

Municipal Think Tank: Ontario Growth Plan & Climate Change Action Plan

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4:00 PM @ YORK UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



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INTRODUCTION AND WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The Province of Ontario recently released proposed amendments to the [Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#) and related land use plans (i.e. Greentbelt Plan), as well as the [Climate Change Action Plan](#) (CCAP). Given that these plans chart a course towards 2041 (in the case of the Growth Plan) and 2050 (in the case of the CCAP) policy objectives, this emerging policy framework connecting land use decisions to climate action will have significant implications for municipal and other local government agencies over the long term.

The [Ontario Climate Consortium \(OCC\)](#) and the [Clean Air Partnership \(CAP\)](#) hosted a workshop to convene municipal policy practitioners, as well as policy experts from other levels of government, academia, civil society and the private sector, to discuss proposed amendments to the land use planning framework in relation to the Province's climate change action agenda (both with respect to mitigation and adaptation).

The Think Tank, hosted at York University, featured introductory presentations on recent OCC research on land use planning and climate action in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), and on priority growth plan amendments from a climate perspective. Following from these short presentations, seven facilitated breakout sessions were held, gathering sector specific comments on the Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Think Tank was attended by more than 90 participants from municipal and provincial governments, conservation authorities, academia, private industry, NGOs and civil society.

PRESENTATIONS

The workshop began with a series of three brief context-setting presentations designed to set the stage for and inform the breakout discussions that followed.

Ian McVey, Ontario Climate Consortium, Introductions and Context-Setting ([pdf of presentation](#)) ([video of presentation](#))

Ian outlined the workshop goals and provided some background context. He highlighted the critical link between climate action and land use planning policy in the region, both from a mitigation and adaptation perspective.

On the mitigation side Ian described the predominance of transportation and building emissions in Ontario's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions profile, both of which are linked to patterns of urban sprawl which have characterized land development patterns in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) over the past several decades. On the adaptation front, Ian noted the correlation between traditional patterns of urban development which transforms permeable surfaces (e.g. forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands) into impermeable surfaces (e.g. buildings, parking lots and transportation corridors) and vulnerability to climate impacts related to extreme rainfall and extreme heat events. He also noted the wide variation in vulnerability within cities with some areas having higher levels of tree cover and greenspace and others severely lacking; and suggested that successful adaptation requires implementation of a large number of relatively small-scale measures across the urban landscape that are tailored to specific local circumstances.

Ian finished by characterizing the challenges municipal planners face in trying to implement adaptation and mitigation policy in tandem. While both are important, the reality is that there are a number of important conflicts and synergies between mitigation and adaptation actions that need to be taken into account. For example, mitigation policy pushes land use planners towards high levels of density in urban growth centres which can act against achievement of adaptation goals by reducing green space in a given area (and thus attenuating urban heat island impacts). At the same time there are opportunities for synergistic action between mitigation and adaptation. For example, energy and water efficiency efforts, supported by local storage infrastructure, can help to build resilience to climate impacts while at the same time supporting province wide emission reduction efforts.

Laura Taylor, York University [OCC Research on Land Use Planning and Climate Action](#) in the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Laura's presentation focused on delivering highlights from the OCC's research on land use and climate planning integration. The research was completed in 2015 in support of the coordinated review of the land use planning framework in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region and included a comprehensive literature review and scan of international jurisdictions which informed a policy evaluation of Ontario's planning framework. The evaluation has led to the development of a set of policy recommendations and a proposed performance measurement framework.

In her presentation, Laura discussed the focus on urban regions in the literature on climate change. Encouragingly, Ontario has an advantage in that it actually takes a regional approach to land use planning in the GGH. This stands in contrast to many domestic and international jurisdictions where the absence of such a regional approach creates challenges for the coordination of action across the urban landscape. However, for successful climate change mitigation and adaptation, the presence of a regional planning approach isn't enough. Indeed, there is a fundamental need to mainstream climate action across all levels of government in order to create the conditions for coordinated decision-making both horizontally across provincial government ministries, as well as vertically with municipalities and the federal government. The reality is that municipal governments interact with a range of provincial ministries on land use planning issues, and in many cases receive conflicting or contradictory signals with respect to policy priorities. For example, climate adaptation policies encouraging green infrastructure have the effect of increasing the space needed on the ground for stormwater management within communities and increased space is at odds with policies encouraging compact urban form to reduce GHGs.

