Proposed

GREENBELT PLAN 2005 (2016)

Greenbelt Plan

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

February 28, 2005

Approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, Order-in-Council No. 208/2005. The Greenbelt Plan was established under Section 3 of the Greenbelt Act, 2005, to take effect on December 16, 2004

MAY 2016

Ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview
Preface

Four provincial land use plans work together to manage growth, build complete communities, curb sprawl and protect the natural environment in Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe region: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006, the Greenbelt Plan (2005), the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2002), and the Niagara Escarpment Plan (2005).


The Government of Ontario has reviewed and considered all feedback received from stakeholders, the public and Indigenous communities, as well as the Advisory Panel’s recommendations. The government is now proposing changes to the four plans, and is asking for your feedback.

For an overview of the proposed changes to the four provincial land use plans, please see Shaping Land Use in the Greater Golden Horseshoe at www.ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview.

Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016)

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is issuing the Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016) pursuant to the Greenbelt Act, 2005 for consultation. After considering all submissions and comments received, the Minister may modify the Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016) and can then submit it, along with recommendations, to the Lieutenant Governor in Council for a decision. If approved, the revised Greenbelt Plan would come into effect on the date set out in the decision.

This document includes the table of contents, text, and the maps comprising the schedules and appendices of the Greenbelt Plan as proposed to be revised. For convenience, this document is referred to as the Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016). This is one of four proposed revised plans for which the government is seeking input. All input and feedback will be taken into consideration prior to a final decision on the revised plans.

Seeking Feedback (page 95)

Your feedback on the proposed changes is greatly appreciated. This section, which is included after the proposed plan, provides details for submitting comments and feedback on the Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016).
Proposed

GREENBELT PLAN (2016)

This annotated version of the Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016) includes explanatory text boxes. The explanatory text boxes have been included for information purposes only, to assist users in reading the Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016). The explanatory text boxes would not be included in the final Greenbelt Plan (2016) if approved.

The explanatory text boxes highlight selected proposed changes compared to the Greenbelt Plan (2005) (as amended). The description in the explanatory text boxes is limited to selected points and not inclusive of all proposed changes.

Nothing in the explanatory text boxes should be interpreted as deviating from or modifying the proposed policies. The explanatory text should not be relied on in place of specialized legal or professional advice regarding a particular matter.
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context

The Golden Horseshoe is one of the

Explanatory Text

It is proposed that the Introduction section of the Greenbelt Plan would be revised and restructured. In most cases changes would include minor updates (e.g., clarifying how the Greenbelt Plan works with other government initiatives, removing outdated references, etc.). Proposed changes / additions to Section 1.1, if approved, would include:

• An increased focus on the significant natural assets located in the region that benefit public health and overall quality of life;

• Recognition of the unique soil, moderate climate and abundant water resources of the region that support some of Canada’s most productive farmland;

• Recognition of the interests of First Nations and Métis communities in land use planning;

• References to the Ontario Climate Change Strategy, 2015, and long-term greenhouse gas and emissions reduction targets;

• More direction on how the Greenbelt Plan works with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe;

• A new purpose for the Greenbelt Plan “settlement areas” to support the achievement of “complete communities” that have a long-term goal of becoming “net-zero” or low carbon communities; and

• An acknowledgment that the Greenbelt may be expanded in the future to include additional significant ecological and hydrological areas.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is one of the most dynamic and fastest growing regions in North America.

The Greenbelt is a cornerstone of Ontario’s proposed Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan which is an overarching strategy that will provide clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated, and what must be protected for current and future generations.

The Greenbelt Plan identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological features and functions occurring on this landscape. – it is currently home to over two-thirds of Ontario’s and more than one-quarter of Canada’s population. The region is home to people from every corner of the world and offers a high quality of life and diverse economy.
The GGH is located in the heart of the Great Lakes region. It contains many of Canada’s most significant ecologic and hydrologic natural environments and scenic landscapes, including the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment. These natural areas clean the air, provide drinking water and support recreational activities that benefit public health and overall quality of life.

The region also has some of Canada’s most important and productive farmland. Its fertile soil, moderate climate and abundant water resources support agricultural production that cannot be duplicated elsewhere in the province and the country.

The First Nations and Métis communities within the Great Lakes region continue to shape the history and economy of the area. Ontario recognizes the unique role that Indigenous peoples have had and will continue to have in the growth and development of this region.

Ontario’s Climate Change Strategy, 2015 reaffirms the government’s commitment to meet its long-term targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Protecting agricultural lands, water resources and natural areas, and building compact and complete communities that are walkable and transit-supportive where appropriate will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will work toward the long-term goal of net-zero communities. Greenhouse gas emissions can be offset by “carbon sinks” found in natural areas such as the Greenbelt that also includes agricultural lands, green infrastructure and other greenspaces.

The Greenbelt Plan includes lands within, and builds upon the ecological protections provided by, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP). It also complements and supports other provincial level initiatives such as the Parkway Belt West Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan.

The Greenbelt Plan, together with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), builds on the Provincial Policy Statement to establish a land use planning framework for the GGH that supports a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment and social equity.

The Growth Plan is an overarching strategy that provides clarity and certainty about urban structure, where and how future growth should be accommodated and what must be protected for future generations. The Greenbelt Plan identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological and hydrological features, areas and functions occurring on this landscape.

The Greenbelt Plan complements and supports other provincial level initiatives such as the Parkway Belt West Plan and the Rouge Park and Rouge North Management Plan.

The Protected Countryside lands identified in this Greenbelt Plan are intended to enhance the spatial extent of agriculturally and environmentally protected lands currently covered by the NEP and the ORMCP while at the same time improving linkages between these areas and the surrounding major lake systems and watersheds. Collectively, the lands in these three plans form the Greenbelt. The Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 1 of this Greenbelt Plan) is made up of an Agricultural System and a Natural System, together with a series of settlement areas.

The Agricultural System is made up of specialty crop, prime agricultural and rural areas. The Natural System identifies lands that support both natural heritage and hydrologic features and

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functions. Both systems maintain connections to the broader agricultural and natural systems of southern Ontario, a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector and is made up of specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas and rural lands. The Natural System identifies lands that support both natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions. Both systems maintain connections to the broader agricultural and natural systems of southern Ontario.

The settlement areas, identified as Towns/Villages and Hamlets, vary in size, diversity and intensity of uses and are found throughout the Protected Countryside. The policies for these settlement areas support the achievement of complete communities that are environmentally sound and are resilient to climate change with the long-term goal of becoming net-zero communities or low-carbon communities.

While providing permanent agricultural and environmental protection, the Greenbelt also contains important natural resources and supports a wide range of recreational and tourism uses, areas and opportunities together with a vibrant and evolving agricultural and rural economy.

The Greenbelt Plan is structured to provide for the inclusion of publicly owned lands in urban river valleys that were not in the Greenbelt at the time the Plan was approved in 2005. These lands, while not part of the Protected Countryside, are part of the Greenbelt and these areas assist in recognizing the importance of connections to Lake Ontario and other areas in Southern Ontario.

The schedules to this Greenbelt Plan show lands, settlements, roads and natural systems outside of the Greenbelt Area. This Plan does not apply to lands beyond the Greenbelt Area as shown on Schedule 1.

Within the vast majority of south-central Ontario and substantial portions of the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) beyond the Greenbelt Area, there are extensive agricultural areas, natural and hydrologic features and functions, and other significant resources. The lack of inclusion within the Greenbelt Area does not imply any lesser importance or recognition of the full array of natural environmental and resource attributes found in these areas. Rather, all lands outside of the Greenbelt Area will continue to be governed by current, and potentially future, planning frameworks and regimes which manage land use in Ontario. There may be specific areas identified in the future, including areas of ecological and hydrological significance, where it is considered appropriate to expand the Greenbelt to provide additional long-term protection. In addition, no preference for urban structure or the allocation of residential and employment growth beyond the Greenbelt should be inferred from the Greenbelt Plan, as it is intended that these matters be addressed by the planning system and particularly through the proposed Growth Plan.

1.2 Vision and Goals

**Explanatory Text**

Proposed changes to the existing Vision and Goals section of the Plan would include a number of updates and clarifications. In other cases, new concepts are proposed (e.g., building resilience to and mitigating climate change, “complete communities”, community hubs).

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Proposed changes / additions to Section 1.2, if approved, would include:

- A new central vision of the Plan to encourage building resilience to and mitigating climate change;

- Recognition that the vision of the Plan requires effective collaboration with many partners including First Nations and Métis communities;

- Updated agricultural viability and protection goals, including a goal related to the protection and enhancement of the “Agricultural System”;

- A modified environmental protection goal that would require consideration of natural heritage and water resources when contemplating watershed / subwatershed and stormwater management planning and water and wastewater servicing;

- A revised culture, recreation and tourism goal promoting the conservation of “cultural heritage resources” to support the social, economic and cultural well-being of all communities;

- New goals for “settlement areas” that would encourage the development of “complete communities” that have a long-term goal of becoming “net-zero communities” and encourage the development of community hubs;

- A revised infrastructure and natural resources goal that would promote the integration of land use planning with “infrastructure” development;

- A proposed new section related to climate change goals, which would promote integrating climate change considerations into planning and growth management; and

- Revisions to the urban river valley goals to include coastal “wetlands” as features to be protected along urban river valleys and the promotion of “cultural heritage resources” conservation.

1.2.1 Vision

The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land which:

- Protects against the loss and fragmentation of the agricultural land base and supports agriculture as the predominant land use;

- Gives permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that sustain ecological and human health and that form the environmental framework around which major urbanization in south-central Ontario will be organized; and

- Provides for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses; and

- Builds resilience to and mitigates climate change.
The successful realization of this vision for the Greenbelt centres on effective collaboration amongst the province, other levels of government, First Nations and Métis communities, residents, private and non-profit sectors across all industries, and other stakeholders.

1.2.2 Protected Countryside Goals

To enhance our urban and rural areas and overall quality of life by promoting the following matters within the Protected Countryside:

1. Agricultural Viability and Protection

a) Protection of the specialty crop area land base while allowing agriculture supportive infrastructure and value added uses necessary for sustainable agricultural uses and activities;

b) Support for the Niagara Peninsula specialty crop area as a destination and centre of agriculture focused on the agri-food sector and agri-tourism related to grape and tender fruit production;

c) Protection of prime agricultural areas by preventing further fragmentation and loss of the agricultural land base caused by lot creation and the redesignation of prime agricultural areas;

d) Provision of the appropriate flexibility to allow for agriculture, agriculture related and secondary uses, normal farm practices and an evolving agricultural/rural economy; and agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses, normal farm practices and an evolving agricultural and rural economy;

e) Increasing certainty for the agricultural sector to foster long-term investment in the Agricultural Support Network, and improvement to, and management of the agricultural land base; and

f) Enhancing the strengths of the Agricultural System throughout the Protected Countryside, including through consideration for the impacts of development on agriculture and planning for local food and near-urban agriculture.

2. Environmental Protection

a) Protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural heritage, hydrologic and landform features, areas and functions, including protection of habitat for flora and fauna and particularly species at risk;

b) Protection and restoration of natural and open space connections between the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment, Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the major river valley lands, while also maintaining connections to the broader natural systems of southern Ontario beyond the Golden Horseshoe GGH such as the Great Lakes Coast, the Carolinian Zone, the Lake Erie Basin, the Kawartha Highlands and the Algonquin to Adirondacks Corridor;

c) Protection, improvement or restoration of the quality and quantity of ground and surface water and the hydrological integrity of watersheds; and

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d) Provision of long-term guidance for the management of natural heritage and water resources when contemplating such matters as watershed/subwatershed and stormwater management planning, water and wastewater servicing, development, infrastructure, open space planning and management, aggregate rehabilitation and private or public stewardship programs.

3. Culture, Recreation and Tourism

a) **Support for the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage resources:** Identification, conservation, use and wise management of cultural heritage resources, to support the social, economic and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Métis communities;

b) Provision of a wide range of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and water-based/shoreline uses that support hiking, angling and other recreational activities; and

c) Enabling continued opportunities for sustainable tourism development.

4. Settlement Areas

a) Support for a strong rural economy by allowing for the social, economic and service functions through the residential, institutional and commercial/industrial uses needed by the current and future population within the Greenbelt, particularly within settlements; and

b) Sustaining the character of the countryside and rural communities;

c) Support for complete communities that promote and enhance human health and social well-being, are economically and environmentally sustainable and are developed in a manner that support the long-term goal of becoming net-zero communities; and

d) Serving as centres for the development of community hubs where compatible services are co-located to address local needs in convenient locations that are accessible by active transportation and, where available, transit.

5. Infrastructure and Natural Resources

a) Support for infrastructure which achieves the social and economic aims of the Greenbelt and the proposed Growth Plan while seeking to minimize environmental impacts; and

b) Recognition of the benefits of protecting renewable and non-renewable natural resources within the Greenbelt; and

c) Provision for the availability and sustainable use of those resources critical to the region’s social, environmental, economic and growth needs.
6. Climate Change

a) Integrating climate change considerations into planning and managing the Agricultural System, Natural Heritage System and Water Resource System to improve resilience and protect carbon sequestration potential, recognizing that the Natural Heritage System is also a component of green infrastructure; and

b) Integrating climate change considerations into planning and managing growth by incorporating techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in resilient settlement areas and infrastructure located within the Greenbelt.

1.2.3 Urban River Valley Goals

To integrate the Greenbelt into urban areas which were not in the Greenbelt at the time it was approved in 2005, by promoting the following matters within the Urban River Valley designation:

• Protection of natural and open space lands along river valleys in urban areas which will assist in connecting the rest of the Greenbelt Area to the Great Lakes and other inland lakes;

• Protection of natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions along urban river valleys, including coastal wetlands;

• Conservation of cultural heritage resources;

• Provision of a gateway to the rural landscape of the Greenbelt; and

• Provision of a range of natural settings on publicly owned lands for recreational, cultural and tourism uses including parkland, open space land and trails.

1.3 General Authority

This Plan derives its authority from the Greenbelt Act, 2005, which authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council, by regulation, to designate an area of land as the Greenbelt Area. The Greenbelt Act, 2005 further authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish a Greenbelt Plan for all or part of the Greenbelt Area.

The Greenbelt Plan applies to the lands delineated in Ontario Regulation 59/05, as and shown on Schedule 1.

1.4 How to USE Read this Plan

1.4.1 General

This Greenbelt Plan builds upon the existing policy framework established in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), issued under section 3 of the Planning Act, and its implementation through municipal official plan policies and maps.

Based on the above, this Greenbelt Plan must be read in conjunction with all other applicable land use planning policy, regulations and/or standards, as amended from time to time. Such documents

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include but are not limited to: the PPS; Minister’s zoning orders under section 47 of the Planning Act; the proposed Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan; other provincial land use plans; upper, lower and single-tier municipal official plans; zoning by-laws; regulations including Such documents include but are not limited to: the PPS; Minister’s zoning orders under section 47 of the Planning Act; the Growth Plan; other provincial plans including the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and source protection plans under the Clean Water Act, 2006; upper, lower and single-tier official plans; zoning by-laws; as well as other pertinent legislation (e.g. the federal Fisheries Act) and regulations (e.g. those under the Conservation Authorities Act, as well as other pertinent legislation (e.g. the federal Fisheries Act) and regulations. Where more specific provincial plans or regulations apply to lands within the Greenbelt, including plans under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, the more specific plan or regulation shall prevail. Each of these instruments apply to certain defined parts of the Greenbelt and provide specific direction on certain matters. Where more specific provincial plans or regulations apply to lands within the Greenbelt, including plans under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, the more specific plan or regulation shall prevail.

1.4.2 Structure of the Plan

The Greenbelt Plan consists of:

Section 1.0 – Introduction: Describes the context for the Greenbelt Plan in southern Ontario and introduces the Plan’s Vision and Goals. The legislative authority for the Plan and how it is to be used and applied within the land use planning system are also set out in this section.

Section 2.0 – Greenbelt Plan: Describes the lands governed by the Greenbelt Plan, which include the NEP Area, the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, the Parkway Belt West Plan Area, lands designated as Urban River Valley and lands designated Protected Countryside in this Plan. It describes how lands in the three existing provincial plans and lands designated as Urban River Valley are affected by this Plan, and that lands designated as Protected Countryside within the Greenbelt Area are subject to the entire Greenbelt Plan, except section 6.0.

Section 3.0 – Geographic Specific Policies in the Protected Countryside: Sets out the three key policy areas in the Protected Countryside designation that are spatially based: the Agricultural System, the Natural System and SettlementAreas.

The Agricultural System is comprised of specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas and rural areas. While the Greenbelt Plan identifies the boundaries of the specialty crop areas, it relies on municipal official plans to delineate prime agricultural areas and rural areas, the agricultural land base (specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas and rural lands) and the Agricultural Support Network. The Agricultural Support Network is a collection of elements that support agricultural viability, but is not a designation with a list of permitted uses. While the Greenbelt Plan identifies the boundaries of the specialty crop areas, it relies on official plans to further delineate the prime agricultural area and rural lands.

The Natural System is comprised of the Natural Heritage System, Water Resource System and key hydrologic areas, key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features. The Natural Heritage System is not a designation in and of itself with a list of permitted uses. Rather, it functions as an

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overlay on top of the prime agricultural area and/or rural area lands designations contained in municipal official plans. As such, permitted uses are those set out within the prime agricultural area and rural area lands policies of this plan and designations of municipal official plans, subject to constraints the policies of the Natural System.

