

Caledon Citizen

Publications Mail Agreement Number 0040032702

Covering all of Caledon

Office Administrator: Cheryl Phillips
Email: admin@caledoncitizen.com

Telephones: 905-857-6626 or 905-857-5846
Fax: 905-857-6363

Website: www.caledoncitizen.com

Main Office: 25 Queen Street, North, Bolton L7E 1C1

Owned and operated by
Caledon Publishing Limited

Publisher: Bruce R. Haire
Advertising Manager: John H. Archibald
Editor: **Mark Pavilons** Email: editor@caledoncitizen.com
Staff Reporter: **Alan Liczyk** Email: alan@caledoncitizen.com

Is it really 'Places To Grow' or just places to stagnate?

An issue that ought to dominate the forthcoming Ontario election campaign is the current government's wholly inconsistent stands on the subject of growth in the so-called *Greater Golden Horseshoe area*.

With considerable flourish, the government of Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty last year released a document dubbed Places To Grow, which purported to lay down planning targets for a 25-year period.

Part and parcel of this planning exercise was the government's Greenbelt Act, which effectively (a) froze development in what has become known as the Oak Ridges Moraine, and (b) by inference, at least, sacrificed some of the province's best remaining farmland rather than see any development in Moraine areas where agriculture has been at best marginal.

A skeptic would say the actions in question simply reflect the sad reality that there are vastly more votes to be had among urban Ontarians (and particularly those in and around Toronto) than among farmers and other rural residents, most of whom traditionally have voted Conservative anyway.

Whatever the case, there is surely a significant inconsistency between a long-term plan that envisions continued vigorous growth in the GTA and various pieces of policy and legislation that are effectively preventing any significant growth of existing urban centres beyond the sacred Greenbelt.

When it was unveiled last year, Places To Grow was trumpeted by David Caplan, the government's Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, as a means of ensuring that the Greater Golden Horseshoe can attract new businesses and support a high quality of life for its residents.

"The Growth Plan is a visionary plan to create better-planned communities and more opportunities for economic prosperity," the minister said. "It will create better-planned communities, with more options for living, working, shopping and playing."

He maintained that the focus of Places To Grow plan would be the creation of complete communities, with a greater mix of businesses, services, housing and parks that will make them more livable.

The plan supposedly would stimulate

economic prosperity, revitalize downtowns, and encourage more compact communities with services, shops and businesses close to home while preserving greenspace and agricultural lands that are under pressure, curbing urban sprawl, cutting down on car dependency, contributing to better air quality, spurring transit investment and creating conditions favourable to public transit use, and promoting "a culture of conservation."

The reality is that to date precious little has been done toward meeting any of these glorious objectives.

Rather, what we see today is a worsening gridlock, the continued loss of excellent farmland in Peel and York Regions and absolutely nothing being done to stimulate growth that the plan envisions in Dufferin, Simcoe and Wellington counties with lots of marginal farmland and too many urban centres that have become bedroom communities with far too few local employment opportunities.

At this point, there is clearly no coherent government policy we know of that would permit the sort of growth Places To Grow envisions for areas like Dufferin.

Of course, changes in policy could change the picture overnight.

For example, a government that wanted to see healthy growth in towns like Orangeville would merely have to change a few policies and spend some money. In the longer range, the Province ought to allow all cities and towns in the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie watersheds to draw Great Lakes water in the same way Alliston now can get water from Georgian Bay and most of the urban portions of Peel Region can get theirs from Lake Ontario.

But, as we say, the appropriate approach to the expected population growth of the Greater Golden Horseshoe ought to be a major talking point in the election campaign, if only to get all the parties on record so the public will not only have help in making their election-day decision but be able to monitor the extent to which the winner carries out its promises.

The planning decisions made today could profoundly affect the lifestyles and prosperity of future generations.



Our Readers Write

Bus vandalism is a crime

Parents and kids need to be reminded again that vandalism to school buses is a crime. At this time of year it seems that school buses become big yellow targets for bored kids looking for an outlet, and I think that we parents need to be proactive and warn our kids of the serious safety issues, repercussions and consequences involved in vandalizing buses.

When school buses are targeted, not only is the safety of the kids on the bus put into jeopardy, but the personal well-being of the drivers is also put at risk.

