

Smart Growth

In 2001, the Ontario Government introduced a strategy called Smart Growth. The vision of this strategy is to promote and manage population growth while sustaining a vibrant economy, building strong communities, and promoting a healthy environment.



With sustainable planning, our communities can grow in an environmentally friendly fashion

Our principles for Smart Growth

- Environmental management based on watershed boundaries is the best way to protect the natural environment, while watershed studies and long term environmental monitoring are imperative in the development of strong communities and healthy watersheds.
- Conservation Halton is committed to supporting development decisions that
- protect the natural features of our watershed, enhance our ecosystem, and safeguard human life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion.
- Drinking water source sites, environmentally significant areas, wetlands, open spaces, and passive recreation areas must be protected and enhanced for present and future generations.

Summary

Conservation Halton's viewpoint on Smart Growth supports and highlights the environmental aspects of the strategy with a focus on respect for the natural environment during urban development. In addition, it outlines the importance of strong partnerships between conservation authorities and municipalities to foster the creation and maintenance of healthy watersheds.

- Urban development should occur in a way that minimizes pollution and uses energy and transportation resources in an efficient and sustainable manner.
- To lessen the damages caused by habitat fragmentation, and loss of green space and tree cover, it is important to protect and enhance Conservation Halton's network of escarpment parks and natural areas as core lands for resource management and public enjoyment.
- Greening of existing urban areas, including the creation and maintenance of trail connections linking existing natural areas, is important for the development of liveable communities.
- Alternative subdivision, lot, and building designs must be utilized to ensure water conservation and natural heritage protection objectives are achieved.
- Financial incentives and tax credits should be used to encourage growth where it will have the least environmental impact while providing motivation to protect conservation lands and practice initiatives focussed on pollution and greenhouse gas reduction.

Sustainable Halton

Halton Region is developing a plan for building sustainable and healthy communities for generations to come. This growth management initiative is called Sustainable Halton. Over the next 25 years, the Greater Golden Horseshoe is expected to grow significantly. By 2031, the Province of Ontario forecasts that Halton Region will have a population of 780,000 (up from 439,400 in 2006) and 390,000 jobs (up from 230,700 in 2006). Sustainable Halton will help Halton Region plan to accommodate this future growth, meet the provincial requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and the Places to Grow Plan, and will help develop Halton's next Official Plan.

Smart Growth Principles and Progress

Ontario is currently undergoing substantial population growth, and as a result, is faced with critical issues regarding urban sprawl, gridlock, and reduced water and air quality. By 2021, it is projected that the population of Central Ontario will have grown to approximately ten million people. In response to this growth, the provincial government introduced the Smart Growth strategy.

The goals of Smart Growth include:

- Developing a coordinated approach between all levels of government and stakeholders for managing sustainable growth.
- Investing wisely in new infrastructure and promoting better use of resources through optimising the use of existing infrastructure.
- Protecting the quality of air, water, and land by focussing growth away from environmentally significant areas.
- Expanding transportation systems within and between communities.

Environmental Aspects of Smart Growth

Urban development has the potential to negatively affect the natural environment. However, with careful planning and foresight, Ontario can grow in an environmentally responsible manner. Through watershed studies and environmental monitoring and planning, environmentally significant areas can be identified and growth can occur with the least environmental impact. Ultimately, it is important that we balance population growth with the need for economically strong communities and a clean, healthy environment. This type of planning can occur through the cooperative partnerships forged between conservation authorities, municipalities and the Province.

Conservation Halton

Natural Champion for a Healthy Watershed



Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. Conservation Halton has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators, along with a network of volunteers, who are guided by a Board of Directors that includes municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services.

For more information about Smart Growth contact Conservation Halton:

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