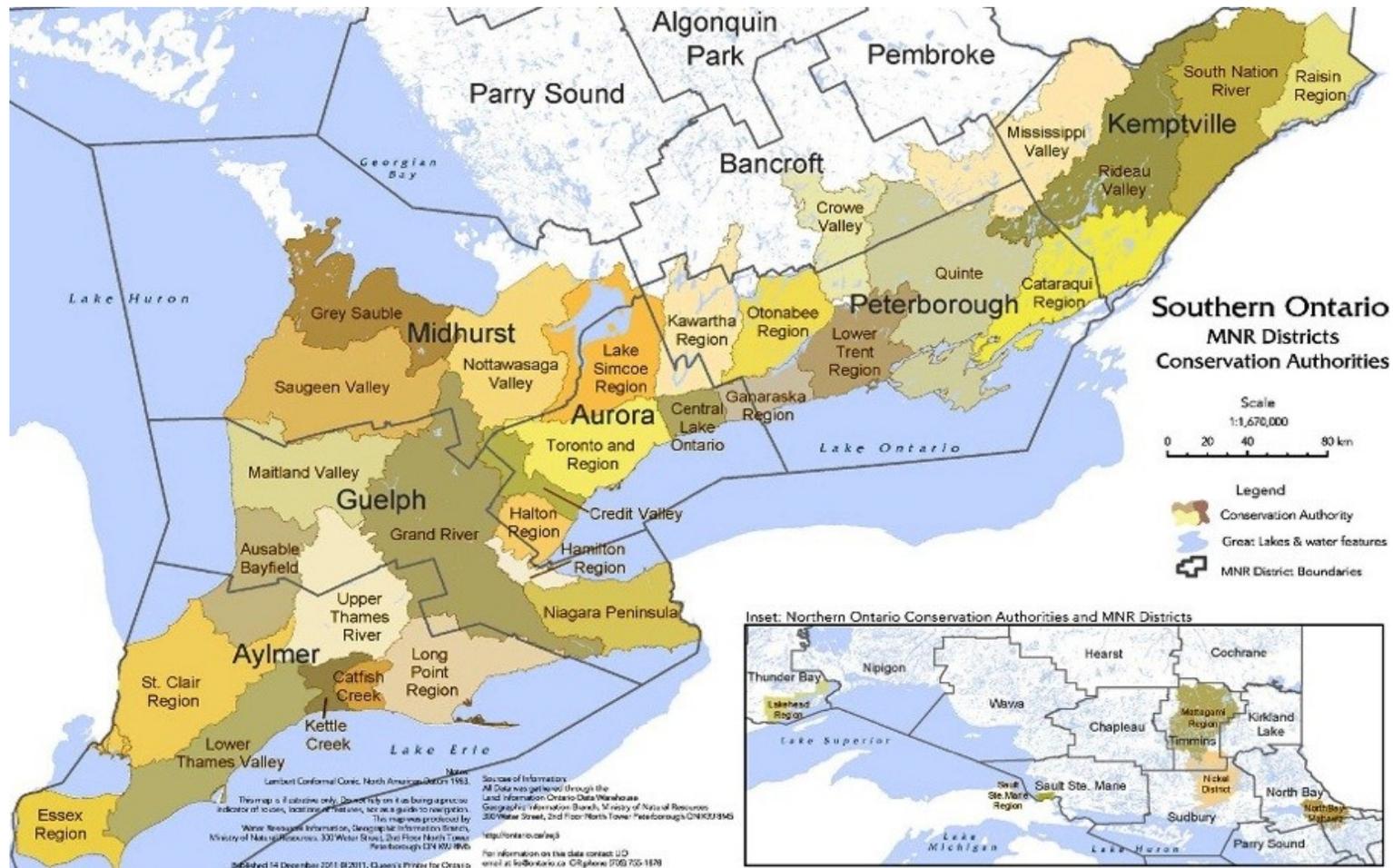
The PPS requires prime agricultural land be protected for long-term use. Unfortunately no areas of CLI class 1, 2 or 3 soils exist in Ontario north of the Shield line. Equally noteworthy for agriculture, fewer than 2,200 crop heat units are available anywhere north of Manitoulin Is.

Geography Matters



It would be appropriate for the PPS to recognize the boundary of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, and to also note the significant differences in the level of community and land development.