Supporting coordinated decision-making on climate and land use planning, Laura stressed the need for education and support for land use planners to build understanding of climate change and their capacity to act, particularly in support of vulnerable communities characterized by socio-economic and spatial marginalization. An enhanced understanding within the planning community of climate change, and the role that planners can play in supporting positive action, will help achieve climate change goals.

Marcy Burchfield, Neptis Foundation: Top Priority Growth Plan Amendments from a Climate Action Perspective ([pdf of presentation](#)) ([video of presentation](#))

Marcy's presentation outlined the Neptis Foundation's perspectives on the top proposed Growth Plan priorities from a climate action perspective. She started her presentation by outlining some of the urban development patterns that have characterized growth in the GGH region. Marcy referred the audience

to the recent Neptis Report authored by Pamela Blais, [Planning for Prosperity](#), which noted that there is a misalignment between where employment growth is occurring and the transportation infrastructure planned under the Big Move. She also referred to Neptis's [Growing Pains](#) report which found that, while growth occurring in the GTHA region is more compact than it was in the 90s, it is still not occurring in the areas that will enable existing and planned public transportation infrastructure to be of greatest value.

With respect to “top priority” amendments, Marcy asserted that the **intensification first principle** and the related proposed criteria regarding potential **settlement area expansions** have critical importance from a climate mitigation perspective. From a climate adaptation perspective, new language and terminology around **integrated watershed management** have been significantly improved in the proposed Growth Plan. Marcy also noted some weaknesses in the proposed plan, particularly the ability for targets to be amended/weakened in outer ring municipalities, some of which are experiencing significant growth pressure. The creation of two sets of rules in inner and outer ring municipalities could increase growth pressures in outlying areas where planned transit investment will have limited impact.

Marcy noted that municipalities need a lot more support for Growth Plan implementation than occurred under the first iteration of the Growth Plan. Most notably, municipalities need support with data monitoring to track Growth Plan implementation in order to enable evaluation of progress on an ongoing basis. Marcy also argued for a new relationship between the Province and Municipalities during the implementation stage of the Growth Plan. The Province did not continue to champion its own Plan during the first 10 years of its implementation, which often left Municipalities in the lurch while defending their plans at the OMB and at Council. The Province needs to provide more in the way of guidance. Given the complexities of preparing municipalities to mitigate and adapt to climate change, a model of collaboration needs to be developed so that as issues arise they can be addressed by Municipalities and the Province in a comprehensive way.

Gabriella Kalapos, Clean Air Partnership

Gabriella established the context for the breakout sessions, noting how in addition to environmental concerns, the Growth Plan was created to address economic challenges. There is a direct economic connection between land use, growth and infrastructure capital, and operating and rehabilitation costs. How we choose to grow will determine whether we increase our infrastructure deficit (resulting from deferred maintenance and rehabilitation investment) or if we grow more sustainably and thereby address our growing infrastructure deficit. [FCM has estimated the Canada's municipal infrastructure deficit](#) has grown from an estimated \$12 billion in 1985 to \$60 billion in 2003 and is estimated at \$123 billion in 2009.

This group discussed the need to raise awareness and capacity within municipal government, including both elected officials and staff.

Outreach efforts should focus on demonstrating how climate action is already part of municipal government mandates.

By demonstrating how the responsibilities and actions of various municipal stakeholder groups already support achievement of climate goals, buy-in and support for the Growth Plan and CCAP will be enhanced.

SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Breakout #1: Education and Outreach to Support Plan Implementation

Discussion within the group was largely about public engagement in the Growth Plan development and implementation. The perspective from the group was that more emphasis on community education and buy-in should have occurred before drafting of amendments (notwithstanding the work of the Crombie Panel, which was still organized to receive comments, not to work to generate policies and actions). Rather, combining public education of issues and open discussion of alternatives is better done before proposals are released, and improves the ability of everyone to strategize best practices for implementation.

This group also discussed the need to raise awareness and capacity within municipal government, including both elected officials and staff. Outreach efforts should focus on demonstrating how climate action is already part of municipal government mandates: e.g., stormwater management and flood prevention; and encouraging active transportation to improve residents' health and well-being. By demonstrating how the responsibilities and actions of various municipal stakeholder groups already support achievement of climate goals, buy-in and support for the Growth Plan and CCAP will be enhanced.

Building on the point above, it was noted that engagement techniques should include visualization techniques that demonstrate how regional land use planning, when coupled with effective municipal policy implementation, can translate into positive changes “on the ground” within particular communities. Through the reinforcement of positive narratives, public buy-in and political support at the municipal scale can be enhanced. The group pointed to the example of the regional growth “strategy” (not “plan”) created in Metro Vancouver, which was focused on actions needed at the highly localized level to realize the broad plan goals, as good examples of this approach. The group suggested that the province use [community service hubs](#) as places where info on planning is disseminated and where the province can solicit input from citizens.