Settlement Areas are comprised of Towns/Villages and Hamlets. Although this Plan shows boundaries for Towns/Villages, Hamlets are only shown as symbols. In both cases, this Plan defers to municipal official plans for the detailed delineation of settlement boundaries. Further, this Plan does not apply to lands within the boundaries of Towns/Villages and Hamlets, as they existed on the day this Plan came into effect. Municipal official plans will continue to govern land use within these settlements. However, where expansions to settlements permitted by this Plan are proposed, the policies of this Plan apply to such expansions. Although this Plan shows boundaries for Towns/Villages, Hamlets are only shown as symbols. In both cases, this Plan defers to official plans for the detailed delineation of settlement area boundaries. Generally, this Plan does not apply to lands within the boundaries of Towns/Villages and Hamlets. Official plans will continue to govern land use within these settlement areas. However, where expansions to settlement areas are proposed in the Greenbelt, the policies of both this Plan and the Growth Plan apply to such expansions.

Lands in the Protected Countryside will be within one of the following policy areas: the agricultural land base (specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas, rural Area lands), Towns/Villages, Hamlets or Shoreline Built-up Areas. In addition, lands may also be subject to the policies of the Natural Heritage System and Water Resource System, key hydrologic areas, key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features.

Also described in this section are policies regarding parkland, open space and trails in the Greenbelt.

Section 4.0 – General Policies in the Protected Countryside: Describes the general policies that apply across the Protected Countryside. These policies are based on certain uses (non-agricultural uses, recreation and tourism uses, infrastructure, natural resource uses, cultural heritage resources and existing uses). This section also contains policies on lot creation.

Section 5.0 – Implementation: Provides a description of:

- The status and effect of the Plan;
- How the Plan is to be implemented;
- The relationship of the Plan to the land use planning system;
- How boundaries are to be interpreted;
- The process for reviewing and amending the Plan;
- Monitoring and performance measures; and
- The Greenbelt Council.

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Section 6.0 – Urban River Valley Policies: Sets out policies for the Urban River Valley designation that applies to publicly owned urban river valley lands brought into the Greenbelt by amendment after approval of the Plan in 2005.

1.4.3 How to Read this Plan

The following is a brief description of how this Plan, read in its entirety, affects a specific area, land use or development / infrastructure /resource proposal.

1. Refer to Schedule 1 to determine if the lands are located within the NEP Area or the Oak Ridges Moraine Area. If the property is located in either of these areas, the policies of the NEP or the ORMCP continue to apply as set out in section 2.0. If the lands are located in the Protected Countryside designation, then the entirety of the Greenbelt Plan’s relevant policies apply. Determine if the lands are located within the Parkway Belt West Plan. If so, the policies of the Parkway Belt West Plan continue to apply as set out in section 2.0.

Determine if the lands are located within the Urban River Valley designation on Schedule 1. If so, the specific policies set out in section 6.0 for the designation apply.

2. If lands are within the Protected Countryside, determine which of the Geographic Specific Policies apply as described in section 3.0. This is accomplished by a series of steps.

Refer to Schedules 1, 2 and 3 of this Plan to determine if the lands are located within a specialty crop area or a Town/Village or Hamlet. If lands are located in a specialty crop area, refer to the policies of this Plan. If lands are located in a Town/Village or Hamlet, refer to municipal official plans (unless it is a proposed expansion of a settlement, in which case refer to the policies of this Plan). Also, refer to the General Policies of this Plan as described below official plans.

If the lands are not in a specialty crop area or Town/Village or Hamlet, determine in which municipality the lands are located and refer to the municipal official plans that are in effect to determine if the lands are designated prime agricultural area or rural lands (or a similar designation to rural). Once this determination is made, refer to the Agricultural System policies of this Plan (section 3.1) to determine if there are any additional restrictions or requirements relating to prime agricultural areas or rural areas.

Refer to Schedule 4 of this Plan to determine if the lands are located within the Natural Heritage System. If so, refer to the Natural System policies of section 3.2, which is an overlay on top of the prime agricultural and/or rural area land base designations of municipal the Agricultural System within official plans.

Refer to municipal official plans, data or information on natural features from provincial, municipal and agency (e.g. conservation authority) sources, and conduct a preliminary assessment of the property to determine if there are any key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, or key hydrologic features areas on the lands. If so, refer to the natural features policies of sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5 of this Plan.

3. Determine which general policies in section 4.0 may apply to the lands based on the type of use or whether lot creation is proposed.

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4. Determine how the policies of the Plan apply to matters that may be subject to transition under the provisions of the Greenbelt Act, 2005, in conjunction with the Implementation policies in section 5.0.

5. Determine how the other Implementation policies in section 5.0 may apply to the lands including how this Plan works with other applicable legislation, regulations, policy and planning documents and/or whether there are any boundary interpretation policies to be considered. This includes, but is not limited to, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, the Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015, Ontario’s Great Lakes Strategy and source protection plans under the Clean Water Act, 2006.
2.02  Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Area, as defined by Ontario Regulation 59/05, is governed by this Greenbelt Plan, which includes lands within the NEP Area, the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, the Parkway Belt West Plan Area, and lands designated as Protected Countryside and as Urban River Valley by this Plan.

2.1  Lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine Area

The requirements of the ORMCP (Ontario Regulation 140/02), made under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, continue to apply and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply with the exception of section 3.3.

Where, by the operation of subsection 2(4) of the ORMCP, lands are within the Oak Ridges Moraine Area but are not governed by the policies of the ORMCP, the lands are deemed to be within the Protected Countryside and all of the polices of the Greenbelt Plan apply to the lands unless the lands:

a) ______ would be subject to the Countryside or Settlement Area designations of the ORMCP if that plan applied; and

b) ______ do not connect the lands subject to the ORMCP to the Protected Countryside.

2.2  Lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area

The requirements of the NEP, established under the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, continue to apply and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply with the exception of section 3.3.

2.3  Lands within the Parkway Belt West Plan Area

The requirements of the Parkway Belt West Plan, deemed to be a development plan under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, continue to apply to lands within the Parkway Belt West Plan Area and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply with the exception of sections 3.2 and 3.3.

2.4  Lands within the Protected Countryside Area

Lands within the Protected Countryside, as shown on Schedule 1, are subject to the entirety of this Greenbelt Plan except section 6.0.

2.5  Lands within the Urban River Valley Area

Lands within the Urban River Valley designation, as shown on Schedule 1, are subject to the policies of section 6.0 and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply except as set out in that section.

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3.0 Geographic Specific Policies in the Protected Countryside

There are three types of Geographic Specific Policies that apply to specific lands within the Protected Countryside: Agricultural System, Natural System and Settlement Areas. In addition there are General Policies, and Parkland, Open Space and Trails policies that apply to the Protected Countryside, however, the Parkland, Open Space and Trails policies apply across the Greenbelt.

3.1 Agricultural System

Explanatory Text

A number of changes to Section 3.1 are proposed to encourage opportunities for economic activities on agricultural lands to support viable rural economies, in closer alignment with several PPS, 2014 policies.

Proposed changes / additions to Section 3.1, if approved, would include:

• An update to redefine the “Agricultural System” as containing an “Agricultural Support Network” (“infrastructure”, services and assets that support the viability of the agri-food sector) in addition to the land base;

• Revised direction requiring upper or single-tier municipalities to refine their official plan mapping to bring “prime agricultural areas”, “specialty crop areas”, and “rural lands” into conformity with provincial mapping, through a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan, where there are inconsistencies at municipal boundaries or discrepancies between provincial and municipal mapping that are significant;

• The introduction of newly defined terms (e.g., “on-farm diversified uses”, “Agricultural Support Network”);

• The permission for additional uses on farms such as “on-farm diversified uses” (e.g., agri-tourism) and flexibility for larger “agriculture-related uses” (e.g., grain dryers) to service the broader farming community;

• A new policy requiring “agriculture-related uses” and “on-farm diversified uses” proposed within “specialty crop areas” and “prime agricultural areas” to be compatible with and not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. In rural lands, this would be encouraged. In all circumstances, criteria for these uses would be based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas;

• A new policy requiring “agricultural impact assessments” where non-agricultural uses are proposed in “specialty crop areas” and “prime agricultural areas” to determine how adverse impacts on the “Agricultural System” are avoided, or if avoidance is not possible, minimized and mitigated. In rural lands, this would be encouraged. “Agricultural impact assessments” would be required in additional circumstances (e.g., “settlement area” boundary expansions proposed into “prime agricultural areas”).

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• New policies requiring land use compatibility where “agricultural uses” and non-agricultural uses interface, to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on the “Agricultural System”;

• A new policy requiring continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections of the “Agricultural Support Network” to be maintained and enhanced;

• A new policy encouraging community hubs in rural settings; and

• A new section of policies encouraging municipalities to implement strategies and approaches to sustain and enhance the “Agricultural Support Network” (e.g., providing opportunities to support local food/near-urban agriculture, preparing regional agri-food strategies or establishing and/or consulting with agricultural advisory committees or liaison officers, etc.).

3.1.1 Description

The Protected Countryside contains an Agricultural System that provides a continuous and permanent land base necessary to support long-term agricultural production and economic activity. Many of the farms within this system also contain important natural heritage and hydrologic features, and the stewardship of these farms has facilitated both environmental and agricultural protection. The Agricultural System is therefore integral to the long-term sustainability of the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside. It is through evolving agricultural and environmental approaches and practices that this relationship can continue and improve and a complementary support network that are both necessary to support long-term agricultural production and economic viability. Many of the farms within this system also contain important natural heritage and hydrologic features, and the stewardship of these farms facilitates both environmental benefits and agricultural protection. The Agricultural System is therefore integral to the long-term sustainability of the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside. It is through evolving agricultural and environmental approaches and practices that this relationship can continue and improve.

The Agricultural System is made up of specialty crop areas, prime agricultural areas and rural areas. The Agricultural System includes expansive areas where prime agricultural and specialty crop lands predominate and active agricultural and related activities are ongoing. The delineation of the Agricultural System was guided by a variety of factors including a land evaluation area review (LEAR) which assessed such matters as soils, climate, productivity and land fragmentation, the existing pattern of agriculturally protected lands set out in municipal official plans; and a consideration of projected future growth patterns.

An Agricultural System is a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agri-food sector. An Agricultural System has two components: the agricultural land base and the Agricultural Support Network. The agricultural land base is comprised of prime agricultural areas and specialty crop areas, as well as rural lands where active agricultural and related activities are ongoing. The Agricultural Support Network includes infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector.

The delineation of the Agricultural System is guided by a variety of factors including a land evaluation area review (LEAR) which assesses such matters as soils, climate, productivity and

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land fragmentation; the existing pattern of agriculturally protected lands set out in official plans; the availability of infrastructure, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector and a consideration of projected future growth patterns.

There are two specialty crop areas: the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area and the Holland Marsh. The delineation of the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area (see Schedule 2) is based on provincial soil and climate analysis of current and potential tender fruit and grape production areas. The Holland Marsh boundary is based on provincial muck soil analysis and current agricultural production in both the Region of York and the County of Simcoe (see Schedule 3).

Prime agricultural areas, are those lands designated as such within municipal official plans.

Rural areas are those lands outside of settlement areas which are not prime agricultural areas and which are generally designated as rural or open space within municipal official plans. Rural areas are typically characterized by a mixture of agricultural lands, natural features and recreational and historic rural land uses. Lands are those lands outside of settlement areas which are not prime agricultural areas and which are generally designated as rural or open space within official plans.

Municipalities may amend their municipal official plan designations for prime agriculture areas and rural areas when they bring their official plans into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, subject to the criteria identified in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2.

At the time of a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan, upper and single-tier municipalities may have to amend their official plan designations for prime agricultural areas and rural lands in accordance with the policies of section 5.3.

3.1.2 Specialty Crop Area Policies

For lands falling within the specialty crop area of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. Within specialty crop areas, normal farm practices and a full range of agricultural, agriculture-related and secondary uses are supported and permitted. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses shall be based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas.

2. Lands within specialty crop areas shall not be redesignated in municipal official plans for non-agricultural uses, with the exception of those uses permitted in the general policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6. These non-agricultural uses are generally discouraged in specialty crop areas and may only be permitted after the completion of an agricultural impact assessment.

3. Towns/Villages and Hamlets are not permitted to expand into specialty crop areas.
4. New land uses, including the creation of lots, as permitted by the policies of this Plan, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

5. Land use compatibility shall be promoted to avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on the Agricultural System, where agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses interface, based on provincial guidance.

6. The geographical continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the Agricultural Support Network shall be maintained and enhanced.

3.1.3 Prime Agricultural Area Policies

For lands falling within the prime agricultural area of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. Within Normal farm practices and a full range of agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses are supported and permitted. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses shall be based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas, as identified in municipal official plans, normal farm practices and a full range of agricultural, agriculture-related and secondary uses are supported and permitted.

2. Prime agricultural areas shall not be redesignated in municipal official plans for non-agricultural uses except for:
   a) Refinements to the prime agricultural and rural area designations, subject to the criteria identified in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2; or area and rural lands designations, subject to the criteria identified in the policies of section 5.3; or
   b) Settlement area expansions subject to the settlement area policies of section 3.4.

3. Other uses may be permitted subject to the general policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6. Non-agricultural uses may be permitted subject to the policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6. These uses are generally discouraged in prime agricultural areas and may only be permitted after the completion of an agricultural impact assessment.

4. New land uses and the creation of lots, as permitted by the policies of this Plan, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

5. Land use compatibility shall be promoted to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on the Agricultural System, where agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses interface, based on provincial guidance.

6. The geographical continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the Agricultural Support Network shall be maintained and enhanced.
3.1.4 Rural Area Policies

For lands falling within the rural area lands of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. Rural areas support, and provide the primary locations for a range of recreational, tourism, institutional and resource-based commercial/industrial uses. They also contain many historic highway commercial, non-farm residential and other uses which, in more recent times, would be generally directed to settlement areas but which are recognized as existing uses by this Plan and allowed to continue and expand subject to the existing use policies of section 4.5. Notwithstanding this policy or the policies of section 5.3, municipal official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to the types of uses permitted within rural area lands.

2. Rural areas also contain many existing agricultural operations. Existing and new agricultural uses are allowed and normal farm practices and a full range of agricultural, agriculture-related and secondary uses are supported and permitted. Proposed agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses should be compatible with and should not hinder surrounding agricultural operations. Criteria for these uses shall be based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas.

3. Settlement area expansions are permitted into rural area lands, subject to the settlement area policies of section 3.4.

4. Other uses may be permitted subject to the general policies of sections 4.1 to 4.6. Where non-agricultural uses are proposed, the completion of an agricultural impact assessment should be considered.

5. New multiple lots or units or multiple lots for residential dwellings development, (e.g. estate residential subdivisions and adult lifestyle or retirement communities), whether by plan of subdivision, condominium or severance, shall not be permitted in rural area lands. Notwithstanding this policy, municipal official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to residential severances and. Official plans shall provide guidance for the creation of lots within the rural area lands not addressed in this Plan. Regardless, new lots for any use shall not be created if the creation would extend or promote strip development.

6. New land uses, the creation of lots (as permitted by the policies of this Plan), and new and expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

7. Land use compatibility shall be promoted to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on the Agricultural System, where agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses interface, based on provincial guidance.

8. The geographical continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the Agricultural Support Network shall be maintained and enhanced.

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9. Where public service facilities exist on rural lands, consideration should be given to maintaining and adapting these as community hubs where feasible, to meet the needs of the community.

3.1.5 External Connections

Agricultural Support Network

Planning authorities are encouraged to implement strategies and other approaches to sustain and enhance the Agricultural System and the long-term economic prosperity and viability of the agri-food sector, including the maintenance and improvement of the Agricultural Support Network by:

a) Providing opportunities to support local food, urban and near-urban agriculture and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food and agri-product businesses through protecting agricultural resources, and minimizing land use conflicts;

b) Considering the Agricultural Support Network in planning decisions to protect or enhance critical agricultural assets. Where negative impacts on the Agricultural Support Network, a component of the Agricultural System, are unavoidable, they shall be assessed and to the extent feasible, mitigated;

c) Undertaking long-term planning for agriculture, integrating agricultural economic development, infrastructure, goods movement and freight considerations with land use planning;

d) Preparing regional agri-food strategies or establishing and/or consulting with agricultural advisory committees, or liaison officers; and

e) Providing opportunities for agriculture-supportive infrastructure both on and off farms.

3.1.6 Agricultural System Connections

The Greenbelt Agricultural System is connected both functionally and economically to the prime agricultural resource lands and agri-food sector beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt. Agricultural System is connected both functionally and economically to the agricultural land base and agri-food sector beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt. Agriculture is the predominant land use in the Greenbelt and is an important economic factor in the quality of life for communities in and beyond the Greenbelt.

To support the connections between the Greenbelt’s Agricultural System and the prime agricultural resource areas of southern Ontario, municipalities, farming organizations, and other agencies and levels of government are encouraged to consider how activities and changes in land use, both within and abutting the Greenbelt, relate to the broader agricultural system and economy of southern Ontario and they should plan appropriately to ensure both functional and economic connections are maintained and strengthened. Strengthen the connections between the Agricultural Systems of the Greenbelt and the rest of the GGH, municipalities, farming organizations, and other agencies and levels of government are encouraged to consider how activities and changes in land use, both within and in proximity to the Greenbelt, relate to the broader agricultural system and economy of southern Ontario. Municipalities should plan appropriately to ensure both functional and economic connections are maintained and strengthened in conjunction with natural heritage.
systems, water resources, growth management and infrastructure to maximize synergies and support a viable agri-food sector.

3.2 Natural System

Explanatory Text

In some cases, the changes that are proposed for Section 3.2 of the Greenbelt Plan involve reorganizing and revising existing policy directions (e.g., requiring, instead of encouraging, “watershed planning” to inform decisions on growth) and in other cases, new concepts are proposed to be added (e.g., natural heritage and hydrologic evaluation exemptions for uses related to agriculture).

