Places to Grow
Youth Engagement Project

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Donna Diakun
Ontario Growth Secretariat
Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure
Presentation Overview

• Background on the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
• Places to Grow Youth Engagement Project
  • Hands-on assignments and activities for planning and designing the built environment while protecting natural, cultural and heritage resources
• Youth Engagement Project Video
• Questions and Discussion
Places to Grow

- Places to Grow is the Ontario government's program to manage growth and development in Ontario in a way that supports economic prosperity, protects the environment and helps communities achieve a high quality of life.
- Through Places to Grow, the Province develops regional growth plans that help to identify how to guide government investments and provide a policy framework for municipal governments and other decision makers.
- The Places to Grow Act sets out the parameters for developing regional growth plans.
Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe

- 32,000 square kilometres - centred around Toronto
- Canada’s economic engine, representing two-thirds of the province’s GDP
- 21 counties and regions, comprising 110 different municipal jurisdictions
- Largest city region in Canada
  - One quarter of Canada’s population
- One of the fastest growing urban regions in North America
  - Forecast to grow by 3.7 million people and 1.8 million jobs by 2031
  - Nearly half of all immigrants to Canada settle in the region
Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe

A highly diverse region:

• Heavily urbanized core centred around Toronto
• Dozens of mid-sized cities and small towns
• Ethnically diverse region with 50% of inhabitants foreign born and over 100 languages spoken
• Includes important natural areas such as Niagara Escarpment - UN Biosphere Reserve
• Approximately 40% of the Greater Toronto Area is classified prime agricultural land - only 5% of Canada’s overall land mass is considered “prime”
Need for Growth Management

- Urban development patterns since the 1950s have left the region with many communities where:
  - disproportionately high dependence on the automobile as a primary mode of transportation
  - transit is operationally and financially difficult to deliver to low density, highly dispersed settlement areas
  - spatial separation between the places where people live, work, shop and play
  - low density development consumes prime farmland and green spaces at rates higher than population growth rates
- If growth management policies are not implemented, the Greater Golden Horseshoe is at threat of losing its competitive advantage in attracting both highly skilled residents and economic investment.
Benefits of Growth Management

Environmental Benefits
• Improve air quality.
• Reduce development pressures on natural areas & agricultural lands.
• Support efforts to combat climate change.

Economic Benefits
• Attract jobs and workers.
• Increase productivity.
• Support innovation.
• Reduce infrastructure costs.

Health Benefits
• Reduce obesity.
• Improve cardio-vascular health.
Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
Growth Plan Objectives

• Create complete communities with more options for living, working, shopping and playing in closer proximity.
• Revitalize downtowns to become vibrant centres.
• Reduce traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices.
• Provide greater choice in housing types to meet people’s needs throughout their lives.
• Curb urban sprawl and protect farmlands and natural areas.
Growth Plan Guides Where and How to Grow

- Infill and Redevelopment...not sprawl
  - Density is used to support mixed use, walkable neighbourhoods with access to transit.
- Revitalize downtowns by identifying Urban Growth Centres.
  - 25 downtowns in Ontario
  - Focal points for community and cultural identity
  - Mixed use economic centres
  - Key transportation nodes
- Develop around major transit station areas and along key transportation corridors.
- Build better suburbs with compact, mixed-use communities.
- Plan for employment by reserving an adequate supply of employment lands.
- Align Provincial infrastructure investments with Growth Plan policies.
- Link communities and provide transportation options.
- Protect what is valuable.
150 residents and jobs / hectare
200 residents and jobs / hectare
Develop Around Major Transit Station Areas

- Support opportunities for intensification and increased density around major transit station areas.
Build Better Suburbs

• Greenfield development must create complete communities, with compact development patterns and well-connected street networks that support transit services, walking, biking, parks and a mix of housing and jobs.
• Future greenfield areas must be built at a minimum density of 50 people and jobs combined per hectare.
• Expansion of urban areas into rural countryside and natural areas not allowed unless it meets strict tests.
Public Engagement