Finally the group suggested that a Standing Roundtable could improve public engagement in land use planning policy development and implementation. Core membership in this Roundtable would be nominated among various stakeholder groups but materials and discussions should be open to the public. The Roundtable should be interdisciplinary, balancing science and grassroots knowledge.

There needs to be more opportunity for collaboration across the region, sharing best practices and identifying emerging issues.

Data sets that are collected relating to the Growth Plan should be aligned with the Census and Transportation Tomorrow data sets.

Breakout #2: Regional Oversight - Performance Monitoring and Data Availability

This Group felt the Growth Plan needs to do much more to address the challenges of transitioning towards low carbon communities. It was noted that the Special Policy Area (SPA) model may be able to provide a mechanism for how that transition could be better supported. The SPA model is similar to the community improvement areas (CIAs), identifying areas of vulnerability and /or innovation and opportunity. These areas would likely need to go beyond a single municipal jurisdictional area, as the CIAs do currently, and instead relate to a larger area which may cross more than one jurisdictional boundary (for example an SPA to comprehensively address employment growth and re-urbanization in the Airport zone or an SPA for the Whitebelt which will require net-zero communities development).

Regarding coordination, it was felt there is a need to re-think the current operational mode of planning to broaden the conversation and work more collaboratively with the Provincial and Federal governments. An example is the Pan-Canadian Framework for Combatting Climate Change. There needs to be more opportunity for collaboration across the region, sharing best practices and identifying emerging issues. Addressing climate change and transitioning to a low carbon future will require innovative policy decisions, and broader input into what these policies might look like.

The Group observed a need for more transparency in the allocation of forecasts from the upper- to lower-tier municipalities to reduce challenges of local politics playing too big of a role in the process. Bill 73 introduced a change to the composition of the mandatory planning advisory committee but it does not guarantee transparency. Additionally, it was felt that growth and intensification targets are complex between regional and lower-tier municipalities. Targets may make sense at a wider spatial scale but not necessarily at one regional or local scale, the Province should work with regional and local Municipalities to explore this further.

Finally, data sets that are collected relating to Growth Plan should be aligned with the Census and Transportation Tomorrow data sets, while also prioritizing what data is critical to the three Ps of climate mitigation and adaptation action: purposeful, pertinent, and productive.

The Province needs to enable Municipalities to be policy innovators by allowing cities to enact by-laws that enable them to be policy leaders.

Municipalities need real data to support municipal land use planning innovation that addresses the energy and carbon challenge.

To support the creation of net zero communities, energy planners need to be brought into the land use planning decision-making process much earlier.

There is a need to consider locating small scale energy infrastructure within urban growth areas.

Breakout #3: Integration of Land Use and Energy Planning

Enable municipal policy innovation and leadership

This group spent some time discussing the need for the province to enable municipalities to be policy innovators by allowing cities to enact by-laws that go beyond provincial legislation (e.g. building code, municipal act, etc.). Policy flexibility for municipalities to be policy leaders establishes capacity for improvement across the province by creating “living laboratories” for policy innovation and a “race-to-the top” for climate and energy ambition. The Province should set the “floor” by providing required elements that need to go into municipal climate-related plans and strategies (i.e. official plans, community energy plans, etc.) as a minimum, and enable municipalities to go beyond by providing guidance and resources to support higher ambition.

For example, currently municipalities face considerable constraints in developing new distributed energy generation infrastructure. They are not eligible to participate in the large renewable procurement (LRP) program, and the role of LDCs in generation is also limited. The group recommends that the province consider removing exclusionary criteria which limits municipal participation in the development of new energy generation at the neighbourhood/community scale. It was also noted that provincial energy plans don’t align with climate ambitions at either the municipal or provincial scale. The example was given of the planned expansion of the gas-fired Portlands Energy Centre which, if built, compromises the City of Toronto’s efforts to achieve its GHG targets.

Finally, the group noted that municipalities need real data to support municipal land use planning innovation that addresses the energy and carbon challenge. CCAP’s support for energy mapping was seen as positive, however data sharing protocols must be established between municipalities (upper and lower tier), local distribution companies and the province in order to ensure coordination across planning and mapping initiatives.