Proposed changes / additions to Section 3.2, if approved, would include:

- New wording highlighting the natural heritage system connections beyond the Greenbelt, in the “Greater Golden Horseshoe” that speaks to the broader natural heritage system connections that would be identified in the Growth Plan Area;

- Revised policies that would permit additional uses on farms such as “on-farm diversified uses” and flexibility for larger “agriculture-related uses” in the Natural Heritage System;

- Revised policy requiring “watershed planning”, instead of encouraging it, to inform decisions on growth, “development”, “settlement area” boundary expansions and planning for water, wastewater and stormwater “infrastructure”;

- Revised policy requiring the development of “watershed plans” and watershed management approaches, instead of encouraging it, to be integrated with “watershed planning” and management in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe;

- New policy requiring municipalities to consider the Great Lakes Strategy, the targets and goals of the Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015, and applicable Great Lakes agreements as part of “watershed planning”, coastal, or waterfront planning initiatives;

- A new policy requiring “subwatershed plans”, or equivalent, before the approval of “settlement area” boundary expansions, secondary plans and resort development to guide planning and “development” decisions;

- New policies requiring municipalities to identify and protect “key hydrologic areas” (“significant groundwater recharge areas”, “highly vulnerable aquifers”, and “significant surface water contribution areas”) and to undertake “watershed planning” as a basis for identifying and protecting these areas;

- New policies requiring a number of criteria to be met where “major development” is proposed within a “key hydrologic area” in order to protect, improve or restore the “hydrologic functions” of these areas. “Major development” would need to be consistent with the criteria set out in the relevant watershed or “subwatershed plan”;

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• Bringing policies on the “habitat of endangered species and threatened species” into closer alignment with the PPS, 2014 and the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (e.g., natural heritage evaluation may not be required);

• A new policy exempting buildings and structures for “agricultural uses”, “agriculture-related uses” and “on-farm diversified uses” from the requirement to undertake a natural heritage or hydrologic evaluation (subject to criteria), while still ensuring ecological impacts are minimized;

• A new policy that would permit new buildings or structures for “agricultural uses”, “agriculture-related uses” and “on-farm diversified uses”, within 30 metres of certain streams in the Niagara Tender Fruit and Grape Area without a hydrologic evaluation, subject to criteria;

• A new policy that would add many of the major watercourses between the Greenbelt and Lake Ontario (the external connections shown on Schedules 1, 2 and 4) and several coastal “wetlands” into the Greenbelt Plan as Urban River Valley areas (these areas would be subject to the policies of Section 6.0 of the Plan); and

• Recognition of the importance of the Rouge Urban National Park Management Plan meeting or exceeding the policy requirements of the Greenbelt Plan.

3.2.1 Description

The Protected Countryside contains a Natural System that provides a continuous and permanent land base necessary to support human and ecological health in the Greenbelt and beyond. The Natural System policies protect areas of natural heritage, hydrologic and/or landform features, which are often functionally inter-related and which collectively support biodiversity and overall ecological integrity. The Natural System policies protect areas of natural heritage, hydrologic and/or landform features, which are often functionally inter-related and which collectively provide essential ecological goods and services, including water storage and filtration, cleaner air, biodiversity, habitat, crop pollination, carbon storage and resilience to climate change, which supports overall ecological integrity.

The Natural System within the Protected Countryside functions at three scales:

1. The system builds upon and is connected to other Golden Horseshoe scale natural systems as identified within the NEP and the ORMCP (see Appendix 1); is connected to and/or supports broader natural systems in southern Ontario such as the Great Lakes Coast, Carolinian Zone and the Kawartha Highlands and the Algonquin to Adirondacks Corridor;

2. The system is connected to and/or supports broader natural systems in southern Ontario such as the Great Lakes Coast, Carolinian Zone and the Kawartha Highlands; and builds upon and is connected to other Greater Golden Horseshoe scale natural systems as identified through the Growth Plan, the NEP and the ORMCP (see Appendix 1); and

3. The system is supported by a multitude of natural and hydrologic features and functions found within the Golden Horseshoe but outside of the NEP and the ORMCP. In particular, the numerous watersheds, subwatersheds and groundwater resources, including the network of
tributaries that support the major river systems identified in this Plan, are critical to the long-term health and sustainability of water resources and biodiversity and overall ecological integrity. The analysis and management of the Greenbelt’s water resources must therefore be integrated with the management of water resources outside the Greenbelt. Municipal official plans and related resource management efforts by conservation authorities and others shall continue to assess and plan for these natural and hydrologic features in a comprehensive and integrated manner, which builds upon and supports the natural systems identified within the Greenbelt. GGH but outside of the NEP and the ORMCP. In particular, the numerous watersheds, subwatersheds and groundwater resources, including the network of tributaries that support the major river systems identified in this Plan, are critical to the long-term health and sustainability of water resources and biodiversity and overall ecological integrity. Official plans and related resource management efforts by conservation authorities and others shall continue to assess and plan for these natural and hydrologic features in a comprehensive and integrated manner, through the identification and protection of natural systems, building upon and supporting the natural systems identified within the Greenbelt.

The Natural System is made up of a Natural Heritage System and a Water Resource System that often coincide given ecological linkages between terrestrial and water-based functions.

The Natural Heritage System (see Schedule 4) includes areas of the Protected Countryside with the highest concentration of the most sensitive and/or significant natural features and functions. These areas need to be managed as a connected and integrated natural heritage system given the functional inter-relationships between them, and the fact this system builds upon the natural systems contained in the NEP and the ORMCP. Together with the landscape surrounding the Greenbelt, these systems currently comprise, and function as, a connected natural heritage system, includes core areas and linkage areas of the Protected Countryside with the highest concentration of the most sensitive and/or significant natural features and functions. These areas need to be managed as a connected and integrated natural heritage system given the functional inter-relationships between them, and the fact this system builds upon the natural systems contained in the NEP and the ORMCP (see Schedule 4) and will connect with the Natural Heritage System that will be identified through the Growth Plan. Together, these systems will comprise and function as a connected natural heritage system.

The Water Resource System is made up of both ground and surface water features and their associated functions, which provide the water resources necessary to sustain healthy aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and human water consumption. The ORMCP and NEP include very significant elements of, and are fundamental to, the Water Resource System. The areas to which these plans apply contain primary recharge, headwater and discharge areas, together with major drinking water aquifers, within the Greenbelt.

The Protected Countryside includes several areas of hydrologic significance, including:

- The upper reaches of watersheds draining to Lake Ontario to the west of the Niagara Escarpment;
- Lands around the primary discharge zones along the toe of the Escarpment and base of the Oak Ridges Moraine;

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• The major river valleys that flow from the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment to Lake Ontario;

• The portions of the Lake Simcoe watershed and the former Lake Algonquin Shoreline within York and Durham Regions; and

• The former Lake Iroquois shoreline in Durham and Niagara Regions.

These areas of hydrological significance incorporated into the Greenbelt function together with other hydrological features and areas both within the Greenbelt and within the remainder of watersheds that extend outside of the Greenbelt to form water resource systems.

3.2.2 Natural Heritage System Policies

For lands within the Natural Heritage System of the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

1. The full range of existing and new agricultural, agricultural-related and secondary uses and normal farm practices are permitted subject to the policies of 3.2.2.2 below; agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses and normal farm practices are permitted subject to the policies of section 3.2.2.2.

2. New buildings or structures for agriculture, agriculture-related and secondary uses are not subject to the Natural Heritage System policies below, but are subject to the policies on key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features as identified in the natural features policies of section 3.2.4; agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses are not subject to the policies of section 3.2.2.3, but are subject to the policies of section 3.2.5.

3. New development or site alteration in the Natural Heritage System (as permitted by the policies of this Plan) shall demonstrate that:

a) There will be no negative effects on key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features or their functions;

b) Connectivity between key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features is maintained, or where possible, enhanced for the movement of native plants and animals across the landscape; along the system and between key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features located within 240 metres of each other, is maintained, or where possible, enhanced for the movement of native plants and animals across the landscape;

c) The removal of other natural features not identified as key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features should be avoided. Such features should be incorporated into the planning and design of the proposed use wherever possible; and

d) The disturbed area, including any buildings and structures, of any site does not exceed 25 per cent (40 per cent for golf courses);

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d) The disturbed area of any site does not exceed 25 percent, and the impervious surface does not exceed 10 percent, of the total developable area, except for uses described in and governed by sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.2. With respect to golf courses, the disturbed area shall not exceed 40 percent of the site.

e) The impervious surface does not exceed 10 per cent of the total developable area, except for uses described in and governed by sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.2;

4. Where non-agricultural uses are contemplated within the Natural Heritage System, applicants shall demonstrate that:

a) At least 30 percent of the total developable area of the site will remain or be returned to natural self-sustaining vegetation, recognizing that section 4.3.2 establishes specific standards for the uses described there;

b) Connectivity along the system and between key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features located within 240 metres of each other is maintained or enhanced; and

c) Buildings or structures do not occupy more than 25 percent of the total developable area and are planned to optimize the compatibility of the project with the natural surroundings.

d) The compatibility of the project with the natural surroundings is optimized; and

g) At least 30 per cent of the total developable area of the site will remain or be returned to natural self-sustaining vegetation, recognizing that section 4.3.2 establishes specific standards for the uses described there.

5. The Natural Heritage System, including the natural features policies of section 3.2.4, 3.2.5, does not apply within the existing boundaries of settlement areas, but does apply when considering expansions to settlements as permitted by the policies of this Plan. Municipalities should consider the Natural Heritage Systems connections within settlement areas when implementing municipal policies, plans and strategies.

6. When official plans are brought into conformity with this Plan, the boundaries of the Natural Heritage System may be refined, with greater precision, in a manner that is consistent with this Plan and the system shown on Schedule 4.

7. Where regulations or standards of other agencies or levels of government exceed the standards related to key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features in this Plan, such as may occur with hazardous lands under section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act or with fisheries under the Federal Fisheries Act, the most restrictive provision or standard applies.

3.2.3 Water Resource System Policies

The following Water Resource System policies apply throughout the Protected Countryside:

1. All planning authorities shall provide for a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach for the protection, improvement or restoration of the quality and quantity of water. Such an approach will consider all hydrologic features and functions and include a systems approach to the inter-relationships between and/or among recharge/discharge areas, shorelines, etc.
aquifers, headwaters and surface waters (i.e., Lakes as well as rivers and streams, including intermittent streams).

2. Watersheds are the most meaningful scale for hydrological planning, and municipalities together with conservation authorities should ensure that watershed plans are completed and used to guide planning and development decisions within the Protected Countryside. shall ensure that watershed planning is completed to inform decisions on growth, development, settlement area boundary expansions and planning for water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure.

3. Cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts need to be considered in the development of watershed plans. The development of watershed plans and watershed management approaches in the Protected Countryside should be integrated with watershed planning and management in the NEP and the ORMCP areas and beyond the Greenbelt Growth Plan.

4. Municipalities shall, in accordance with provincial direction related to the protection of source water, protect vulnerable surface and ground water areas, such as wellhead protection areas, from development that may adversely affect the quality and quantity of ground and surface waters, consider the Great Lakes Strategy, the targets and goals of the Great Lakes Protection Act, 2015, and any applicable Great Lakes agreements as part of watershed planning and coastal or waterfront planning initiatives.

5. Prior to the approval of settlement area boundary expansions, secondary plans and resort development, a subwatershed plan or equivalent shall be completed to inform these planning and development decisions.

3.2.4 Key Hydrologic Areas

Key hydrologic areas are areas which contribute to hydrologic functions of the Water Resource System. These areas maintain ground and surface water quality and quantity by collecting, storing and filtering rainwater and overland flow, recharge aquifers and feed downstream tributaries, lakes, wetlands and discharge areas. These areas are also sensitive to contamination and feed key hydrologic features and drinking water sources.

Key hydrologic areas include:

- Significant groundwater recharge areas;
- Highly vulnerable aquifers;
- Significant surface water contribution areas.

For lands within a key hydrologic area in the Protected Countryside, the following policies apply:

1. Major development may be permitted where it is demonstrated that:

   a) The hydrologic functions of these areas shall be protected and, where possible, improved or restored through;
i. The identification of planning, design and construction practices and techniques; and

ii. Meeting other criteria and direction set out in the watershed or subwatershed plan.

b) In significant groundwater recharge areas, predevelopment infiltration on the site will be maintained, improved, or restored;

c) In highly vulnerable aquifers, the quality of water infiltrating the site will be maintained; and

d) In significant surface water contribution areas, the quality and quantity of water, including baseflow, will be protected.

3.2.4 3.2.5 Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features Policies

Key natural heritage features include:

• Significant habitat of endangered species, threatened species and special concern species; Habitat of endangered species and threatened species;

• Fish habitat;

• Wetlands;

• Life science areas of natural and scientific Interest (ANSIs);

• Significant valleylands;

• Significant woodlands;

• Significant wildlife habitat;

• Sand barrens, savannahs and tallgrass prairies; and

• Alvars.

Key hydrologic features include:

• Permanent and intermittent streams;

• Lakes (and their littoral zones);

• Seepage areas and springs; and

• Wetlands.
For lands within a key natural heritage feature or a key hydrologic feature in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Development or site alteration is not permitted in key hydrologic features and key natural heritage features within the Natural Heritage System, including any associated vegetation protection zone, with the exception of:
   a) Forest, fish and wildlife management;
   b) Conservation and flood or erosion control projects, but only if they have been demonstrated to be necessary in the public interest and after all alternatives have been considered; or
   c) Infrastructure, aggregate, recreational, shoreline and existing uses, as described by and subject to the general policies of section 4 of this Plan.

2. Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 4), key hydrologic features are defined by and subject to the natural features policies of section 3.2.4.

3. Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 4), key natural heritage features are defined by and subject to the policies of, the PPS, 2014.

4. In the case of wetlands, seepage areas and springs, fish habitat, permanent and intermittent streams, lakes, and significant woodlands, the minimum vegetation protection zone shall be a minimum of 30 metres wide measured from the outside boundary of the key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature.

5. A proposal for new development or site alteration within 120 metres of a key natural heritage feature within the Natural Heritage System or a key hydrologic feature anywhere within the Protected Countryside requires a natural heritage evaluation and/or a hydrological evaluation, which identify a vegetation protection zone which:
   a) Is of sufficient width to protect the key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature and its functions from the impacts of the proposed change and associated activities that may occur before, during, and after, construction; and where possible, restore or enhance the feature and/or its function; and
   b) Is established to achieve, and be maintained as natural self-sustaining vegetation.

6. Expansions to existing agricultural buildings and structures and farm and non-farm dwellings, together with accessory uses, are permitted in key natural heritage features, subject to the existing use policies of section 4.5 of this Plan. A proposal for new development or site alteration within the Natural Heritage System is not subject to the policies of section 3.2.5.5 of this Plan where the only key natural heritage feature is the habitat of endangered species and threatened species.

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7. Notwithstanding the natural features policies of section 3.2.4 3.2.5 of this Plan, new buildings and structures for agricultural uses will shall be required to provide a 30 metre vegetation protection zone from a key natural heritage feature, unless that key natural heritage feature is only the habitat of endangered species and threatened species, or key hydrologic feature, but may be exempted are exempt from the requirement of establishing a condition of natural self-sustaining vegetation if the land is, and will continue to be, used for agricultural purposes. Despite this exemption, agricultural uses should pursue best management practices to protect and/or restore key hydrologic features and functions.

8. Notwithstanding the policies of section 3.2.5.5, a natural heritage evaluation or hydrologic evaluation is not required for new buildings and structures for agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses located within 120 metres of a key natural heritage feature and/or key hydrologic feature, provided the features and their functions are protected from the impacts of the proposed building or structure by meeting the following requirements:

a) A 30 metre vegetation protection zone is maintained and the key natural heritage feature and/or key hydrologic feature is maintained;

b) Connectivity between key natural heritage features and/or key hydrologic features can be maintained and, where feasible, improved;

c) The new building or structure is located away from the key natural heritage feature and/or key hydrologic feature to the maximum extent possible, and where possible clustered with existing buildings or structures;

d) Best management practices are pursued to protect and/or restore key natural heritage features and/or key hydrologic features and functions;

e) Measures are put in place, especially for stormwater management and erosion control so that potential impacts of the building or structure on the key natural heritage and/or key hydrologic features and functions are mitigated, before, during and after construction; and

f) The municipality or other approval authority has also considered the following in relation to determining any potential impacts of the proposal:

i. The nature and purpose of the building or structure;

ii. The size and scale of the building or structure, including where appropriate, the cumulative impact of existing development;

iii. The site characteristic such as topography; and

iv. The sensitivity of the adjacent key natural heritage feature(s) and/or key hydrologic feature.

9. Notwithstanding the policies of sections 3.2.5.4 to 3.2.5.5, within the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area, new buildings or structures for agricultural, agriculture-related, and on-farm diversified uses are permitted within 30 metres of a stream, which is an agricultural swale.
roadside ditch, or municipal drain as determined through provincially approved mapping, without a hydrologic evaluation, provided that:

a) The conditions in section 3.2.5.8 of this Plan are met;

b) There is no alternative location for the building or structure on the property without impacting lands that are in specialty crop production;

c) A minimum 15 metre vegetation protection zone is maintained between the building or structure and the stream; and

d) A new individual on-site sewage system shall not be located within 30 metres of the stream.

3.2.5 3.2.6 External Connections

The Natural Heritage System is connected to local, regional and provincial scale natural heritage, water resource and agricultural systems beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt and includes those areas designated as Urban River Valley in the Plan.

To support the connections between the Greenbelt’s Natural System and the local, regional and broader scale natural heritage systems of southern Ontario, such as the Lake Ontario shoreline, including its remaining coastal wetlands, the Great Lakes Coast, Lake Simcoe, the Kawartha Highlands, the Carolinian Zone and the Algonquin to Adirondack Corridor, the federal government, municipalities, conservation authorities, other agencies and stakeholders should:

1. Consider how activities and land use change both within and abutting the Greenbelt relate to the areas of external connections and Urban River Valley areas identified in this Plan;

2. Promote and undertake appropriate planning and design to ensure that external connections and Urban River Valley areas are maintained and/or enhanced; and

3. Undertake watershed based planning, which integrates supporting ecological systems with those systems contained in this Plan.