- An important component of the Province’s overall Growth Plan implementation strategy.
- Dedicated website: [www.placetogrow.ca](http://www.placetogrow.ca)
  - Includes online tools, visualizations, image bank, information materials, links to discussion and education tools.
- Places to Grow Summit in Fall 2008 for stakeholders – focusing on urban design and practical tools.
- Ongoing Growth Plan training for municipal councils and other stakeholders.
- Expansion of successful youth engagement project.
Places to Grow Youth Engagement Project
Places to Grow Youth Engagement Project

- Now in its third year, for youth aged 15 to 18.
- Provides an active learning experience where students analyze, plan and design part of the built environment in their home town through independent assignments and group work.
- Youth learn about the government of Ontario’s Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- Still in pilot phase – want to explore ways to expand participation and impact.
Youth Engagement Project (continued)

• A next generation of leaders is informed about growth management issues and given the tools to understand and participate in building a better future.

• The project challenges youth to:
  • Learn about principles of smart growth planning and urban design with hands-on exercises;
  • Think about the quality of their neighbourhoods and downtowns now and in the future;
  • Build 3-D models and create photo banners to communicate the future vision for their neighbourhoods and downtowns.
Participating Cities from 2007 to 2009

Barrie Brampton Burlington Guelph Hamilton
Kitchener-Waterloo Markham Mississauga Newmarket
Oakville Oshawa Peterborough Pickering
Richmond Hill St. Catharines Toronto
How does the project work?

- First assignment: get to know your study area
- Introductory Symposium (group event)
- 3 more assignments
- Design charrette (group event)

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<th>Week starting Monday</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
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<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Assignment 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introductory Symposium</td>
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<td>Early March</td>
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<td>Assignments 2, 3, 4</td>
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<td>Approx. 2-week intervals</td>
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<td>Design Charrette</td>
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Online Community

- Participants sign on to a secure, tailor-made online hub.
  - Hosted by consultant Youthography for this project.
- Assignment questions and answers are posted on the online hub.
- A moderator (often a past participant) reviews the postings and is available to answer questions.
- Participants can chat online in a common forum.
Hands-on Assignments

• Completed independently.
• Focus on exploring the built environment and related issues through direct experience:
  • Participants visit and walk around the downtown or a specific case study neighbourhood in their home town, and analyze the area for transportation types, land uses, population diversity.
  • Take photographs of the study area & post these online.
  • Measure sidewalks, take traffic counts and conduct other active research.
• Participants draw inspiration from web-based research:
  • Conduct research on topics such as sustainable transportation or the great cities of the world.
  • Apply this research to ideas on improving their home towns.
• Variety of assignments to be expanded this year. We welcome your thoughts and ideas.
Assignment 1: Get to know your study area

• Objectives:
  To have participants become familiar with their community, its character and land uses, and what makes a great city.

• To create a foundation for the rest of the activities and live sessions.
Assignment 1: Site Explorations / Character Study

- Link is provided to an aerial map of a study area.
- Participants are asked to:
  - Go there and walk around.
  - Write down first impressions.
  - Take dozens of photos.
  - Consider questions about likes, dislikes, what’s missing, and opportunities for change.
- Variation: Create analytical maps of historical ownership, paved areas for cars, parks & natural areas, community amenities.

Photo credit: Ontario Realty Corporation Geoviewer. Base imagery provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources.
Add-on Activity: Walking Tour with City Planner

• Students learn first hand about smart growth planning, urban design, and what works and doesn’t work.

• Variation: Video of a city planner giving a tour of an urban area and pointing out what elements make up a great city.

Photo credit: The Hamilton Spectator

Bruce Krushelnicki, Burlington's planning director, takes students on a tour of the city's downtown yesterday. 'One of our problems in Burlington is that we're very car dependent,' said Krushelnicki.

Photo credit: The Hamilton Spectator
Group Event 1: Introductory Symposium

Presentation: “What makes a livable city?”

Photo credits: Urban Strategies Inc.
Introductory Symposium (continued)

- Students are grouped by city (6 to 8 youth per group).
- Small group activity: Discuss your first impressions, likes and dislikes, and map existing land uses with colour coding.
Introductory Symposium (continued)

• Small group activity: Create a photo collage of the study area (using the photos from Assignment 1) of what you like and what areas need improvement.
Introductory Symposium (continued)

• Share results with the large group.
Assignment 2: How people get around

• Objective:
To have participants better understand different modes of transportation in general and in the study area, and how transportation relates to daily choices, use of space and the built form of our environment.
Part 1 – Street Design

• Streets are public space, just like parks. How do we measure who a street is designed for?