Planning for Net zero communities

To support the Growth Plan objective of creating net zero communities, the group recommended that energy planners at IESO and LDCs need to be brought into the land use planning decision-making processes at a much earlier stage than is currently the case. Currently LDCs/IESO and

gas utilities are brought into the land use planning process at the “end of pipe” (i.e. when new residential/commercial development plans are approved). By bringing energy planners into the conversation earlier, opportunities for small-scale generation infrastructure can be considered to support the creation of “net-zero communities”.

Building on the point above, the group noted the need to consider locating small scale energy infrastructure within urban growth areas, as is done with transportation infrastructure in the current version of the growth plan. Integrating energy generation infrastructure into the urban fabric through land use planning decisions can address current or foreseen capacity constraints, as well as unforeseen capacity constraints that may emerge as electric vehicle penetration increases. Distributed generation also reduces the need for new large scale transmission infrastructure to deliver energy from further afield.

Finally, the Group noted that the Growth Plan definition of “net zero communities” is currently unclear, and is inconsistent with CCAP’s focus on “net zero homes”. In both cases, it is unclear what constitutes a net zero home or community. The group preferred the Growth Plan’s net zero communities approach, which it saw as being more equitable to lower income communities where housing affordability is a concern as well as providing municipalities with flexibility to decide on the geographic scope (neighbourhood, district, whole municipality) that is appropriate given local circumstances.

Containment and intensification are fundamental to the creation of compact, transit-oriented communities.

The Growth Plan should be integrated with regional transportation planning.

A comprehensive education effort to demonstrate the benefits of living in compact transit-oriented communities, including cost and convenience is needed.

The province should consider support for local food hubs in urban growth centres and transit hubs. Sprawl must be contained to protect land needed for local food production.

Breakout #4: Low Carbon Transportation Planning

The group expressed strong support for containment and intensification as being fundamental to creating compact, transit-oriented communities. There was also strong interest in integrating the Growth Plan with regional transportation planning to ensure that local planners are thinking on a regional scale. The group recognized, however, cultural and communications challenges to increased density in many communities in the region, which poses a barrier to the achievement of Growth Plan objectives. Many developers continue to focus on building “ground-based” dwellings in the tradition of single-family homes and urban sprawl, asserting that they are simply responding to consumer demand in the region.

To counteract this, the group suggested that a comprehensive education effort aimed at the public to demonstrate the benefits of living in compact transit-oriented communities, including cost and convenience, is needed. Furthermore, the group emphasized the need to ensure that transit planning is aligned with urban development patterns such that areas with density and/or jobs are receiving sufficient transit service in a timely manner. The group spent some time discussing the need to plan for low carbon transportation options when building new schools, community centres and other public buildings. Because the land requirements for these building types are often quite high, these buildings are often built in greenfield areas that are not integrated with existing or planned low carbon transit options, which creates demand for personal vehicular travel.

Building on the point above, the group spent some time discussing synergies between low carbon transportation and food security in the region. The group noted that many new food retail locations are built in greenfield auto-dependent areas, which is creating “food deserts” in urban cores that exacerbate vulnerability of socio-economically marginalized populations. The group felt the province should focus some effort on trying to stimulate the creation of local food hubs alongside planned transit hubs to provide market access for agricultural producers in the region and limit the need for consumers to solely rely on their automobile for food purchases. While it is difficult for municipalities to determine which businesses set-up in the vicinity of major transit hubs, they can use zoning restrictions to promote small business in the area and use publicly-owned land to create opportunities for farmers markets and other uses that promote food security.

The Province should better integrate the freight sector into the Growth Plan and Big Move Plan.

Municipalities can use local procurement policies, which promote health as a main objective, to increase smaller local food markets within communities. The Province should consider beefing up the agricultural section of the Growth Plan to include support for local food hubs in urban growth centres and transit hubs. The group also reiterated the importance of containing sprawl to protect land needed for local food production.

An additional intersection between low carbon transport and food policy emerges in the freight transportation sector. In dense urban areas, large freight transportation is an issue due to congestion and constant re-routing due to construction. A group member noted that current freight policies and practices by food distributors can have significant mileage and cost impacts. The group agreed the Province should look to better integrate the freight sector into the Growth Plan and Big Move Plan. The group suggested Urban Consolidation Centres (UCC) as a potential solution, where all aspects of the supply chain are at located in one particular region (E.g. [Freight Village Hubs](#)).

While incorporating watershed and subwatershed plans into the amended Growth Plan is an improvement, the exclusion of “integrated watershed management” is a missed opportunity.