The river valleys that run through existing or approved urban areas and connect the Greenbelt to inland lakes and the Great Lakes, including areas designated as Urban River Valley, are a key component of the long-term health of the Natural System. In recognition of the function of the urban river valleys, municipalities and conservation authorities should:

1. Continue with stewardship, remediation and appropriate park and trail initiatives which maintain and, to the extent possible, enhance the ecological features and functions found within these valley systems;

2. In considering land conversions or redevelopments in or abutting an urban river valley, strive for planning approaches that:
a) Establish or increase the extent or width of vegetation protection zones in natural self-sustaining vegetation, especially in the most ecologically sensitive areas (i.e. near the stream and below the stable top of bank);

b) Increase or improve fish habitat in streams and in the adjacent riparian lands;

c) Include landscaping and habitat restoration that increase the ability of native plants and animals to use valley systems as both wildlife habitat and movement corridors; and

d) Seek to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts associated with the quality and quantity of urban run-off into the valley systems; and

3. Integrate watershed planning and management approaches for lands both within and beyond the Greenbelt taking into consideration the goals and objectives of protecting, improving and restoring the Great Lakes.

In addition to the urban river valleys, portions of the former Lake Iroquois shoreline, particularly within Durham Region, traverse existing or approved urban areas. Municipalities should consider planning, design and construction practices that maintain or where possible enhance the size, diversity and connectivity of key natural heritage features and key hydrologic areas of those portions of the Lake Iroquois shoreline within their approved urban boundaries.

These external connections are generally depicted by a dotted green line on Schedule 1 and 4, but are not within the regulated boundary of the Greenbelt Plan. Schedules 1, 2 and 4 at the time of the Plan’s approval in 2005 have been added to the Greenbelt Plan as Urban River Valley areas and are subject to the policies of section 6.0 of this Plan.

3.2.6 The Rouge River Watershed and Park

The Rouge River Watershed is of particular significance within the Protected Countryside because of the extensive public investment in establishing the Rouge Urban National Park and the efforts of all levels of government in preparing the Rouge North Management Plan. The Rouge Watershed and the Little Rouge River serve as a vital ecological corridor linking the environmental systems of Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine in this area of the Greater Toronto Area.

This plan identifies a 600 m wide corridor for the Little Rouge River as the main ecological corridor, between Lake Ontario and the southerly boundary of Oak Ridges Moraine Area, as well as several other Rouge River tributaries, in recognition of the longstanding commitment to establishing the Rouge Park.

Land use planning and resource management within those portions of the Rouge River watershed within the Protected Countryside shall comply with the provisions of both this Plan and the Rouge

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North Management Plan. In the case of a conflict between this Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan, the more restrictive policies apply. For those lands within the watershed north of Steeles Avenue, outside of the Protected Countryside, the Rouge North Management Plan and the Rouge North Implementation Manual, together with any municipal or conservation authority plans or initiatives which build on and/or support the Rouge North Management Plan, should be considered as the guiding land planning and resource management documents. For those lands within the Rouge Park south of Steeles Avenue, outside of the Protected Countryside, the Rouge Park Plan together with any municipal or conservation authority plans or initiatives which build on and/or support the Rouge Park Plan should be considered as the guiding land use planning and resource management documents.

For lands within the Rouge Urban National Park, collaboration with Parks Canada shall ensure that the Rouge Urban National Park Management Plan meets or exceeds the policy requirements of the Greenbelt Plan. Further, planning of surrounding lands outside of the Rouge Urban National Park should be undertaken in a manner that considers the interface with the Park. This includes connections to surrounding natural heritage, agricultural and open space and trail systems.

3.3 Parkland, open Space and Trails

3.3.1 Description

A system of parklands, open spaces, water bodies, and trails across the Greenbelt is necessary to provide opportunities for recreation, tourism and cultural/natural heritage appreciation, as well as support environmental protection. This system currently supports a variety of passive and active uses, as well as health, economic and other quality of life benefits within the Greenbelt, and appreciation of cultural heritage and natural heritage. They serve as an important component of complete communities and provide important benefits to support environmental protection, improved air quality and climate change mitigation. This system currently supports a variety of passive and active uses, as well as health, economic and other quality of life benefits within the Greenbelt.

A system of parklands, open spaces, water bodies, and trails helps address the causes and impacts of climate change by capturing and storing carbon, recharging aquifers and protecting biodiversity and sensitive areas.

It should be recognized that parkland, open space and trails exist within surroundings of predominantly privately held lands. While private land owners may, and do, adopt a collaborative approach with groups such as hiking and snowmobile associations to allow public access across portions of their property, this is only with the consent of the landowner.

Maintaining and expanding the supply of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails is encouraged through strategic planning activities that identify, plan for and protect these resources for current and future generations. The planning and activity associated with parkland, open space and trail uses should maximize the opportunity to cooperate with all landowners. This includes measures to prevent trespassing on farm properties to avoid risks to farm biosecurity and crop damage.

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Throughout the Greenbelt, there is existing public parkland and open space, as well as existing major trails such as the Bruce Trail, the Trans Canada Trail, the Niagara Greenway and the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail. This system of parks and trails provides significant economic benefits and opportunities for a multitude of uses and activities compatible with the Greenbelt’s vision and goals. This system should serve as a base for future decisions on parkland and open space use and trail development.

3.3.2 Parkland, open Space and Trail Policies

The Province should, in partnership with municipalities, conservation authorities, non-government organizations, and other interested parties:

1. Encourage the development of a system of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails where people can pursue the types of recreational activities envisaged by this Plan, and to support the connectivity of the Natural Heritage System and the development of complete communities in settlement areas across the Greenbelt;

2. Encourage the development of a trail plan and a coordinated approach to trail planning and development in the Greenbelt to enhance key existing trail networks and to strategically direct more intensive activities away from sensitive landscapes; and

3. Promote good stewardship practices for public and private lands within the Greenbelt, including clear demarcation of where public access is permitted.

3.3.3 Municipal Parkland, open Space and Trail Strategies

For all lands falling within the Protected Countryside, municipalities should:

1. Provide for a full range of publicly accessible, built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and water-based activities;

2. Develop and incorporate strategies (such as community-specific levels of provision) into official plans to guide the adequate provision of municipal recreation facilities, parklands, open space areas and trails;

3. Include the following considerations in municipal parkland and open space strategies:

   a) Providing for open space areas for current and future populations and promoting stewardship of open space areas;

   b) Providing facilities, parklands, open space areas and trails that particularly support an active, healthy community lifestyle;

   c) Identifying key areas or sites for the future development of major facilities that avoid sensitive landscapes;

   d) Identifying and targeting under-serviced areas for improved levels of protection; and

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e) Protecting the recreation and tourism values of waterfront areas as a high priority; and

f) Supporting local food initiatives.

4. Include the following considerations in municipal trail strategies:

a) Preserving the continuous integrity of corridors (e.g., abandoned railway rights-of-way and utility corridors);

b) Planning trails on a cross-boundary basis to enhance interconnectivity where practical;

c) Incorporating the existing system of parklands and trails where practical;

d) Restricting trail uses that are inappropriate to the reasonable capacity of the site (notwithstanding the ability to continue existing trails/uses);

e) Providing for multi-use trail systems which establish a safe system for both motorized and non-motorized uses;

f) Supporting and ensuring compatibility with agriculture; and

g) Ensuring the protection of the sensitive key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features and functions of the landscape.

Provincial parks and conservation authority lands are also important components in the development of parkland, open space and trail strategies. Ongoing management of these lands for publicly accessible recreation, in keeping with environmental management plans and strategies for such areas and the policies of this Plan, is important in providing access to this system. Where geographic-specific park or public land management plans exist, municipalities, agencies and other levels of government must consider such plans when making decisions on land use or infrastructure proposals.

3.4 Settlement Areas

Explanatory Text

Changes to Section 3.4 of the Greenbelt Plan would include minor updates (e.g., the removal of the Hamlet boundary minor rounding out policy) and several new additions (e.g., consideration for modest expansions of “settlement areas” to be considered as part of a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan). To reduce duplication between the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, it is proposed that in this section, the Greenbelt Plan would defer to the Growth Plan for policies on climate change and “settlement area” boundary expansions.
Proposed changes / additions to Section 3.4, if approved, would include:

- New goals for “settlement areas” that would encourage the development of community hubs and the development of “complete communities” that have a long-term goal of becoming “net-zero communities”;
- New policies directing municipalities to facilitate the development of community hubs;
- A new policy that defers to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe for policy direction that would require municipalities to integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth in “settlement areas”;
- New policies encouraging the development of soil re-use strategies and the use of best practices for the management of excess soil and fill;
- Revised policy specifying that the “Agricultural Support Network” policies, parkland, open space and trail policies and the policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe apply in Towns/ Villages and Hamlets;
- A revised policy allowing an upper or single-tier municipality to consider modest expansions of “settlement area” boundaries as part of a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan;
- A new policy that defers to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe for policy direction pertaining to modest expansions of “settlement area” boundaries; and
- Removal of the policy that allowed minor rounding out of Hamlet boundaries at the time of municipal conformity.

3.4.1 Description

Settlement areas within the Greenbelt support and provide significant economic, social and commercial functions to prime agricultural areas and rural areas. They are an integral part of the long-term economic and social sustainability of the Greenbelt and this Plan envisions that they continue to evolve and grow in keeping with their rural and/or existing character. Land use patterns within settlement areas shall support the development of complete communities that support the long-term goal of becoming net-zero communities. The development of complete communities shall in part be achieved by facilitating the development of community hubs that involve the co-location of public services to address local community needs in convenient locations that are accessible by active transportation and, where available, transit.

The settlement areas have been placed into two categories: Towns/Villages, and Hamlets. These settlement areas vary significantly in both spatial and population size, economic activity, diversity/intensity of uses, the type(s) of water and sewage services and the role they play within their municipalities. Settlement areas of all types are found throughout the

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Protected Countryside. Towns/Villages and Hamlets are identified on Schedule 1. To determine the exact designated, precise settlement area boundaries, reference should be made to municipal official plans.

Towns/Villages have the largest concentrations of population, employment and development within the Protected Countryside and tend to be the central settlement area(s) for their respective municipalities. Although most have full municipal water and sewer services, some only have a municipal water service and/or a combination of private and municipal water services. Towns/Villages are the focus of development and related economic and social activity.

Hamlets are substantially smaller than Towns/Villages and play a significantly lesser role in accommodating concentrations of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development. Further, they are typically serviced with individual on-site sewage and water services and thus are not locations to which growth should be directed.

3.4.2 Town/Village Policies - General Settlement Area Policies

For lands within Towns/Villages and Hamlets in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Towns/Villages, as identified in municipal official plans and within their approved boundaries as they existed on the date this Plan came into effect, continue to be governed by municipal official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the external connections policies of section 3.2.5. Settlement areas outside the Greenbelt are not permitted to expand into the Greenbelt.

2. Municipalities shall incorporate policies in their official plans to facilitate the development of community hubs that:

   a) enable the co-location of public services to promote cost-effectiveness and service integration;
   
   b) facilitate access through locations served by a range of transportation options including active transportation and, where available, transit;
   
   c) give priority to existing public service facilities within settlement areas as the preferred location, where appropriate; and
   
   d) enable the adaptive reuse of existing facilities and spaces in settlement areas, where appropriate.

3. Municipalities shall collaborate and consult with service planning, funding and delivery sectors to facilitate the co-ordination and planning of community hubs and other public service facilities.

4. Municipalities shall integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth in settlement areas in accordance with policy 4.2.10 of the Growth Plan.

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5. Municipalities are encouraged to develop soil re-use strategies as part of planning for growth and to integrate sustainable soil management practices into planning approvals.

6. Municipalities and industry shall use best practices for the management of excess soil and fill generated during any development or site alteration, including infrastructure development, so as to ensure that:

a) Any excess soil or fill is re-used on-site or locally, to the maximum extent possible; and

b) Fill received at a site will not cause an adverse effect with regard to the current or proposed use of the property or the natural environment.

3.4.3 Town/Village Policies

For lands within Towns/Villages in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Towns/Villages are subject to the policies of the Growth Plan and continue to be governed by official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the policies of sections 3.1.5, 3.2.6 and 3.3.

2. Municipalities are encouraged to continue their efforts to support the long-term vitality of these settlements through appropriate planning and economic development approaches which seek to maintain, intensify and/or revitalize these communities. This includes modest growth that is compatible with the long-term role of these settlements as part of the Protected Countryside and the capacity to provide locally based sewage and water services. Extensions or expansions of services to settlement areas within the Protected Countryside shall be subject to the infrastructure policies of section 4.2 of this Plan, including the requirements regarding environmental assessments and agricultural impact assessments.

3. Settlement areas outside the Greenbelt are not permitted to expand into the Greenbelt.

4. Extensions or expansions of services to settlement areas within the Protected Countryside shall be subject to the infrastructure policies of section 4.2 of this Plan, including the requirements regarding environmental assessments.

5. At the 10-year Greenbelt Plan review period, modest settlement area expansions may be possible for Towns/Villages, provided the proposed growth:

a) Is on municipal sewage and water services;

b) Would not exceed the assimilative and water production capacities of the local environment as determined on a watershed or subwatershed basis;

e) Complies with any applicable watershed plan;

d) Does not extend into the Natural Heritage System;

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e) Does not extend into specialty crop areas; and

f) Appropriately implements the requirements of any other provincial and municipal policies, plans, strategies or regulations, including requirements for assessment of need, locational and similar considerations. As part of a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan, an upper or single-tier planning authority may allow expansions of settlement area boundaries in accordance with policy 2.2.8 of the Growth Plan.

3.4.3 Hamlet Policies

For lands within Hamlets in the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Hamlets, as identified in municipal official plans and within their approved boundaries as they existed on the date this Plan came into effect, continue to be governed by municipal official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the external connections policies of section 3.2.5. This Plan permits infill and intensification of Hamlets subject to appropriate water and sewage services, are subject to the policies of the Growth Plan and continue to be governed by official plans and related programs or initiatives and are not subject to the policies of this Plan, save for the Agricultural Support Network policies of section 3.1.5, the external connections policies of section 3.2.6 and the Parkland, Open Space and Trails policies of section 3.3. This Plan permits limited growth through infill and intensification of Hamlets subject to appropriate water and sewage services.

2. Outside of specialty crop areas, minor rounding out of Hamlet boundaries at the time of municipal conformity is also permitted in keeping with the character of the Hamlet. This rounding out is only permitted subject to the infrastructure policies contained in section 4.2 of this Plan and municipal official plans.

3.4.4 Additional Policies for Settlement Area Expansion

For settlement areas within the Protected Countryside, notwithstanding the policies of section 4.2.1, 5.2.1, the following additional policies apply to municipally initiated settlement area expansion proposals:

1. Where a municipality had initiated the consideration of a settlement area expansion prior to the date this Plan came into effect, such an expansion may be considered through the municipality’s exercise to bring its official plan into conformity with this Plan as described in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2—5.3. The proposed expansion shall:

a) Prior to December 16, 2003, be supported by:

i. A council resolution authorizing the consideration of such an expansion; and

ii. The substantial completion of background studies or reports by municipal staff or planning consultants, or the expenditure of municipal funds on the consideration of such expansion.

b) Not extend into the Natural Heritage System;
c) Not extend into specialty crop areas; and

d) Maintain the rural and/or existing character of the settlement area.

2. Clause 3.4.4.1 does not apply to Section 3.4.5.1 does not apply to:

a) Those lands within the City of Pickering, in the Regional Municipality of Durham, bounded by the CPR Belleville Line in the south; the York-Durham Townline to the west; and West Duffins Creek to the east; and

b) Those lands within the Town of Markham, in the Regional Municipality of York, bounded by the York-Durham Townline to the east; Steeles Avenue to the south; the Little Rouge River to the west; and, 16th Avenue to the north.
4.04 General Policies for the Protected Countryside

4.1 Non-Agricultural Uses

The rural areas of the Protected Countryside are intended to continue to accommodate a range of commercial, industrial and institutional uses serving the rural resource and agricultural sectors. They are also intended to support a range of recreation and tourism uses such as trails, parks, golf courses, bed and breakfasts and other tourism based accommodation, serviced playing fields and campgrounds, ski hills and resorts.

4.1.1 General Non-Agricultural Use Policies

For non-agricultural uses, the following policies apply:

1. Non-agricultural uses are not permitted in the specialty crop area as shown on Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 of this Plan or within prime agricultural areas in the Protected Countryside with the exception of those uses permitted under the general policies of section 4.0 of this Plan and subject to the Natural System policies in section 3.2, non-agricultural uses are not permitted in the specialty crop area as shown on Schedule 2 of this Plan or within prime agricultural areas in the Protected Countryside as designated in municipal official plans section 4.2 to 4.6 of this Plan.

2. Proposals for non-agricultural uses must demonstrate that:
   a) The use is appropriate for location in a rural areas; 
   b) The type of water and sewer servicing proposed is appropriate for the type of use;
   c) There are no negative impacts on key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features or their functions; and
   d) There are no negative impacts on the biodiversity or connectivity of the Natural Heritage System.

3. Where non-agricultural uses are proposed in rural lands, the completion of an agricultural impact assessment should be considered.

4.1.2 Recreational Use Policies

In addition to the non-agricultural use policies of section 4.1.1, recreational uses are also subject to the following policies:

1. Residential dwelling units, other than for an employee, shall not be permitted in association with recreational uses.

2. An application to establish or expand a major recreational use in the Natural Heritage System shall be accompanied by a vegetation enhancement plan that incorporates planning, design, landscaping, and construction measures that:
a) Maintain or, where possible, enhance the amount of natural self-sustaining vegetation on the site and the connectivity between adjacent key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features;

b) Wherever possible, keep intermittent stream channels and drainage swales in a free-to-grow, low-maintenance condition;

c) Minimize the application and use of pesticides and fertilizers; and

d) Locate new natural self-sustaining vegetation in areas that maximize the ecological functions and ecological value of the area.

