



Here's what you need to know about OMB Hearings related to the Growth Plan

What is the Growth Plan?

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, (the Growth Plan) was released in June of 2006, soon after the *Places to Grow Act, 2005* was enacted. Since then, municipalities have been required to make sure their official plan conforms to the policies of the Growth Plan. The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario was released in 2011.

What does the OMB have to do with the Growth Plan?

The Places to Grow Act, 2005 requires municipalities to amend their official plans so that they follow the policies of the Growth Plan. The Planning Act allows these amendments to be appealed to the OMB. The municipality is required to hold public meetings to receive comments and requests for changes. A person has to make an oral submission at a public meeting, or a written submission to council before the plan was adopted in order to appeal the official plan or amendment. After an appeal is filed with the Board, the hearing process begins.

What is the OMB Growth Plan Hearing Process?

Because of the complex nature of these types of hearings, they may become lengthy and involve many parties, witnesses and issues. Sometimes, a Growth Plan hearing can take weeks or even months. The OMB has developed procedures and best practices to lead to timely and efficient hearings, while maintaining the fairness of the process. These include:

- The municipality whose official plan amendment is before the Board should call a meeting of the parties to discuss the hearing process, and may include participants to the hearing.
- The OMB will use pre-hearings to clarify issues, identify parties and participants, order witness presentations and establish timelines.
- The OMB will limit the hearing time spent on the presentation of evidence of witnesses to avoid repetition or redundancy.
- The OMB will use mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution to resolve issues and possibly appeals.
- The OMB will use standard Procedural Order which is part of the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Board.

To participate effectively in the Hearing Process, you should review the OMB's Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Procedural Order and the OMB's Practice Direction on Growth Plan Hearings. You should also review the Information Sheet on Parties and Participants in order to understand the differences in roles and responsibilities for parties and participants in OMB hearings.

How can I participate in a hearing about a Growth Plan matter?

Any person or public body who appeals an official plan amendment related to growth plan conformity automatically becomes a party to the matter. All party and participant requests are to be made in accordance with the Board's rules.

Do I need representation at the hearing?

You do not need to have representation to appear at the Board. You may represent yourself. Self-represented individuals and ratepayer organizations who are unfamiliar with the Board's processes or with the legislative and policy framework of Growth Plan related hearings should review the materials available on the Board's website as well as the Ministry of Infrastructure's website. They are also encouraged to contact the Board's Citizens' Liaison Office and the OMB case management staff assigned to the file to ask questions.

How is ADR used in the Growth Plan Hearing Process?

The Board may schedule a mediation following a mediation assessment. A party may request a mediation assessment by letter to the Associate Chair. The Associate Chair will schedule the mediation assessment to be conducted in his discretion. In the mediation assessment, the Board will look at

- the likelihood of settlement that will reduce the number of issues in the hearing, the number of hearing days and witnesses,
- what issues will be the subject of mediation, and
- the structure of the mediation including what parties will participate, and the timing, duration and location of the mediation sessions.

Where can I get more information?

For further information please refer to the **OMB's Rules of Practice and Procedure**. They are available at **www.elto.gov.on.ca** or by calling (416) 212-6349 or toll free 1-866-448-2248.

For more information about the Places to Grow Act and the Growth Plan, please contact the Ministry of Infrastructure or visit **www.placestogrow.ca**.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has information on **[Land Use Planning](#)**.

For more information on party and participant status please read the information sheet "**[Here's what you need to know about participating in a Hearing.](#)**"

You may wish to speak to the Citizen Liaison Office by calling (416) 212-6349 or toll free 1-866-448-2248.

Please Note

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