It was unclear how the consideration of climate change impacts and severe weather events would be used to set watershed plan goals or define unacceptable impacts

The CCAP should make reference to watershed planning and reference the role that integrated watershed planning can play in identifying opportunities for carbon storage, and protecting lands with high potential for supporting carbon offset projects.

Breakout #5: Integrated Watershed Management (IWM)

Overall, the group agreed that the decision to incorporate watershed and subwatershed plans into the amended Growth Plan (GP) represents a significant improvement. However the group questioned why the broader concept of “integrated watershed management” (IWM) wasn’t included, noting that the proposed definition in the GP is very water-centric (quality and quantity; cumulative impacts) and feature-specific (hydrologic features and areas) and does not include consideration for broader, landscape-level natural heritage management. Related to the above point is the context that the existing IWM plans have been authored by Conservation Authorities in significant consultation with municipal partners and other stakeholders. Clarification is requested on how these existing, broader scoped watershed plans will be considered under the amended GP as major investments have been made to produce these comprehensive plans and knowing how the local knowledge they contain will be used in future land use planning decisions is important.

Notwithstanding the overall positive response around including watershed and subwatershed planning in Growth Plan policies, the need for clarification around the implications of policy 4.2.1.3 (under Water Resource Systems) was identified. The group found it unclear whether the allocation of growth, together with water resource planning, would also result in deciding the **location** of water servicing. This seemed a potential ‘red flag’ as the **more detailed and comprehensive** subwatershed plan is **not** used to inform this first, critical step which could create a ‘done deal’ before understanding the sensitivities of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem. Related to the above Policy 4.2.1.3, but discussed after the Breakout session concluded, was whether the use of watershed planning to inform growth allocations means that ‘no growth’ could be assigned to an area based on “unacceptable” impacts to water quantity (for water taking/drinking supply) or assimilative capacity of watercourses to manage water quality? Additionally, it is unclear how the consideration of climate change impacts and severe weather events (on water resources) would be used to set watershed plan goals or define unacceptable impacts, especially without knowing the future climate scenarios that would be used.

The group spent some time discussing the extension of the Greenbelt to include URV and the application of similar Greenbelt level protection to lands within the mapped natural heritage system. Group comments were from two perspectives:

1) URV already have protective legislation (i.e., hazard lands) and are not generally under development pressure, so the new designation under the GP is nice but doesn't really add much to the current planning 'tool box', and

2) the application of similar Greenbelt level protection to the mapped natural heritage system seems to be a good move for greenfield planning and urban expansion areas, however, rather than promoting increased integration and enhancement of the terrestrial natural heritage system, the focus of Growth Plan policy (see 4.2.2.2) is to stipulate how expansions can occur within the natural heritage system. It is unclear if the existing urban areas are even more vulnerable to this policy focus.

With respect to (mis)alignment between the Growth Plan and CCAP the group noted that CCAP makes no reference to watershed planning. While CCAP does focus on land-based carbon sequestration, there is no reference to the role that integrated watershed planning can play in identifying opportunities for carbon storage, and protecting lands with high potential for supporting carbon offset projects.

The group supported the reference in 4.2.10.1 to official plans (OPs) requiring climate change policies that reduce GHG emissions and address climate change adaptation goals, but questioned why 4.2.10.2 weakens this important first step by only *encouraging* municipalities to develop strategies, etc. The group also suggested that 4.2.10 should include a reference to Ontario's forthcoming climate adaptation plan/strategy, and generally increase references to adaptation. Currently that section refers much more clearly to mitigation efforts (i.e. GHG emission reductions) than adaptation. Greater detail and direction is needed about what adaptation policies (in OPs) will speak to, e.g., assessing, identifying, mapping and reducing sector-based vulnerabilities, with the ultimate goal of minimizing risk and increasing resilience under future climate change scenarios.

The group also noted that the climate change section of the proposed Growth Plan (4.2.10) doesn't refer back to watershed planning, in spite of there being an integral connection between the two. It was suggested that the Province look to increase integration of climate and watershed planning in both the Growth Plan and CCAP. Indeed, while CCAP does not refer at all to watershed planning, it does include a number of references to land based carbon sequestration in forests, wetlands, grasslands and agricultural areas which will need to be integrated with watershed planning efforts.

Breakout #6: Integrated Planning and Infrastructure

There is a need to explore price signals related to growth in order to explore possible misalignments between fiscal instruments and growth management goals and opportunities to increase alignment.