3. An application to expand or establish a major recreational use shall be accompanied by a conservation plan demonstrating how water use and nutrient and biocide will be kept to a minimum, including through the establishment and monitoring of targets.

4. Small-scale structures for recreational uses (such as boardwalks, footbridges, fences, docks and picnic facilities) are permitted within key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features; however, the number of such structures and the negative impacts on these features should be minimized.

4.1.3 Developed Shoreline Area Policies

The shorelines of Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe, and Lake Scugog and other inland lakes contain substantial amounts of both seasonal and permanent residential development. The shoreline areas of lakes (including the littoral zones) are particularly important and sensitive given the key natural heritage features and functions and because of the connectivity that shorelines provide for flora and fauna. Substantial amounts of both seasonal and permanent residential development. The developed shoreline areas of lakes (including the littoral zones) are particularly important and sensitive given the key natural heritage features and functions, the connectivity that shorelines provide for flora and fauna, and the benefits to water quality and quantity. Lands adjacent to water have the highest concentration of the Province’s cultural heritage resources. In addition, the shorelines are locations for vital human services, such as drinking water system intakes, and they support a wide range of recreational venues and opportunities, including trail systems such as the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail. Climate change is expected to be an important consideration in shoreline management given projected declines in Great Lakes water levels.

In addition, the shorelines support a wide range of recreational venues and opportunities, including trail systems such as the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail.

For shoreline areas falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. For the purposes of this Plan, shoreline areas are those areas where concentrations of existing or approved shoreline development are currently zoned and/or designated in municipal official plans, as of the date this Plan came into effect.
2. Subject to any municipal and agency planning requirements, minor rounding out, infill development, redevelopment and resort development is permitted in shoreline areas along Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe, Lake Scugog and other inland lakes, subject to the following criteria:

a) Municipalities and conservation authorities shall ensure that the development is integrated with existing or proposed parks and trails and/or does not constrain ongoing or planned stewardship and remediation efforts;

b) The Natural System policies of section 3.2 of this Plan are applied;

c) To the extent possible, such development enhances the ecological features and functions in shoreline areas;

d) Proposals for land use conversions, redevelopments and/or resort development shall:

i. Establish or increase the extent and width of a vegetation protection zone along a shoreline to a minimum of 30 metres;

ii. Increase or expand the extent of fish habitat in the littoral zone;

iii. Minimize erosion, sedimentation and the introduction of nutrient or other pollutants and promote planning, design and construction practices that maintain or improve water quality;

iv. Improve the efficiency of sewage disposal facilities in order to reduce nutrient inputs to groundwater and the lake; and

v. Integrate landscaping and habitat restoration into the design of the proposal to enhance the ability of native plants and animals to use the shoreline as both wildlife habitat and a movement corridor; and

e) The capacity of the receiving water body shall be determined considering inputs from both existing and approved development and available capacity shall be demonstrated. Such proposals shall comply with any relevant watershed or subwatershed study and in the case of Lake Simcoe, any such analysis must be considered in the context of the Lake Simcoe Environmental Management Strategy.

3. Notwithstanding the policies of section 4.1.3.2 (d), structures may be permitted in the vegetation protection zone and littoral zone subject to any municipal, agency or other requirements or restrictions, and provided the area occupied by such structures is minimized. Policy 4.2.4.5 of the Growth Plan applies to shoreline areas within the Protected Countryside.

4.2 Infrastructure

Explanatory Text

The changes proposed for Section 4.2 of the Greenbelt Plan would involve the addition of a number of new concepts (e.g., “low impact development” and “green infrastructure”) and new policy direction (e.g., the requirement for an “agricultural impact assessment” where “infrastructure” is proposed to cross “specialty crop areas” and “prime agricultural areas”). To
reduce duplication between the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, it is proposed that, in this section, the Greenbelt Plan would defer to the Growth Plan for policies pertaining to the requirement to complete water and wastewater, and stormwater master plans.

Proposed changes / additions to Section 4.2, if approved, would include:

- New direction that planning for growth would need to be undertaken in an integrated and co-coordinated manner with land use and master planning while ensuring that “infrastructure” is financially viable over its lifecycle through asset management plans;

- New wording that would speak to municipalities increasing resiliency of “infrastructure” and encouraging the use of “green infrastructure”, to reduce risks and costs associated with extreme weather events.

Infrastructure is important to economic well-being, human health and quality of life in southern Ontario and the Greenbelt.

There is already extensive local and regional infrastructure within the Greenbelt to serve its settlement areas, agricultural and resource sectors and the rural economy. Existing infrastructure must be maintained and new infrastructure will be needed to continue serving existing and permitted land uses within the Greenbelt.

In addition, major infrastructure serving national, provincial and inter-regional needs traverses the Greenbelt. It is also anticipated that new and/or expanded facilities will be needed in the future to serve the substantial growth projected for southern Ontario. Planning for this growth will need to be undertaken in a manner that is integrated and co-ordinated with land use and master planning, while also ensuring that infrastructure is financially viable over its lifecycle through asset management plans.

Climate change also poses a challenge for maintaining existing infrastructure and planning for new infrastructure. By increasing resiliency of infrastructure and encouraging the use of green infrastructure, municipalities can reduce the risk of harm to life and property and decrease the need for costly repairs or replacement resulting from extreme weather events. Infrastructure vulnerability risk assessment and climate change adaptation strategies can help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

4.2.1 General Infrastructure Policies

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. All existing, expanded or new infrastructure subject to and approved under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Environmental Assessment Act, the Planning Act, the Aggregate Resources Act, the Telecommunications Act or by the National or Ontario Energy Boards, or which receives a similar environmental approval, is permitted within the Protected Countryside, subject to the policies of this section and provided it meets one of the following two objectives:

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a) It supports agriculture, recreation and tourism, rural settlement areas, resource use or the rural economic activity that exists and is permitted within the Greenbelt; or

b) It serves the significant growth and economic development expected in southern Ontario beyond the Greenbelt by providing for the appropriate infrastructure connections among urban growth centres and between these centres and Ontario’s borders.

2. The location and construction of infrastructure and expansions, extensions, operations and maintenance of infrastructure in the Protected Countryside, are subject to the following:

a) Planning, design and construction practices shall minimize, wherever possible, the amount of the Greenbelt, and particularly the Natural Heritage System and Water Resource System, traversed and/or occupied by such infrastructure;

b) Planning, design and construction practices shall minimize, wherever possible, the negative impacts and disturbance of the existing landscape, including, but not limited to, impacts caused by light intrusion, noise and road salt;

c) Where practicable, existing capacity and coordination with different infrastructure services is shall be optimized so that the rural and existing character of the Protected Countryside and the overall urban structure for southern Ontario established by Greenbelt and any provincial growth management initiatives are supported and reinforced;

d) New or expanding infrastructure shall avoid key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, or key hydrologic areas unless need has been demonstrated and it has been established that there is no reasonable alternative; and

e) Where infrastructure does cross the Natural Heritage System or intrude into or result in the loss of a key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature, or key hydrologic areas, including related landform features, planning, design and construction practices shall minimize negative impacts and disturbance on the features or their related functions, and where reasonable, maintain or improve connectivity;

f) New or expanding infrastructure shall avoid specialty crop areas and other prime agricultural areas, in that order of priority, unless need has been demonstrated and it has been established that there is no reasonable alternative; and

g) Where infrastructure crosses specialty crop areas and prime agricultural areas, an agricultural impact assessment shall be undertaken.

3. Infrastructure serving the agricultural sector, such as agricultural irrigation systems, may need certain elements to be located within the vegetation protection zone of a key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature. In such instances, these elements of the infrastructure may be established within the feature itself or its associated vegetation protection zone but all reasonable efforts shall be made to keep such infrastructure out of key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features or the vegetation protection zones.

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4. Municipalities should plan for infrastructure and land use in an integrated fashion to ensure that the most value is obtained from existing infrastructure, that new infrastructure investments support growth planning and environmental objectives, and that the most cost-effective and sustainable infrastructure alternatives are identified.

5. Integrated decision-making for infrastructure and land use planning should be co-ordinated among upper, single and lower-tier municipalities to maximize efficiencies and achieve desired planning outcomes aligned with the provincial plans in the GGH.

4.2.2 Sewage and Water Infrastructure Policies

In addition to the above general infrastructure policies and the settlement area policies of section 3.4, the following policies apply to sewer policies of section 4.2.1, for sewage and water infrastructure proposals: in the Greenbelt Plan the following policies shall apply:

1. Proposals for infrastructure within or crossing the Protected Countryside shall demonstrate:

Planning, design and construction of sewage and water infrastructure shall be carried out in accordance with the policies of section 3.2.6 of the Growth Plan.

a) Sewage and water servicing can be provided in a manner that does not negatively impact ecological features and functions, quality and quantity of ground and surface water, including stream baseflow, and is sufficient to accommodate the proposed use(s);

b) Applicable recommendations, standards or targets within watershed plans and water budgets are reflected; and

c) Any sewage and water servicing installation is planned, designed and constructed to minimize surface and groundwater disruption.

2. Where settlements do not currently have Great Lake or Lake Simcoe based water and sewage services, extensions to or expansions of existing Great Lake or Lake Simcoe based services to such settlements is not permitted, unless such servicing is required to address failed individual on-site sewage or water services or to ensure the protection of public health where it has been determined by a medical officer of health (or health authority) that there is a public health concern associated with existing services within the settlement. The capacity of the services provided in these circumstances will be restricted to that required to service the affected existing settlement plus the capacity for potential development within the approved settlement boundary as it existed on the date this Plan came into effect.

3. Where settlements currently have, or have approvals for, Great Lake based water and/or sewer services as of the date this Plan came into effect, such services may be extended and expanded to serve growth within an approved settlement boundary as it existed on the date this Plan came into effect. Where only Great Lake water exists or has been approved, corresponding municipal sewage service shall be required in order for any expansion of the current settlement boundary where such expansion would be permitted by this Plan.

4. Where settlement area expansions are contemplated by a municipality, the environmental assessment in support of expanded sewage and water services must be completed or approved.

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prior to amending the boundaries of the settlement within the municipal official plan. The expansion must not extend into the Natural Heritage System or the specialty crop area.

5.2. The extension of municipal or private communal sewage or water services outside of a settlement area boundary shall only be permitted in the case of health issues or to service existing uses and the expansion thereof adjacent to the settlement area. Notwithstanding the above, where municipal water services exist outside of settlement areas, existing uses within the service area boundary as defined by the environmental assessment may be connected to such a service.

6. New or expanded partial servicing, where site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services, is only permitted in the following circumstances:

a) Where such servicing is necessary to address failed individual on-site sewage or water services serving existing development; or

b) To allow for infilling and intensification within settlement areas served by partial services as of the date this Plan came into effect.

7. In the siting of new municipal and other wells, consideration shall be given to the location of vulnerable areas.

4.2.3 Stormwater Management and Resilient Infrastructure Policies

In addition to the above general infrastructure policies and the settlement area policies of section 3.4, the following policies apply to stormwater management infrastructure proposals: policies of section 4.2.1, for stormwater management infrastructure in the Greenbelt Plan the following policies shall apply:

1. Stormwater management ponds are prohibited in key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features or their vegetation protected zones, except for those portions of the Protected Countryside that define the major river valleys that connect the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. In these areas, naturalized stormwater management ponds are permitted provided they are located a minimum of 30 metres away from the edge of the river/stream and in the vegetation protection zones of any abutting key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features. Planning, design and construction of stormwater management infrastructure shall be carried out in accordance with the policies of section 3.2.7 of the Growth Plan.

2. Municipalities will assess infrastructure vulnerability within Towns/ Villages in accordance with policy 3.2.1.4 of the Growth Plan.

3. Stormwater management ponds are prohibited in key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features or their vegetation protection zones, except for those portions of the Protected Countryside that define the major river valleys that connect the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario. In these areas, naturalized stormwater management ponds are permitted provided they are located a minimum of 30 metres away from the edge of the
river/stream and outside the vegetation protection zones of any key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features.

2. Applications for development and site alteration in the Protected Countryside shall be accompanied by a stormwater management plan which demonstrates that:

a) Planning, design and construction practices will minimize vegetation removal, grading and soil compaction, sediment erosion and impervious surfaces;

b) Where appropriate, an integrated treatment approach shall be used to minimize stormwater management flows and structures through such measures as lot level controls and conveyance techniques such as grass swales; and

c) Applicable recommendations, standards or targets within watershed plans and water budgets are complied with; and

d) Applicable objectives, targets, and any other requirements within a stormwater master plan are met in accordance with the policies of section 3.2.7 of the Growth Plan.

3. The objectives of a stormwater management plan are to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and/or mitigate stormwater volume, contaminant loads and impacts to receiving water courses in order to:

a) Maintain groundwater quality and flow and stream baseflow;

b) Protect water quality;

c) Minimize the disruption of pre-existing (natural) drainage patterns wherever possible;

d) Prevent increases in stream channel erosion;

e) Prevent any increase in flood risk; and

f) Protect aquatic species and their habitat.

4.3 Natural Resources

4.3.1 Renewable Resource Policies

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Renewable resources are those non-agriculture-based natural resources that support uses and activities such as forestry, water taking, fisheries, conservation, and wildlife management.
2. Activities related to the use of renewable resources are permitted in the Protected Countryside, subject to the policies of this Plan and all other applicable legislation, regulations and municipal planning documents, including the PPS. All such uses shall be undertaken in accordance with the applicable recommendations, standards or targets of any relevant watershed plan or water budget and provincial guidance.

3. Within a key natural heritage feature, key hydrologic feature, or key hydrologic area renewable natural resource activities should be carried out in a manner that maintains or, where possible, improves these features and their functions.

4.3.2 Non-Renewable Resource Policies

For lands within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Activities related to the use of non-renewable resources are permitted in the Protected Countryside, subject to all other applicable legislation, regulations and municipal official plan policies and by-laws. The availability of mineral aggregate resources for long-term use shall be determined in accordance with the PPS, except as provided below.

2. Non-renewable resources are those non-agriculture-based natural resources that have a finite supply, including mineral aggregate resources. Aggregates, in particular, provide significant building materials for our communities and infrastructure, and the availability of aggregates close to market is important both for economic and environmental reasons.

3. Notwithstanding the Natural System policies of section 3.2 of this Plan, within the Natural Heritage System, mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits and quarries are subject to the following:

a) No new mineral aggregate operation and no wayside pits and quarries, or any ancillary or accessory use thereto be permitted in the following key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features:

i. Significant wetlands;

ii. Significant Habitat of endangered species and threatened species; and

iii. Significant woodlands unless the woodland is occupied by young plantation or early successional habitat (as defined by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry). In this case, the application must demonstrate that the specific provisions of policy 4.3.2.5 (c), (d) and 4.3.2.6 (b), (c) and 4.3.2.7 (c) have been addressed, and that they will be met by the operation;

b) An application for a new mineral aggregate operation or new wayside pits and quarries may only be permitted in other key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features not identified in section 4.3.2.3 (a) and any vegetation protection zone associated with such other feature where the application demonstrates:

i. How the Water Resource System will be protected or enhanced; and
ii. That the specific provisions in 4.3.2.5 (c), (d) and 4.3.2.6 (e) have been addressed, and that they will be met by the operation; and policies 4.3.2.6 (b), (c) and 4.3.2.7 (c) have been addressed, and that they will be met by the operation;

c) Any application for a new mineral aggregate operation, or the expansion of an existing mineral aggregate operation shall be required to demonstrate:

i. How the connectivity between key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features will be maintained before, during and after the extraction of mineral aggregates;

ii. How the operator could immediately replace any habitat that would be lost from the site with equivalent habitat on another part of the site or on adjacent lands; and

iii. How the Water Resource System will be protected or enhanced; and

d) An application for the expansion of an existing mineral aggregate operation may be permitted in the Natural Heritage System, including key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, and in any associated vegetation protection zone only if the related decision is consistent with the PPS. An application to expand an existing mineral aggregate operation may be permitted in the Natural Heritage System, including in key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and in any associated vegetation protection zones, only if the related decision is consistent with the PPS and satisfies the rehabilitation requirements of this section.

4. The Ministry of Natural Resources will pursue the following under the Aggregate Resources Act, for all mineral aggregate operations, including wayside pits and quarries, within the Protected Countryside: Where an application for a new mineral aggregate operation is proposed in prime agricultural areas, an agricultural impact assessment shall be undertaken. Where possible, proposals shall seek to maintain or improve connectivity of the Agricultural System.

5. New and existing mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits and quarries, within the Protected Countryside shall ensure that:

a) Rehabilitated area will be maximized and disturbed area minimized on an ongoing basis during the life-cycle of an operation;

b) Progressive and final rehabilitation efforts will contribute to the goals of the Greenbelt Plan;

c) The Ministry of Natural Resources will determine the maximum allowable disturbed area of each mineral aggregate operation. Any excess disturbed area above the maximum will be required to be rehabilitated. For existing operations this shall be completed within 10 years of the date of approval of the Greenbelt Plan, and 50% completed within six years. For new operations, including expansions, the total disturbed area shall not exceed an established maximum allowable disturbed area; and any excess disturbed area above the maximum allowable disturbed area as determined by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry will be rehabilitated. For new operations the total disturbed area shall not exceed an established maximum allowable disturbed area; and

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d) An application for a mineral aggregate operation or wayside pits and quarries may be permitted only where the applicant demonstrates that the quantity and quality of groundwater and surface water will be maintained as per Provincial Standards under the Aggregate Resources Act.