We're not just talking about egging, soaping or t-ping here (those are fairly innocuous acts). I'm referring to seriously damaging safety components of a bus. Stop arms and stop signals are there for a reason; brake lights and signal lights serve important functions; tires and engines also are critical to the safe operation of a school bus. If those components are tampered with, broken or rendered useless, the potential for that vehicle to have serious problems is unnecessarily increased.

As residents of Bolton, many of our kids ride school buses daily. When I wave goodbye to my eight-year-old in the morning I expect her to return safely in the afternoon. An act of vandalism that causes damage to her bus could change that in an instant, though.

And then there's the financial implications of course. Vandalism costs the bus lines thousands of dollars each year. The cost of that vandalism will eventually need to be deferred somewhere, and you and I know where that's most likely to show up - on our school taxes.

Bus drivers also face anxiety at the end of each weekend. "Did my bus make it through the weekend unscathed, or am I going to find

a real mess that will involve getting my (sometimes inoperable) bus out the the mechanics at the yard, getting a temporary bus, rearranging my delivery/pick up schedule(s), facing angry parents who demand to know why I'm late?"

Think of it this way. What if you arrived at your workplace to find out that someone had tampered with all your tools, walked through your freshly poured cement, or broken some equipment? Or what if someone had unplugged, damaged or removed components from your computer system and rendered your ATM machine inoperable? Or what if you got to work to find out that the door to your hair salon had been broken, the hinges on the chair had been bent so you couldn't use it and all your hair products had been emptied all over the floor. Or what if the battery on your cell phone was removed or damaged so that you couldn't use it? Or what if all the keys on the face of your Blackberry were ripped out?

That would be very frustrating right? And in some cases, even dangerous and maybe even pose a safety risk, right?

Please join me in discussing these issues with our kids.

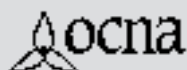
Stephen Owen
Husband of a Bus Driver
Bolton

Thoughtfulness noticed

We couldn't help but notice the lovely planters placed by the road in front of the plazas on Queen St. south in Bolton. Thanks to the Bolton Rotary for trying to beautify the shopping area on the south hill. Every bit helps! And we appreciate your help.

Donna Kamiel-Forster and Paul Forster
Forster's Book Garden

Caledon Citizen



Distributed throughout the Town of Caledon, the Citizen is published every Wednesday in the year by Caledon Publishing Ltd. from production offices at 34 Main Street W., Beeton, Ont.

Visit our website: www.caledoncitizen.com

Member Canadian Community Newspapers Association,
Ontario Community Newspapers Association and the Ontario Press Council

The CALEDON CITIZEN is a member of the Ontario Press Council, an independent body set up by the newspapers of the province to uphold freedom of expression and deal with complaints from readers. The Press Council encourages complainants to first give the newspaper an opportunity to redress their grievances. If not satisfied, they may then write to the Council, enclosing a copy of material that is the subject of the complaint, at 80 Gould St., Suite 206, Toronto, ON M5A 4L8.

Subscriptions: \$37.50 + G.S.T. within 65 kilometres

\$54.00 + G.S.T. beyond 65 kilometres and in towns with letter carriers

Advertising Representatives: Aileen Robbins, David Halwig

Printed by Central Ontario Web Ltd., 705-733-1349

ADVERTISING RULES: The advertiser agrees that the publisher shall not be liable for damages arising out of errors in advertisements beyond the amount paid for the space actually occupied by the portion of the advertisement in which the error occurred, whether such error is due to the negligence of its servants or otherwise, and there shall be no liability for non-insertions of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement.

All advertisers are asked to check their advertisements after first insertion. We accept responsibility for only one incorrect insertion unless notified immediately after publication. Errors which do not lessen the value of the advertisement are not eligible for corrections by a make-good advertisement. There shall be no liability for non-insertion of any advertisement beyond the amount paid for such advertisement. We reserve the right to edit, revise, classify or reject any advertisement.

DEADLINES: Unfortunately deadlines do not allow us to take ads after the following specified times:

DISPLAY ADS and CLASSIFIED ADS: Monday at 10 a.m.

All ads must be paid in advance by deadline or the ad will not run. WE ACCEPT VISA, MASTERCARD & AMEX PAYMENTS OVER THE PHONE.