It was felt that the Growth plan was weak around resilience; clarity on what “consideration of a changing climate” means as it relates to infrastructure decisions referenced in the Growth Plan is also needed.

The Province should provide greater support for Municipal adoption of the Growth plan within their Official Plans and development decisions.

This Group observed that there is a need to explore the price signals related to growth (ex. development charges, property taxes, utility infrastructure costs, transit investments/cost, etc.) in order to explore where there are possible misalignments between fiscal instruments and growth management goals and where there are opportunities to increase alignment between economic instruments and policy goals. The Growth Plan should have addressed this, but it doesn't clearly enough reference that the growth policy is set within an economic framework and misalignments between the two will undermine implementation of the Growth Plan and the CCAP.

Reference to the Provincial greenhouse gas reduction targets within the Growth Plan would improve the ability of the Growth Plan to align with the CCAP. Reference to the important role land use and growth management plays on influencing community energy use within the Growth Plan would increase recognition of the important role the Growth Plan plays in helping to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions and achieving the goals of the CCAP.

It was felt that the Growth plan was weak around resilience; lacking reference to how the Growth Plan will support or address resilience. A Provincial 2017 Resilience Plan is forthcoming but if the Growth Plan does not address resilience, there is the possibility of a missed opportunity. In addition, clarity on what “consideration of a changing climate” means as it relates to infrastructure decisions referenced in the Growth Plan is also badly needed.

There are targets for intensification but no requirement for municipal greenhouse gas reduction targets or further guidance for what bringing climate change into municipal Official Plans should look like. Increased clarity on requirements associated with that would be helpful. It would also be useful for the Province to work in coordination with Municipalities to develop options for some key performance indicators that could be used to track what bringing climate change into Official Plans could look like. There is also the benefit to speaking to how climate change being incorporated into Official Plans will trickle down into Transportation Plans, Growth Management Plans, Asset Management Plans, Infrastructure Plans, etc.

The Province should provide greater support for Municipal adoption of the Growth Plan within their Official Plans and development decisions. Making more aspects of the Official Plan unappealable at the OMB

The Province needs to adhere to the Growth Plan just like municipalities. Provincial Infrastructure decisions need to support implementation of the Growth Plan.

would enable municipalities to conform with the Growth Plan at a faster pace. There is also the need for an ongoing collaboration between the Province and Municipalities on Growth Plan implementation, especially as it relates to supporting the market for intensification and transit investment.

There is the need for the Province to adhere to the Growth Plan just like municipalities are required to. The Province is in charge of making infrastructure decisions that have the ability to support or undermine implementation of the Growth Plan. Finally, there is the need for inter-ministerial coordination (at the provincial level) as well as inter-departmental (at the municipal level) to take place. Reference to that within the Growth Plan and even the CCAP direction would be useful.

The climate change targets at the federal and provincial level will require changes at the community level. Municipalities need to be provided with a stronger decision making role for how that can take place at the provincial and federal level than they are presently given in order to increase their engagement in climate change opportunities within their jurisdictions.

It is preferable that climate change be a lens that is applied over the whole Growth Plan. Better integration of and reference to climate change within the Growth Plan would enable increased integration for the Province and provide direction to Municipalities.

Further consultation between the Province and Municipalities is required around monitoring and reporting.

Breakout #7: Land Use Planning Review: Summary of Proposed Changes

This Group felt more definitive language was needed to help incorporate climate change into Official Plans; thereby facilitating the ability of Official Plans to bring climate change into overall plan development and decision making. This might be achieved by ensuring the Planning Act provides Official Plans with more support to be able to do so. The Group noted that Climate Change Action Plans should be required at a municipal level, but technical guidance on how to do this is necessary. Information needs to be shared across municipalities, with separate treatment of upper and lower tier municipalities and more support for smaller municipalities.

More generally, it was observed that it is preferable that climate change be a lens that is applied over the whole Growth Plan. Better integration of, and reference to climate change within the Growth Plan would enable increased integration for the Province and provide that direction to Municipalities. Vulnerability assessments could be required for requests for grants of provincial money, but clear direction of how those vulnerability assessments should be undertaken would be essential.

On the subject of harmonization of provincial and municipal plans, there is a significant time lag between the Growth Plan and the integration of the Growth Plan into Official Plans. More direction on timelines would be of benefit. What is the timing related to the amended Growth Plan and how does that timing remain consistent with already developed Growth Management Plans? Additionally, further consultation between the Province and Municipalities is required around monitoring and reporting regarding implementation of the Growth Plan and the requirements on the part of municipalities related to the CCAP.