5.6. When operators are undertaking rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operation sites in the Protected Countryside, the following provisions apply:

a) The aggregate industry will work with the Ministry of Natural Resources to consider the development and implementation of comprehensive rehabilitation plans in areas of high concentration of mineral aggregate operations; disturbed area of a site shall be rehabilitated to a state of equal or greater ecological value, and for the entire site, long-term ecological integrity shall be maintained or restored, and to the extent possible, improved;

b) The disturbed area of a site will be rehabilitated to a state of equal or greater ecological value, and for the entire site, long-term ecological integrity will be maintained or restored, and to the extent possible, improved;

c) If there are key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features on the site, or if such features existed on the site at the time of an application:

i. The health, diversity and size of these key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features shall be maintained or restored and, to the extent possible, improved to promote a net gain of ecological health; and

ii. Any permitted extraction of mineral aggregates that occurs in a feature shall be completed, and the area shall be rehabilitated, as early as possible in the life of the operation.

d) Aquatic areas remaining after extraction are to be rehabilitated to aquatic enhancement, which shall be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict, and the combined terrestrial and aquatic rehabilitation shall meet the intent of 4.3.2.5 (e)-section 4.3.2.6 (b); and

e) Outside the Natural Heritage System, and except as provided in 4.3.2.5 sections 4.3.2.6 (a), (b), (c) and (d), final rehabilitation will appropriately reflect the long-term land use of the general area, taking into account applicable policies of this Plan and, to the extent permitted under this Plan, existing municipal and provincial policies.

6. Final rehabilitation in the Natural Heritage System will meet these additional provisions: Final rehabilitation for new mineral aggregate operations in the Natural Heritage System shall meet these additional policies:

a) Where there is no underwater extraction, an amount of land equal to that under natural vegetated cover prior to extraction, and no less than 35% of the land subject to each license in the Natural Heritage System, is to be rehabilitated to forest cover, which shall be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict;
b) Where there is underwater extraction, no less than 35% of the non-aquatic lands portion of the land subject to each license in the Natural Heritage System is to be rehabilitated to forest cover, which shall be representative of the natural ecosystem in that particular setting or ecodistrict; and

c) Rehabilitation will be implemented so that the connectivity of the key natural heritage features and the key hydrologic features on the site and on adjacent lands will be maintained or restored, and to the extent possible, improved.

7.8. Operators are encouraged to consider and provide for public access to former aggregate sites upon final rehabilitation.

8.9. Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the contrary, within the specialty crop areas identified on Schedule 2 as the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area, mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits and quarries are subject to the following requirements:

a) No new mineral aggregate operation, wayside pits and quarries or any ancillary or accessory use thereto will be permitted between Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area;

b) A new mineral aggregate operation or wayside permit pits and quarries may only be considered on primary and secondary selected sand and gravel resources on the Fonthill Kame, in the Town of Pelham, as identified by Aggregate Resource Inventory Paper #4, if the applicant demonstrates that:

i. Substantially the same land area will be rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition which allows for the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area; and;

ii. The microclimate on which the site and the surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production will be maintained;

i. The physical characteristics of the proposed site allow for the rehabilitation of the property back to an agricultural condition, which allows for the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area, and allow for the microclimate on which the site and the surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production to be maintained or restored; or

ii. If the physical characteristics of the proposed site will not allow for the rehabilitation of the property back to an agricultural condition, which allows for the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area, and will not allow for the microclimate on which the site and the surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production to be maintained, the applicant shall consider alternative locations; and

iii. Where other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable, and in situations where complete agricultural rehabilitation in the specialty crop area is not possible

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due to the depth of planned extraction or a substantial aggregate deposit below the water table warranting extraction, agricultural rehabilitation in the remaining licensed area will be maximized as a first priority to allow production of specialty crops.

9. Where a municipality has undertaken a comprehensive aggregate resource management study and implemented the results into its official plan prior to establishment of this Plan, such policies shall be deemed to conform to this Plan.

10. Municipalities should ensure that all land use activities related to the post-extraction rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations are consistent with any relevant approved source protection plan and relevant watershed or sub-watershed plan. Where a municipality has undertaken a comprehensive aggregate resource management study and implemented the results into its official plan prior to December 16, 2004, such policies shall be deemed to conform with this Plan.

11. Municipalities should ensure that all land use activities related to the post-extraction rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations are consistent with any relevant approved source protection plan and relevant watershed or sub-watershed plan.

4.4 Cultural Heritage Resources

For lands within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Cultural heritage resources are defined as man-made or natural features, including structures, objects, neighbourhoods, landscapes and archaeological sites, that have been identified as significant by the local municipality or the province for being meaningful components of a community’s cultural heritage or identity. Significant cultural heritage resources including built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources shall be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities.

2. Greenbelt municipalities should work with aboriginal groups and other stakeholders to identify and protect cultural heritage resources and plan toward maintaining, developing and using these resources in a manner that will benefit the local community and be compatible with the Greenbelt’s vision and goals. Planning authorities shall work with stakeholders, and shall consider the interests of First Nations and Métis communities in conserving cultural heritage resources through official plan policies and strategies.

3. Municipalities should build cultural components into their municipal plans and planning processes, including creating inventories of cultural heritage resources and planning for their ongoing protection and appropriate use. Municipal cultural plans should draw from and promote an integrated vision of local cultural development that emphasizes connections across the full range of arts, heritage, cultural industries, libraries, archives and other cultural activity. are encouraged to consider the Greenbelt’s vision and goals in preparing archaeological management plans and municipal cultural plans in their decision-making.
4.5 Existing Uses

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. All existing uses lawfully used for such purpose on the day before the Greenbelt Plan comes into force are permitted.

2. Single dwellings are permitted on existing lots of record, provided they were zoned for such as of the date the Greenbelt Plan came into force, or where an application for an amendment to a zoning by-law is required as a condition of a severance granted prior to December 14, 2003 but which application did not proceed. Municipalities are encouraged to retain existing lots of record for agricultural uses and discourage non-agricultural uses where appropriate.

3. Outside of settlement areas, expansions to existing buildings and structures, accessory structures and uses, and/or conversions of legally existing uses which bring the use more into conformity with this Plan, are permitted subject to a demonstration of the following:
   a) Notwithstanding section 4.2.2.6, new municipal services are not required; and
   b) The use does not expand into key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, unless there is no other alternative in which case any expansion shall be limited in scope and kept within close geographical proximity to the existing structure.

4. Expansions to existing agricultural buildings and structures, residential dwellings, and accessory uses to both, may be considered within key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features if it is demonstrated that alterations to existing buildings and structures for agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, on-farm diversified uses and residential dwellings, may be considered within key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and their associated vegetation protection zones, if it is demonstrated that:
   a) There is no alternative and the expansion, alteration or establishment is directed away from the feature to the maximum extent possible; and, the expansion or alteration in the feature is minimized and in the vegetation protection zone, is directed away from the feature to the maximum extent possible; and
   b) The impact of the expansion or alteration on the feature and its functions is minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent possible.

5. Expansion, maintenance and/or replacement of existing infrastructure is permitted, subject to the infrastructure policies of section 4.2.

4.6 Lot Creation

For lands falling within the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. Lot creation is permitted in the Protected Countryside for the range of uses permitted by the policies of this Plan, discouraged and may only be permitted for:
2. Lot creation is also permitted in the following circumstances:

a) outside the specialty crop area and prime agricultural area, the range of uses permitted by the policies of this Plan;

b) within the specialty crop area and prime agricultural area,
   i. agricultural uses where the severed and retained lots are intended for agricultural uses and provided the minimum lot size is 16 hectares (or 40 acres) within specialty crop areas and 40 hectares (or 100 acres) within prime agricultural areas; and
   ii. agriculture-related uses, provided that any new lot shall be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services;
   ac) acquiring land for infrastructure purposes, subject to the infrastructure policies of section 4.2;
   b. d) facilitating conveyances to public bodies or non-profit entities for natural heritage conservation, provided it does not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling in specialty crop or prime agricultural areas; and
   e) Minor lot adjustments or boundary additions, provided they do not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling in specialty crop or prime agricultural areas and there is no increased fragmentation of a key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature;

3. More specifically, within the specialty crop area and prime agricultural area, lot creation is permitted for:

a) Agricultural uses where the severed and retained lots are intended for agricultural uses and provided the minimum lot size is 40 acres within specialty crop area and 100 acres within prime agricultural areas;

b) Existing and new agriculture-related uses, provided that any new lot

f) the severance of a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation, which residence was an existing use as of the date this Plan came into force, provided that:
   i. the severance will be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the use, including a sewage and water system appropriate for such a use; and appropriate sewage and water services; and
   c) The severance of a residence surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation, which residence was an existing use as of the date this Plan came into force, provided that the planning authority ensures that a residential dwelling is not permitted in
perpetuity on the retained lot of farmland created by this severance. Approaches to ensuring no new residential dwellings on the retained lot of farmland may be recommended by the Province, or municipal approaches that achieve the same objective should be considered; or if the planning authority ensures that a residential dwelling is not permitted in perpetuity on the retained lot of farmland created by this severance. Approaches to ensuring no new residential dwellings on the retained lot of farmland may be recommended by the Province, or municipal approaches that achieve the same objective should be considered.

d) The surplus dwelling policy in 4.6.3 (c) also applies to rural areas as defined by municipal official plans. The severance should be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the dwelling, including existing and reserve areas for individual sewage and water services.
Implementation

5.1 Status and Effect

The Greenbelt Act, 2005, provides for the establishment of the Greenbelt Plan to be created through an Order in Council, which was filed as OIC 208/2005. The Greenbelt Act, 2005, also requires that all decisions on planning applications shall conform to the policies in the Greenbelt Plan approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Greenbelt Act, 2005, also requires that all decisions on planning applications shall conform with the policies in the Greenbelt Plan.

The policies of this Plan do not affect any Aboriginal or treaty right recognized or affirmed by The Constitution Act, 1982. The Ontario government shall consult with Aboriginal peoples about decisions that may affect the use of Crown land and resources within the area of the Greenbelt Plan that are subject to Aboriginal treaty rights.

This Plan must be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The Ontario government shall consult with First Nations and Métis communities on decisions concerning the use of Crown land and resources that may affect Aboriginal and treaty rights within the area of the Greenbelt Plan.

The Greenbelt Plan, including the Introduction, Descriptions, Definitions and Schedules, together with the text and commentary in sections 2.0 and 5.0, to 6.0, shall be read in its entirety and applied in each situation.

5.2 Transition

The Greenbelt Act, 2005, requires that decisions with respect to applications made under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, the Planning Act or the Condominium Act, 1998, which were commenced on or after December 16, 2004 (the date this Plan came into force) and relate to the areas in this Plan designated as Protected Countryside, are required to conform to all applicable policies and provisions of this Plan.

The Greenbelt Act, 2005, authorizes the Minister to pass regulations for various prescribed matters to address applications which were commenced prior to December 16, 2004 but for which no decision has been made and for other transitional matters, including the application of prescribed policies for applications made under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, the Planning Act or the Condominium Act, 1998, which were commenced before December 16, 2004. In addition to such regulations, the settlement area policies of section 3.4 of this Plan, as well as those within this section 5.0, provide further direction on how this Plan applies to existing uses, applications, matters in process and previous site-specific approvals.

Municipalities should consider the policies of the Greenbelt Plan, as appropriate, when processing applications that are not required to conform to this Plan.

5.2.1 Decisions on Applications Related to Previous Site Specific Approvals

This is an unofficial comparison prepared by Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. The official versions of the applicable plans should be consulted.
Where an official plan was amended prior to December 16, 2004 to specifically designate land use(s), this approval may continue to be recognized through the conformity exercise addressed in section 5.3 and any further applications required under the Planning Act or Condominium Act, 1998, to implement the official plan approval are not required to conform with this Plan.

Where a zoning by-law was amended prior to December 16, 2004 to specifically permit land use(s), this approval may continue to be recognized through the conformity exercise described in section 5.3 and any further applications required under the Planning Act or Condominium Act, 1998, to implement the use permitted by the zoning by-law are not required to conform with this Plan.

Applications to further amend the site-specific official plan or zoning by-law permissions referred to above, for uses similar to or more in conformity with the provision of this Plan are also permitted. All such applications should, where possible, seek to achieve or improve conformity with this Plan.

### 5.3 Municipal Implementation of Protected Countryside Policies

The Greenbelt Act, 2005, provides two main avenues for implementation of the Greenbelt Plan. First, section 7 of the Greenbelt Act, 2005, requires municipal and other decisions under the Planning Act or the Condominium Act, 1998, to conform **to** with the policies in the Greenbelt Plan. Second, section 9 of the Greenbelt Act, 2005, requires municipalities to amend their official plan(s) to conform **to** with the Greenbelt Plan.

**Municipal** Official plans shall contain policies that reflect the requirements of this Plan together with a map(s) showing the boundaries of the Greenbelt Area, the Protected Countryside and the Natural Heritage System. Municipalities **should** provide a map showing known key natural heritage and key hydrologic features and any associated minimum vegetation protection zones identified in this Plan. The identification of the Natural Heritage System boundary will form the basis for applying the policies of section 3.2.

Municipalities should also include a map of wellhead protection areas and vulnerable areas together with associated policies for these areas within their official plans, as appropriate and in accordance with any provincial directives on source water protection.

**Building on watershed planning,** key hydrologic areas shall be identified, and the appropriate designations and policies will be applied in official plans to provide for their long-term protection.

The **province, in collaboration with the municipalities,** shall undertake an exercise to provide consistent identification, mapping and protection of the Agricultural System across the GGH. **Within the Protected Countryside,** upper-tier and single-tier municipalities shall refine official plan mapping to bring prime agricultural areas, specialty crop areas, and rural lands into conformity with provincial mapping through a municipal comprehensive review under the Growth Plan.

These refinements shall only be carried out where there are inconsistencies at municipal boundaries or discrepancies between provincial and municipal mapping that are significant. Aside
from addressing these issues, municipalities shall continue to retain existing designations for prime agricultural areas within the Protected Countryside.

Policies to support the Agricultural Support Network do not require separate land use designations in official plans. Municipalities are expected to provide policies to maintain and enhance the Agricultural Support Network and to identify the physical location of elements in the Agricultural Support Network in collaboration with the province. This work will assist with the long-term viability of the agri-food sector by planning for agriculture and the rural economy.

Despite the policies in this Greenbelt Plan, there is nothing in this Plan that limits the ability of decision makers on planning applications to adopt policies that are more stringent than the requirements of the Plan, unless doing so would conflict with any of the policies or objectives of the Plan. With the exception of the lot creation policies of section 4.6, official plans and zoning by-laws shall not, however, contain provisions that are more restrictive than the policies of sections 3.1 and 4.3.2 as they apply to agricultural uses and mineral aggregate resources respectively.

Municipalities may amend the designation for prime agricultural areas and/or rural areas at the time they bring their official plans into conformity with this Plan, only in the following circumstances:

1. If the upper-tier or single-tier municipality has not amended the designation for its prime agriculture/rural lands to reflect the PPS;

2. If an upper-tier or single-tier has completed a comprehensive official plan review; or

3. In order for a lower-tier official plan to conform to an upper-tier plan which has been amended in either of the above circumstances.

Such amendments are intended to be minor in nature, solely with a view to rationalizing prime agri-cultural area and rural area boundaries.

It is intended that the numerical figures identified in this Plan be considered to be approximate, and that for the purposes of preparing area municipal official plans, zoning by-laws, subdivisions approvals, site plan approvals, severances or building permits, minor deviations may be permitted, without amendment to this Plan, provided that such deviations do not alter the intent of this Plan.

5.4 Relationship of the Plan to the Land Use Planning System

The Greenbelt is governed by the planning policy and regulation, of various levels of government and agencies, which work collectively to manage and guide land use within the Greenbelt.

Provincially, the policies of the NEP, the ORMCP, the Parkway Belt West Plan, and the Protected Countryside policies in this Greenbelt Plan form the fundamental planning framework within which all other planning policies and regulations are contained.

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This Greenbelt Plan, together with the Growth Plan, builds upon the existing policy framework established in the PPS and is to be implemented through municipal official plan policies and maps.

The Greenbelt Plan relies on definitions contained in the PPS where those terms are used in this Plan. All terms defined in the definitions section of this Plan are shown in italics, and for ease of use terms defined in the PPS are also included. The Greenbelt Plan also relies on municipal official plan mapping to delineate prime agricultural areas, rural areas, and the detailed boundaries of settlement areas.

In addition to the PPS and municipal official plans and related planning mechanisms (e.g. zoning, subdivision of land), conservation authorities, other agencies and the Federal Government have regulations or standards that apply in the Greenbelt. Where an application, matter or proceeding related to these regulations or standards requires consideration of applicable policy, such applications, matters or proceedings shall conform to this Greenbelt Plan together with other provincial plans applying within the Greenbelt. Where there are regulations or standards that are more restrictive than those contained in these plans, the more restrictive provision prevails.

Based on the above, the Greenbelt Plan must be read in conjunction with all other applicable land use planning policy, regulations and/or standards, as amended from time to time. Such documents include but are not limited to: the PPS; Minister’s zoning orders under the Planning Act; other provincial land use plans; upper, lower and single-tier municipal official plans; zoning by-laws; regulations such as those under the Federal Fisheries Act and regulations (e.g. those under the Endangered Species Act, 2007) and the Conservation Authorities Act, as well as other pertinent legislation (e.g. the federal Fisheries Act) and regulations. Where more specific provincial plans or regulations exist or are promulgated within the Greenbelt, including plans under the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, the more specific plan or regulation prevails.

The Greenbelt Plan itself must also be read in its entirety as existing or proposed land uses may be subject to policies within different sections of the Plan. Where multiple policies apply, these are to be applied in either a cumulative or integrated manner, such that all of the policies that relate to a matter are addressed, with the more specific or restrictive policy applying where there are conflicts. Policies are not meant to be read in isolation or to the exclusion of the rest of the policies, both general and specific. As well, the schedules within the Greenbelt Plan need to be read to determine the applicable policies within the Plan relating to the various designations, information and boundaries shown on these schedules.

5.5 Boundary of the Greenbelt Plan
The Boundary of the Greenbelt Plan as shown on Schedules 1 and 4 of the Greenbelt Plan is prescribed by Ontario Regulation 59/05, as provided by the Greenbelt Act, 2005.