Geography Matters



The PPS states “Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the *quality and quantity of water* by using the *watershed* as the ecologically meaningful scale for planning. In the north, conservation area board funding mechanisms stem from organized municipalities, accordingly CA boundaries in Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Sault Saint Marie correspond with administrative limits not watersheds

PPS in the North at the OMB



Two Island Lake:

OMB File PL110324

Board ruled because of the lot's close proximity to Thunder Bay the conversion from seasonal to permanent use is very likely. Creating a new residential lot in this case is detrimental to Thunder Bay and the surrounding municipalities ...while this application is only for one additional lot, when repeated multiple times over time the effects can be significant....the increased costs can in turn affect the financial health of the adjacent municipality and the Province.

PPS in the North at the OMB



Kakabeka Falls:

OMB File PL101348

Board ruled that a 9-lot plan of subdivision was 'not small' and therefore not consistent with the PPS, even though the development was supported by 16 businesses in the nearby seasonal tourism community of Kakabeka Falls.

In addition, this case would be supported by the Growth Plan policies which seek to strengthen existing tourism/economic nodes.

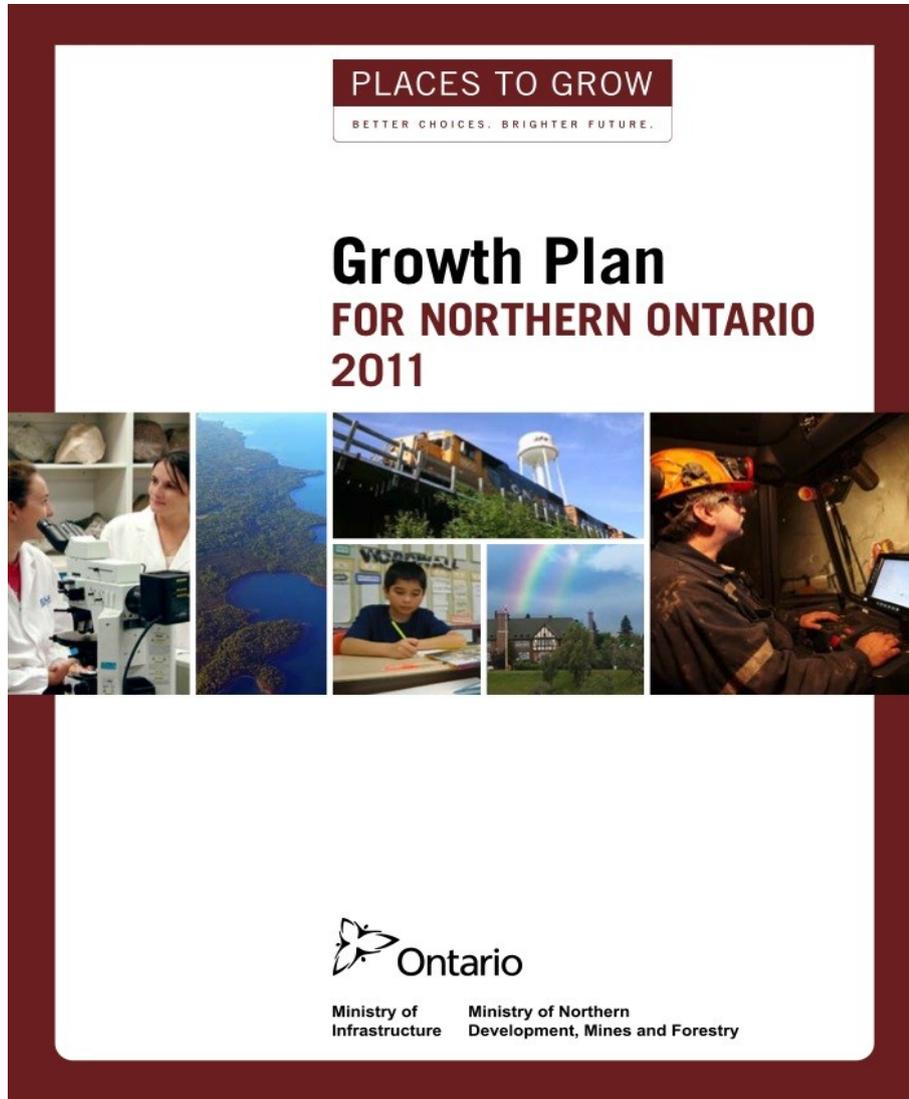
PPS for Growth



The efforts of northern Ontario municipalities to move forward are over-burdened by too many constrictive policies in the provincial policy statement.