• Participants are asked to do the following:
  • For a main street in their study area, count the number of steps given to each of the following categories: sidewalks, green space and trees, bike lanes, bus lanes, parking, driving lanes, and anything else.
  • Then decide, who gets the most space? Is the street balanced? How could the street design be improved?

Photo credit: du Toit Allsopp Hillier and West8
Part II: Biking & walking through the Web

• Participants are asked to:
  • Visit a list of interesting pedestrian and cycling websites and blogs.
  • Comment on what they find.
  • Come up with ways to encourage people in their case study area to walk or bicycle more to get around.

• Variation: Transportation and the Environment
  • Participants are asked to:
    • Come up with ways to reduce their environmental impact by changing their transportation choices in daily life.
    • Consider what changes to the built environment would have made the trip easier, safer, faster, or more interesting.

Photo credit: www.copenhagencyclechic.com
Assignment 3: Mix of Uses

Objective:
To get participants thinking about the different kinds of uses that a neighbourhood should offer in order to meet all the needs of the people who live, work and visit the area.
Part I: Scavenger Hunt

- Participants search their study area for elements that are signs of a vibrant neighbourhood, such as:
  - a place to sit down and warm up without having to buy anything
  - a place to buy milk
  - a place to buy fresh vegetables
  - a place to park a car
  - a place to lock your bike
  - a place to sit and watch people go by
  - a place to use the bathroom without having to buy anything
  - a place where you think seniors would live
  - a place where families with kids would live
  - a store, restaurant or café you’d like to hang out in
  - a place to rent a movie
  - a place to buy a birthday gift for your best friend
  - a post office
  - a place to catch a bus, subway or streetcar
Part II: What’s missing or needs improvement

• Participants are asked to:
  • Consider different kinds of spaces in their study area and how they are used (e.g., places to live, work, shop, gather and play).
  • Describe what is missing and what improvements could be made.
  • Post photos of likes & dislikes for each category on the online hub.

• Variations:
  • Movie director storyboard: Take photographs and write quotes about the study area from an imagined character’s point of view.
  • Survey peers on what choices they will want to make in the future for living, working, and transportation.
Assignment 4: Well designed places

- Objective:
  To give participants a sense of different building densities and good design and to have them express what makes an exciting and vibrant city.
Part I: Places I Like

• Participants are asked to:
  • Choose a city, street or neighbourhood that they like, from anywhere in the world.
  • Describe what makes it great.
  • Post two or three photos of the place to support their ideas.

• Variation: Visit an actual place that you like & follow the same steps as above.
Part II: Planning for Change

• Participants are asked to:
  • Pretend they are a city planner.
  • Select one of the two buildings at right for a site in their case study area.
  • Write to their City Council about why this building would be appropriate and how it would address what’s needed or missing in the case study area.

• Variations:
  • Describe how underused space in the study area could be transformed by a new use that the area needs, and post photos of examples to show how you would like it to look.
  • Describe how green energy and green design elements could be integrated into the community.
Group Event 2: Design Charrette

- Introductory visioning session
- Opportunities to meet senior government leaders, local elected officials and decision-makers.
Design Charrette (continued)

• Focus of the day is the group activity where participants build 3-D models or engage through other creative formats.
Design Charrette (continued)
PLACES TO GROW  BETTER CHOICES. BRIGHTER FUTURE.
Post-event Opportunities and Outcomes

• Youth presentations to municipal councils.
• Display of 3-D models, photo collages, street design banners in Town Halls, other public places.
• Online panel managers for next year’s project.
• Future leadership opportunities for youth in related community initiatives, using the skills they learned during the project.
• Informed citizens who could have influence as future decision-makers, urban planners, developers, business owners.
Ontario Growth Secretariat
Email: donna.diakun@ontario.ca
Web: www.placestogrow.ca