The boundary of the Greenbelt Plan as described in Ontario Regulation 59/05 provides the information for establishing the boundary on the ground by a Licensed Ontario Land Surveyor (under instructions from the Surveyor General for the Province of Ontario).

5.5.2 Boundaries Internal to the Greenbelt Plan

Boundaries of the Natural Heritage System may be refined at the time of municipal conformity in accordance with the Natural Heritage System policies of section 3.2.2.6.

Boundaries of the prime agricultural areas and rural areas are as established in municipal official plans, subject to section 5.3.

Boundaries of Towns/Villages are shown on the Schedules to this Plan but for detailed delineation and the boundaries of hamlets, which are only shown as symbols, reference must be made to municipal official plans.

Boundaries of key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features and any minimum vegetation protection zones identified in this Plan are to be shown in municipal official plans. The detailed delineation of these features and zones can be undertaken by municipalities and/or conservation authorities when dealing with applications for development under the Planning Act or Condominium Act, 1998 or via a municipal zoning by-law update.

5.5.3 Schedules and Appendices

The Greenbelt Plan contains four schedules, identifying:

1. The Greenbelt Plan area, which delineates the NEP Area, the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, the Urban River Valley Area and Protected Countryside Area (including Towns/Villages and Hamlets);
2. The boundary of the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area;
3. The boundary of the Holland Marsh; and
4. The Natural Heritage System.

In addition, the Plan contains two maps in an Appendix, for reference.

5.6 Plan Review

Through the requirement for a 10-year review, the province is ensuring that the Greenbelt Plan will not remain static and will not become irrelevant over time.

The 10-year review of the Greenbelt Plan will be coordinated with the reviews of the NEP and the ORMCP, which includes any adjustments necessary to align the timing of these reviews.

This is an unofficial comparison prepared by Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. The official versions of the applicable plans should be consulted.
The purpose of the review is to assess the effectiveness of the policies contained in the Plan (using information gathered through the monitoring program, and conducted through a public process), and make amendments, if appropriate, to update or include new information or improve the effectiveness and relevance of the policies.

The review can only consider modifications to the urban boundaries within the Greenbelt if the upper or single-tier municipality provides a comprehensive justification or growth management study.

5.7 Amendments to Greenbelt Plan and other Provincial Plans

Under the Greenbelt Act, 2005, Amendments to those areas of the Plan designated as Protected Countryside and Urban River Valley can only be proposed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Amendments are subject to the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Amendments to the Plan shall not have the effect of reducing the total land area of the Greenbelt Plan.

Amendments could be considered outside the 10-year review in the following circumstances:

1. There are major unforeseen circumstances, or major new Provincial policy, legislation or regulation that create the need for an amendment;

2. The overall effectiveness and integrity of the Plan would be threatened if the amendment were deferred to the next 10-year review; or

3. The effectiveness and/or relevance of the Plan’s policies would be improved through an amendment; or

4. For the purpose of extending Greenbelt Plan policy coverage to lands which may be added to the Greenbelt, including areas added as Protected Countryside or Urban River Valley.

Any provision in this Plan regarding the consideration of future amendments does not limit the ability of the Minister to propose any other amendments to the Plan.

Amendments to the NEP remain governed by, and are to be dealt in accordance with, the provisions of the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act.

Amendments to the ORMCP remain governed by, and are to be dealt in accordance with, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001.

Amendments to the Parkway Belt West Plan remain governed by, and are to be dealt in accordance with, the Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994, but are also subject to the policies of sections 2.0, 3.2 and 3.3 of this Plan.
5.7.1 Growing the Greenbelt

5.7.1.1 General

The province shall continue to explore opportunities to grow the Greenbelt to uphold and strengthen the province’s growth management strategy and provide additional protection to sensitive areas from development pressures.

5.7.1.2 Protected Countryside

The Province shall lead a process to identify potential areas to be added to the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt, working with municipalities, conservation authorities and other key stakeholders. This identification shall build upon the systems approach of the Greenbelt Plan and consider the connections with the Agricultural, Natural Heritage and Water Resource Systems of the Plan. A focus shall be on areas of ecological and hydrological significance where urbanization should not occur.

Where determined these identified areas would benefit from Greenbelt protection, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing may initiate amendments to the Greenbelt boundary regulation and Greenbelt Plan to grow the Greenbelt for these lands.

The province shall also consider the addition of other publicly owned lands that support the objectives of the Greenbelt.

5.7.1.3 Urban River Valleys

The river valley corridors designated as Urban River Valley provide a foundation for additional public lands to be added to these areas in the Greenbelt in the future by amendment.

Urban River Valley areas have been added to the Greenbelt since the approval of the Greenbelt Plan in 2005 to bring many of the major watercourses between the Greenbelt and Lake Ontario and several coastal wetlands into the Greenbelt Plan, reinforcing the importance of these connections and features to the health of the Greenbelt.

5.7.1.4 Municipal Requests

The Province shall also consider requests from municipalities to grow the Greenbelt with the Protected Countryside and/or Urban River Valley designations. In considering municipal requests, the province shall be guided by criteria which were developed for municipalities through a public consultation process and released in 2008. These criteria include:

• Providing supportive council resolutions;

• Demonstrating how the proposed lands connect physically or functionally to the Greenbelt; and
• Demonstrating that a proposal would complement the Growth Plan and support other related provincial initiatives such as the Great Lakes Strategy and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

The Province shall consider requests from municipalities to add privately owned lands to areas designated as Urban River Valley where a municipality has endorsed by resolution the request of a property owner for their lands to be added to the Greenbelt and be subject to the policies of the Urban River Valley designation for publicly owned lands.

The Minister may initiate amendments to the Greenbelt boundary regulation and Greenbelt Plan to grow the Greenbelt based on a review of municipal submissions and the criteria.

5.8 Monitoring/Performance Measures

The objective of the monitoring framework is to evaluate

1. The Province, in consultation with municipalities, other public bodies and stakeholders shall develop a set of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the policies of the Plan in achieving its goals, as identified in section 1.2.

Performance measures are to be established through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s Municipal Performance Measurement Program.

In this regard, the Ontario Government will work with other ministries, municipalities and stakeholders to:

1. Identify appropriate performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the Plan; in this Plan, The Province shall monitor the implementation of this Plan, including reviewing performance indicators concurrent with any review of this Plan.

2. Identify roles and responsibilities among partners in the collection and analysis of the indicators; and Municipalities shall monitor and report on the implementation of this Plan’s policies within their municipality, in accordance with any data standards and any other guidelines that may be issued by the Province.

3. Provide for periodic collation, publication and discussion of the results. The Province may require municipalities to provide data and information to the Province to demonstrate progress made towards the implementation of this Plan.

5.9 Greenbelt Council

The Province will establish a Greenbelt Council and provide it with a varied mandate, which could evolve over time. Initially, it is anticipated that the Greenbelt Council will consider how the implementation of the plan is proceeding, including the identification of issues arising from implementation. Greenbelt Act, 2005 requires that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing appoint a Greenbelt Council to provide the Minister with advice on the Greenbelt. The Greenbelt Council is comprised of one or more members who are appointed by the Minister. Council
provides advice on matters relating to the implementation of the Greenbelt Act, 2005 and Greenbelt Plan, any proposed amendments to the Greenbelt Plan, and the ten-year review of the Greenbelt Plan.

The Greenbelt Council will also provide input and advice on the identification and establishment of performance measures, which will be used to track the success of the Greenbelt Plan in achieving its goals. Such advice should take advantage of the local knowledge of the Council’s members and other stakeholders, with a view to identifying the most effective and least costly performance measures that build on the ability of local communities and associations to provide meaningful input and information.

Over the short to mid term, the Council could play a meaningful role in helping to coordinate efforts of municipalities, conservation authorities, associations and other stakeholders in matters which cross municipal boundaries such as trail systems, water resources, watershed plans and programs and agricultural activities. The Greenbelt Council could also provide advice on ways of promoting the Greenbelt and on any amendments proposed to the Plan.

Over the long-term and particularly as the time for the 10-year review of the Greenbelt Plan approaches, it is expected that the Greenbelt Council will play an important role in helping to shape and/or focus the nature and/or content of the review. This could be achieved through Council conducting its own public process to obtain stakeholder views by consulting with municipalities and other stakeholder groups, which would then form the basis for the government to frame the formal review required by the proposed Greenbelt Act, 2005.
6 Urban River Valley Policies

Key river valleys in urban areas adjacent to the Greenbelt provide opportunities for additional connections to help expand and integrate the Greenbelt and its systems into the broader Southern Ontario landscape. The Urban River Valley designation provides direction to those areas where the Greenbelt occupies river valleys in an urban context. These urban river valleys may be the setting for a network of uses and facilities including recreational, cultural and tourist amenities and infrastructure, which are needed to support urban areas.

6.1 Description

The Urban River Valley designation as shown on Schedule 1 applies to lands within the main corridors of river valleys connecting the rest of the Greenbelt to the Great Lakes and inland lakes. The lands in this designation comprise river valleys and associated lands and are generally characterized by being:

- Lands containing natural and hydrologic features, including coastal wetlands; and/or
- Lands designated in official plans for uses such as parks, open space, recreation, conservation and environmental protection.

6.2 Policies

1. Only publicly owned lands are subject to the policies of the Urban River Valley designation. Any privately owned lands within the boundary of the Urban River Valley area are not subject to the policies of this designation. For the purposes of this section, publicly owned lands means lands in the ownership of the province, a municipality, or a local board, including a conservation authority.

2. The lands are governed by the applicable official plan policies provided they have regard to the objectives of the Greenbelt Plan.

3. All existing, expanded or new infrastructure which is subject to and approved under the Environmental Assessment Act, or which receives a similar approval, is permitted provided it supports the needs of adjacent settlement areas or serves the significant growth and economic development expected in southern Ontario and supports the goals and objectives of the Greenbelt Plan.

4. The Protected Countryside policies do not apply except for:

a) The policies of section 3.2.6; and

b) The policies of section 3.3.
Definitions

**Active transportation**

**Means** human powered travel, including but not limited to, walking, cycling, inline skating and travel with the use of mobility aids, including motorized wheelchairs and other power-assisted devices moving at a comparable speed (PPS, 2014).

**Agricultural condition**

**Means**

a) in regard to specialty crop areas, a condition in which substantially the same areas and same average soil capability for agriculture are restored, the same range and productivity of specialty crops common in the area can be achieved, and, where applicable, the microclimate on which the site and surrounding area may be dependent for specialty crop production shall be maintained or restored; and

b) in regard to prime agricultural land outside of specialty crop areas, a condition in which substantially the same areas and same average soil capability for agriculture are restored (PPS, 2014).

**Agricultural impact assessment**

**Means** a study that evaluates the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on agricultural operations and the Agricultural System and recommends ways to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts.

**Agricultural support network**

**Means** within the Agricultural System, a network that includes elements important to the viability of the agri-food sector such as: regional agricultural infrastructure and transportation networks, on-farm buildings and infrastructure, agricultural services, farm markets, distributors and first-level processing, and vibrant, agriculture-supportive communities.

**Agricultural system**

**Means** a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components: 1) an agricultural land base comprised of prime agricultural areas including specialty crop areas and rural lands that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture;

2) an Agricultural Support Network, which includes infrastructure, services and agri-food assets important to the viability of the sector.
Agricultural uses

Means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Agricultural-related uses

Means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are small scale and directly related to the farm operation and are required in close proximity to the farm operation (PPS, 2005), directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity (PPS, 2014).

Agri-tourism uses

Means those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation (PPS, 2014).

Alvars

Means naturally open areas of thin or no soil over essentially flat limestone, dolostone or marble rock, supporting a sparse vegetation cover of mostly shrubs and herbs.

Archaeological resources

Means artifacts, archaeological sites, marine archaeological sites, as defined under the Ontario Heritage Act. The identification and evaluation of such resources are based upon archaeological fieldwork undertaken in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act (PPS, 2014).

Built heritage resource

Means a building, structure, monument, installation or any manufactured remnant that contributes to a property’s cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Aboriginal community. Built heritage resources are generally located on property that has been designated under Parts IV or V Ontario Heritage Act, or included on local, provincial and/or federal registers (PPS, 2014).

Complete communities

Means places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores and
services, a full range of housing and public service facilities. Complete communities may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.

Connectivity

Means the degree to which key natural heritage or key hydrologic features are connected to one another by links such as plant and animal movement corridors, hydrologic and nutrient cycling, genetic transfer, and energy flow through food webs.

Conserve

Means identifying, protecting, managing and using built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained under the Ontario Heritage Act. This may be achieved by the implementation of recommendations set out in a conservation plan, archaeological assessment, and/or heritage impact assessment. Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches can be included in these plans and assessments.

Cultural heritage landscape

Means a defined geographical area that may have been modified by human activity and is identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Aboriginal community. The area may involve features such as structures, spaces, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their inter-relationship, meaning or association. Examples may include, but are not limited to, heritage conservation districts designated under the Ontario Heritage Act; villages, parks, gardens, battlefields, main streets and neighbourhoods, cemeteries, trailways, viewsheds, natural areas and industrial complexes of heritage significance; and areas recognized by federal or international designation authorities (e.g. a National Historic Site or District designation, or a UNESCO World Heritage Site) (PPS, 2014).

Cultural heritage resources

Built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources.

Development

Means the creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures, any of which require approval under the Planning Act, or that are subject to the Environmental Assessment Act, but does not include: requiring approval under the Planning Act, but does not include:

a) The construction of facilities for transportation, infrastructure and utilities used by a public body; activities that create or maintain infrastructure authorized under an environmental assessment process; or

b) Activities or works under the Drainage Act; or works subject to the Drainage Act.
e) The carrying out of agricultural practices on land that was being used for agricultural uses on the date the Plan came into effect (PPS, 2005).

Ecological function

Means the natural processes, products or services that living and non-living environments provide or perform within or between species, ecosystems and landscapes, including hydrologic functions and biological, physical, chemical and socio-economic interactions (PPS, 2005).

**Ecological integrity**

*Which includes hydrological integrity, means the condition of ecosystems in which:*

a) the structure, composition and function of the ecosystems are unimpaired by the stresses from human activity.

b) natural ecological processes are intact and self-sustaining, and

c) the ecosystems evolve naturally.

Ecological value

*Means* the value of vegetation in maintaining the health of the key natural heritage or key hydrologic feature and the related ecological features and ecological functions, as measured by factors such as the diversity of species, the diversity of habitats, and the suitability and amount of habitats that are available for rare, threatened and endangered species.

Endangered species

Means a species that is listed or categorized as an “Endangered Species” on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources’ official species at risk list, as updated and amended from time to time (PPS, 2005), classified as an endangered species in Ontario Regulation 230/08 (Species at Risk in Ontario List) made under the Endangered Species Act, 2007, as it may be amended from time to time.

Existing uses

*Uses legally established prior to the date that the Greenbelt Plan came into force. Existing agricultural accessory buildings and structures including farm dwellings can expand on the same lot subject to the provisions of the municipal zoning by-law.*

*Means uses legally established prior to the date that the Greenbelt Plan came into force on December 16, 2004.*

Farm consolidation

Means the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation.
Fish habitat

As defined in the Fisheries Act, e-F-14, means spawning grounds and any other areas, including nursery, rearing, food supply, and migration areas on which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes (PPS, 2005 2014).

Greater Golden Horseshoe

Means the geographic area identified as the Greater Golden Horseshoe growth plan area in Ontario Regulation 416/05 under the Places to Grow Act, 2005.

Green infrastructure

Means natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Green infrastructure can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, stormwater management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces and green roofs (PPS, 2014).

Habitat of endangered species and threatened species

a) With respect to a species listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario List as an endangered or threatened species for which a regulation made under clause 55(1)(a) of the Endangered Species Act, 2007 is in force, the area prescribed by that regulation as the habitat of the species; or

b) With respect to any other species listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario List as an endangered or threatened species, an area on which the species depends, directly or indirectly, to carry on its life processes such as reproduction, rearing, hibernation, migration or feeding; and places in the areas described in clauses (a) and (b), whichever is applicable, that are used by members of the species as dens, nests, hibernacula or other residences.

Hazardous land

Means property or lands that could be unsafe for development due to naturally occurring processes. Along the shorelines of the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River System, this means the land, including that covered by water, between the international boundary, where applicable, and the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard, erosion hazard or dynamic beach hazard limits. Along the shorelines of large inland lakes, this means the land, including that covered by water, between a defined offshore distance or depth and the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard, erosion hazard or dynamic beach hazard limits. Along river, stream and small inland lake systems, this means the land, including that covered by water, to the furthest landward limit of the flooding hazard or erosion hazard limits (PPS, 2005 2014).

Highly vulnerable aquifers

Means aquifers, including lands above the aquifers, on which external sources have or are likely to have a significant adverse effect.

This is an unofficial comparison prepared by Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. The official versions of the applicable plans should be consulted.
Hydrologic function

Means the functions of the hydrological cycle that include the occurrence, circulation, distribution and chemical and physical properties of water on the surface of the land, in the soil and underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere, and water’s interaction with the environment including its relation to living things (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Infrastructure

Means physical structures (facilities or corridors) that form the foundation for development or resource use. Infrastructure includes: sewage and water systems, sewage treatment systems, waste management systems, electric power generation and transmission including renewable energy systems, communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities (and corridors) that form the foundation for development. Infrastructure includes: sewage and water systems, septage treatment systems, stormwater management systems, waste management systems, electricity generation facilities, electricity transmission and distribution systems, communications/telecommunications, transit and transportation corridors and facilities, oil and gas pipelines and associated facilities (PPS, 2014).

Intensification

Means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

a) redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;

b) the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;

c) infill development; and

d) the expansion or conversion of existing buildings (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Intermittent streams

Means stream-related watercourses that contain water or are dry at times of the year that are more or less predictable, generally flowing during wet seasons of the year but not the entire year, and where the water table is above the stream bottom during parts of the year.