One policy does not fit all.

PPS for Growth



Built on the work done by northern mayors, chambers of commerce, economic development groups and Aboriginal leaders, the Growth Plan was finalized and came into effect on March 3, 2011.

PPS for Growth

Sections 13 and 14 of the Places to Grow Act:

- “ Despite any other Act, a growth plan prevails in the case of conflict between the growth plan and, (a) an official plan; (b) a zoning by-law; or (c) subject to subsection (4), a policy statement issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act*.”
- “ The Minister jointly with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing may, by order, amend the official plan to resolve the non-conformity”.



PPS for Growth RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend the Preamble:

Explain how northern Ontario differences are more profound than simple geography, and why for practical, reasonable and strategic reasons land use planning needs to be done differently.

And Note:

1. The north is comprised of comparatively few, small communities, separated by great distances, and having vast intervening areas of crown land, along with some unorganized settled areas and many first nations settlements.
2. Communities are younger and shallower in the accumulated investments in land improvement, physical community infrastructure and social infrastructure.
3. Current trends project Northern Ontario will experience negligible net population growth over the next 25 years, and it is essential that steps be taken to ensure expected mining and related growth.

PPS for Growth RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Use the Shall-Have-Regard Approach in North:

The Implementation Section of the PPS should be amended to include a specific provision which states that in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan area, municipalities and other planning authorities shall have regard for the policies of the PPS.

This swings the pendulum of power back to local accountability, and away from the current extreme position of unilateral policy application by the Province.

3. Adopt a Practical Approach in Considering Impacts:

Replace “no negative impacts” with “no unacceptable negative impacts”, recognizing that in many situations, any change which occurs will have some negative impact.

The most appropriate consideration is whether the impacts can be mitigated or would be unreasonable.

PPS for Growth RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Allow Settlement Area Boundary Appeals:

Comprehensive reviews can be a long time coming; however it may be crucial for a business or community to be able to quickly respond to a development opportunity.

Such options should not be lost. Nor should the only available alternative be reliance on the Minister to issue a boundary change order.

5. Consider Dropping the No New Towns Provision:

The policy of no new townships should be carefully reconsidered given the new and real prospect of 10,000 long-term jobs arising from the Ring-of-Fire and related developments.

Decentralization of jobs and decision making would help shift the status northern Ontario, moving it away from that of a virtual colony, where worker visitation is preferred over settlement. This problem is perpetuated by the PPS policy of 'no new towns'.

PPS for Growth RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Require the OMB Establish a Northern Panel:

Require that an Ontario Municipal Board member hearing a northern Ontario appeal, be one who has lived or worked in the north for at least three years.

To balance emphasis on constricting growth, the OMB member adjudication a planning situation in the north should have some appreciation gained from personal experience, for the slower rate of growth, the smaller magnitude of impacts and the greater abundance of land, all characteristic of northern Ontario.

7. Establish Municipal-Centred Regional Hinterland Councils:

Management plans of Agencies, and Ministries responsible for hinterland resources, in the area surrounding the municipal-centred region should be required to gain Council approval prior to funding.

Such a Council would introduce a new type and level of inter-boundary coordination that is appropriate to the north, and is called for by the PPS, and ought to include First Nation representation, as well as an accommodation for bundles of smaller communities west of Thunder Bay.

PPS for Growth RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Consider the Creation of Hydro North:

Given the importance of municipal infrastructure and an assured energy supply to northern communities, and given the experience of Thunder Bay and Atikokan generating stations, create Hydro N.

Hydro North would provide an opportunity to re-configure Hydro entities to make them more accountable to the legislature, and it would create a body that is better able to deal with the realities of the northern physical and cultural landscape, and better able to plan for and develop needed expansions.

Call for Action:

GPNO IMPLEMENTATION OVERDUE - The Ministries of Infrastructure, and Northern Development and Mines have already committed to the identification of *economic and service hubs*. They simply need to complete this vital work quickly.

LEADERSHIP IN IMPLEMENTING NEEDED CHANGE - The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, together with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, as empowered by the Planning Act, are requested to consider implementing these recommendations to improve the Provincial Policy Statement.