Key hydrologic areas

Means a key hydrologic area as described in section 3.2.4.

Key hydrologic features

Means a key hydrologic feature as described in section 3.2.4, 3.2.5.

Key natural heritage features

Means a key natural heritage feature as described in section 3.2.4, 3.2.5.
Lake

Means any inland body of standing water, usually fresh water, larger than a pool or pond or a body of water filling a depression in the earth’s surface.

Landform features

Means distinctive physical attributes of land such as slope, shape, elevation and relief.

Life science areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSIs)

Means an area(s) that has been:

a) Identified as having life science values related to protection, scientific study or education; and

b) Further identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources using evaluation procedures established by that Ministry, as amended from time to time, and Forestry using evaluation procedures established by that Ministry, as amended from time to time.

Major recreational uses

Major recreational uses are recreational uses that require large-scale modification of terrain, vegetation or both and usually also require large-scale buildings or structures, including but not limited to the following: golf courses; serviced playing fields; serviced campgrounds; and ski hills.

Low impact development

Means an approach to stormwater management that seeks to manage rain and other precipitation as close as possible to where it falls in order to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution. It comprises a set of site design strategies and distributed, small scale structural practices to mimic the natural hydrology to the greatest extent possible through infiltration, evapotranspiration, harvesting, filtration and detention of stormwater. Low impact development can include: bio-swales, permeable pavement, rain gardens, green roofs and exfiltration systems. Low impact development often employs vegetation and soil in its design, however, that does not always have to be the case.

Major development

Means development consisting of:

a) the creation of four or more lots;

b) the construction of a building or buildings with a ground floor area of 500 m² or more; or

c) the establishment of a major recreational use.

This is an unofficial comparison prepared by Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. The official versions of the applicable plans should be consulted.
Means a recreational use that requires large-scale modification of terrain, vegetation or both and usually also require large-scale buildings or structures, including but not limited to the following: golf courses; serviced playing fields; serviced campgrounds; and ski hills.

Mineral aggregate operation

Means:

a) An operation, other than wayside pits and quarries, conducted under a licence or permit under the Aggregate Resources Act, or successors thereto; and lands under license or permit, other than for wayside pits and quarries, issued in accordance with the Aggregate Resources Act;

b) Associated facilities used in extraction, transport, beneficiation, processing or recycling of mineral aggregate resources and derived products such as asphalt and concrete, or the production of secondary related products, for lands not designated under the Aggregate Resources Act, established pits and quarries that are not in contravention of municipal zoning by-laws and including adjacent land under agreement with or owned by the operator, to permit continuation of the operation; and

c) Associated facilities used in extraction, transport, beneficiation, processing or recycling of mineral aggregate resources and derived products such as asphalt and concrete, or the production of secondary related products (PPS, 2014).

Minimum distance separation formulae

Means formulae developed by the Province to separate uses so as to reduce incompatibility concerns about odour from livestock facilities (PPS, 2005) and guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time to separate uses so as to reduce incompatibility concerns about odour from livestock facilities (PPS, 2014).

Municipal sewage services

Means a sewage works within the meaning of section 1 of the Ontario Water Resources Act that is owned or operated by a municipality (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Municipal water services

Means a municipal drinking-water system within the meaning of section 2 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Natural self-sustaining vegetation

Means vegetation dominated by native plant species that can grow and persist without direct human management, protection, or tending.
Negative impact(s)

Means:

a) In regard to water, degradation to the quality or quantity of surface or ground water, key hydrologic features or vulnerable areas, and their related hydrologic functions, due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities;

b) In regard to fish habitat, the harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat, except where, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities, it has been authorized under the Fisheries Act, using the guiding principle of no net loss of productive capacity; and any permanent alteration to, or destruction of fish habitat, except where, in conjunction with the appropriate authorities, it has been authorized under the Fisheries Act; and

c) In regard to other natural heritage features and areas, degradation that threatens the health and integrity of the natural features or ecological functions for which an area is identified due to single, multiple or successive development or site alteration activities (PPS, 2005).

Net-zero communities

Means communities that meet their energy demand through low-carbon or carbon-free forms of energy and off-set, preferably locally, any releases of greenhouse gas emissions that cannot be eliminated. Net-zero communities include a higher density built form, and denser and mixed-use development patterns that ensure energy efficiency, reduced distances travelled, and improved integration with transit, energy, water and waste systems.

New multiple units or multiple lots for residential dwellings. Lots or units for residential development

Means the creation of more than three units or lots through either plan of subdivision, consent or plan of condominium.

Normal farm practices

Means a practice, as defined in the Farming and Food Production Protection Act, 1998, that is conducted in a manner consistent with proper and acceptable customs and standards as established and followed by similar agricultural operations under similar circumstances; or makes use of innovative technology in a manner consistent with proper advanced farm management practices. Normal farm practices shall be consistent with the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 and regulations made under that Act (PPS, 2005).

Normal farm practices shall be consistent with the Nutrient Management Act, 2002 and regulations made under that Act (PPS, 2014).
On-farm diversified uses

Means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products (PPS, 2014).

Partial services

Means:

a) __________ Municipal sewage services or private communal sewage services and individual on-site water services; or

b) __________ Municipal water services or private communal water services and individual on-site sewage services (PPS, 2014).

Permanent stream

Means a stream that continually flows in an average year.

Prime agricultural areas

Means areas where prime agricultural lands (specialty crop lands and/or Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2, and 3 soils) predominate. This includes: areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4-7 soils; and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas may be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food using evaluation procedures established by the Province as amended from time to time; or may also be identified through an alternative agricultural land evaluation system approved by the Province (PPS, 2005). An area where prime agricultural lands predominate. This includes areas of prime agricultural lands and associated Canada Land Inventory Class 4 through 7 lands, and additional areas where there is a local concentration of farms which exhibit characteristics of ongoing agriculture. Prime agricultural areas are to be identified by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs using guidelines developed by the Province as amended from time to time.

Prime agricultural lands

Means:

a) __________ specialty crop areas, and/or

b) __________ Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2 or 3 lands, as amended from time to time, in this order of priority for protection (PPS, 2014).

Private communal sewage services

Means a sewage works within the meaning of section 1 of the Ontario Water Resources Act that serves six or more lots or private residences and is not owned by a municipality (PPS, 2005).
Private communal water services

Means a non-municipal drinking-water system within the meaning of section 2 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 that serves six or more lots or private residences (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Renewable energy systems

Public service facilities

Means the production of electrical power from an energy source that is renewed by natural processes including, but not limited to, wind, water, a biomass resource or product, or solar and geothermal energy (PPS, 2005). Public service facilities do not include infrastructure (PPS, 2014).

Residence surplus to a farm operation

Means an existing farm residence that is rendered surplus as a result of farm consolidation (the acquisition of additional farm parcels to be operated as one farm operation) (PPS, 2005).

Rural areas

Means lands in the rural area which are located outside settlement areas and which are outside prime agricultural areas (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Sand barrens

Means land (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes or no longer exhibits sand barrens characteristics) that:

a) Has sparse or patchy vegetation that is dominated by plants that are:
   i. Adapted to severe drought and low nutrient levels; and
   ii. Maintained by severe environmental limitations such as drought, low nutrient levels and periodic disturbances such as fire;

b) Has less than 25 per cent tree cover;

c) Has sandy soils (other than shorelines) exposed by natural erosion, depositional process or both; and

d) Has been further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time.

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Savannah

Means land (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes or no longer exhibits savannah characteristics) that:

a) Has vegetation with a significant component of non-woody plants, including tallgrass prairie species that are maintained by seasonal drought, periodic disturbances such as fire, or both;

b) Has from 25 per cent to 60 per cent tree cover;

c) Has mineral soils; and

d) Has been further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time.

Secondary uses

Means uses secondary to the principal use of the property, including but not limited to, home occupations, home industries, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products from the farm operation on the property (PPS, 2005).

Seepage areas and springs

Seepage areas and springs are sites of emergence of groundwater where the water table is present at the ground surface.

Settlement areas

Means urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages and hamlets) that are:

a) Built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and

b) Lands which have been designated in an official plan for development (PPS, 2005) over the long-term planning horizon provided for in the Growth Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated over the long-term, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated.

Significant

Means:

a) In regard to wetlands and life science areas of natural and scientific interest, an area identified as provincially significant by the Ontario using evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources using evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time; and Forestry, as amended from time to time;

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b) In regard to the habitat of endangered species, threatened species and special concern species, means the habitat, as approved by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, that is necessary for the maintenance, survival, and/or the recovery of naturally occurring or reintroduced populations of endangered species, threatened species or special concern species, and where those areas of occurrence are occupied or habitually occupied by the species during all or any part(s) of its life cycle; woodlands, an area which is ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history. The Province (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) identifies criteria relating to the forgoing;

c) In regard to woodlands, an area which is ecologically important in terms of features such as species composition, age of trees and stand history; functionally important due to its contribution to the broader landscape because of its location, size or due to the amount of forest cover in the planning area; or economically important due to site quality, species composition, or past management history. The Province (Ministry of Natural Resources) identifies criteria relating to the forgoing; and

d) In regard to other features and areas in section 3.2.4 of this Plan, ecologically important in terms of features, functions, representation or amount, and contributing to the quality and diversity of the Natural Heritage System. The Province (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) identifies criteria relating to the forgoing;

e) In regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that are valued for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.

While some significant resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation.

**Significant groundwater recharge area**

**Means a significant groundwater recharge area identified:**

a) As a significant groundwater recharge area by any public body for the purposes of implementing the PPS;

b) As a significant groundwater recharge area in the assessment report required under the Clean Water Act, 2006; or

c) As an ecologically significant groundwater recharge area delineated in a subwatershed plan in accordance with the provincial guidelines.
Ecologically significant groundwater recharge areas are areas of land that are responsible for replenishing groundwater systems that directly support sensitive areas like coldwater streams and wetlands.

Significant surface water contribution areas

Means areas, generally associated with headwater catchments, that contribute to baseflow volumes which are significant to the overall surface water flow volumes within a watershed.

Site alteration

Means activities such as filling, grading and excavation that would change the landform and natural vegetative characteristics of land, but does not include; such as grading, excavation and the placement of fill that would change the landform and natural vegetative characteristics of a site.

a) The construction of facilities for transportation, infrastructure and utilities uses by a public body;

b) Activities or works under the Drainage Act; or

e) The carrying out of agricultural practices on land that was being used for agricultural uses on the date the Plan came into effect.

Special concern species

Means a species that is listed or categorized as a “special concern species” on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources’ official species at risk list, as updated and amended from time to time.

Specialty crop areas

Means areas designated using evaluation procedures established by the province, as amended from time to time, where specialty crops such as tender fruits (peaches, cherries, plums), grapes, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops, and crops from agriculturally developed organic soil lands are predominantly grown, usually resulting from guidelines developed by the Province, as amended from time to time. In these areas, specialty crops are predominantly grown, such as tender fruits (peaches, cherries, plums), grapes, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops, and crops from agriculturally developed organic soil, usually resulting from:

a) Soils that have suitability to produce specialty crops, or lands that are subject to special climatic conditions, or a combination of both; and/or

b) A combination of Farmers skilled in the production of specialty crops, and of capital investment in related facilities and services to produce, store, or process specialty crops. (PPS, 2005); and

c) A long-term investment of capital in areas such as crops, drainage, infrastructure and related facilities and services to produce, store, or process specialty crops (PPS, 2014).

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Stable top of bank

Means the edge of the channel or bank, if there is a sharp change from the steep slope of the channel or bank to the shallower slope of the field area, or the normal full extent of the watercourse when it contains the maximum volume of water without flooding, if the change in slope does not exist.

Subwatershed plan

Means a plan that reflects and refines the goals, objectives, targets, and assessments of watershed planning at a broader scale; is tailored to subwatershed needs and local issues; considers existing and proposed development; identifies hydrologic features, areas and functions; and provides for protecting, improving or restoring the quality and quantity of water within a subwatershed. A subwatershed plan is based on pre-development monitoring and evaluation; is integrated with natural heritage protection; and identifies specific criteria, actions and targets for development, for water and wastewater servicing, and stormwater management, and to support ecological needs.

Tallgrass prairies

Means land (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes or no longer exhibits tallgrass prairie characteristics) that:

a) Has vegetation dominated by non-woody plants, including tallgrass prairie species that are maintained by seasonal drought, periodic disturbances such as fire, or both;

b) Has less than 25 per cent tree cover;

c) Has mineral soils; and

d) Has been further identified, by the Minister of Natural Resources or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time.

Threatened species

Means a species that is listed or categorized as a “Threatened Species” on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources’ official species at risk list, as updated and amended from time to time, or classified as a threatened species in Ontario regulation 230/08 (Species at Risk in Ontario List) made under the Endangered Species Act, 2007, as it may be amended from time to time.

Total developable area

Means the total area of the property less the area occupied by key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, including any related Vegetation Protection Zone (see section 3.2.3) and any related vegetation protection zones (see section 3.2.2).
Valleylands

Means a natural area that occurs in a valley or other landform depression that has water flowing through or standing for some period of the year (PPS, 2005, 2014).

Vegetation protection zone

A vegetated buffer area surrounding a key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature within which only those land uses permitted within the feature itself are permitted. The width of the vegetation protection zone is to be determined when new development or site alteration occurs within 120 metres of a key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature, and is to be of sufficient size to protect the feature and its functions from the impacts of the proposed change and associated activities that will occur before, during, and after, construction, and where possible, restore or enhance the feature and/or its function.

Vulnerable

Means surface and groundwater that can be easily changed or impacted by activities or events, either by virtue of their vicinity to such activities or events or by permissive pathways between such activities and the surface and/or groundwater (PPS, 2005).

Watershed planning

Means planning that provides a framework for the management of human activities, land, water, aquatic life and resources within a watershed and for the assessment of cumulative, cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts.

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Watershed planning typically includes: a water budget and conservation plan; nutrient loading assessments; consideration of climate change impacts and severe weather events; land and water use management strategies; an environmental monitoring plan; requirements for the use of environmental management practices and programs; criteria for evaluating the protection of quality and quantity of water and the identification and protection of hydrologic features, areas and functions and the inter-relationships between or among them; and targets for the protection and restoration of riparian areas.

Watershed planning is undertaken at many scales, and considers cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts. The level of analysis and specificity generally increases for smaller geographic areas such as subwatersheds, and tributaries.

Wellhead protection areas

Means the surface and subsurface area surrounding a water well or well field that supplies a public water system and through which contaminants are reasonably likely to move so as eventually to reach the water well or well field.

Wetlands

Means land such as a swamp, marsh, bog or fen (not including land that is being used for agricultural purposes and no longer exhibits wetland characteristics) that lands that are seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water, as well as lands where the water table is close to or at the surface. In either case the presence of abundant water has caused the formation of hydric soils and has favoured the dominance of either hydrophytic plants or water tolerant plants. The four major types of wetlands are swamps, marshes, bogs and fens.

a) Is seasonally or permanently covered by shallow water or has the water table close to or at the surface;

b) Has hydric soils and vegetation dominated by hydrophytic or water tolerant plants; and

Periodically soaked or wet lands being used for agricultural purposes which no longer exhibit wetland characteristics are not considered to be wetlands for the purposes of this definition.

c) Has been further identified, by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry or by any other person, according to evaluation procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time.

Wildlife habitat

Means areas where plants, animals and other organisms live, and find adequate amounts of food, water, shelter and space needed to sustain their populations. Specific wildlife habitats of concern may include areas where species concentrate at a vulnerable point in their annual life cycle; and areas that are important to migratory or non-migratory species (PPS, 2005, 2014).
Woodlands

Means treed areas that provide environmental and economic benefits to both the private landowner and the general public, such as erosion prevention, hydrological and nutrient cycling, provision of clean air and the long-term storage of carbon, provision of wildlife habitat, outdoor recreational opportunities, and the sustainable harvest of a wide range of woodland products. Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas (PPS, 2005). Woodlands include treed areas, woodlots or forested areas and vary in their level of significance at the local, regional and provincial levels. Woodlands may be delineated according to the Forestry Act definition or the province’s Ecological Land Classification System (PPS, 2014).
Schedules

Explanatory Text

Proposed revisions to the schedules and appendices of the proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016), if approved, would include:

- Updated “settlement area” boundaries and transition matters reflecting the latest municipal official plan schedules;

- Updated Niagara Escarpment Plan boundary; and

- Proposed Greenbelt expansion areas including new Urban River Valley areas, two areas in Hamilton, one area in Grimsby and the Lake Gibson area in Thorold in Niagara Region.
Seeking Feedback

The Ontario government is seeking feedback on the proposed changes to the plans.

Provide your feedback

We want to hear your comments and feedback on the proposed changes to the plans.

Please visit www.ontario.ca/landuseplanningreview to:

• Submit or upload your feedback and comments using the online e-form by September 30, 2016.
• Learn more about attending a Public Open House in your area.

Other ways to provide feedback

You also have the option to submit comments using one of the other methods listed below.

Environmental Bill of Rights Registry at www.ontario.ca/ebr

2. Proposed Greenbelt Plan (2016). Notice #012-7195
4. Proposed Niagara Escarpment Plan (2016). Notice #012-7228
5. Proposed Amendment to the Greenbelt Area Boundary Regulation. Notice #012-7198

All comments received on proposed changes to the Niagara Escarpment Plan will also be shared with the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Comments can also be submitted directly to the Niagara Escarpment Commission at www.escarpment.org/planreview.

Regulatory Registry at www.ontariocanada.com/registry

1. Proposed Amendment to the Greenbelt Area Boundary Regulation. Notice #16-MAH017

Comments may also be mailed to:
Land Use Planning Review
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Ontario Growth Secretariat
777 Bay Street, Suite 425 (4th floor) Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

The deadline for providing feedback is September 30, 2016.

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Notice Regarding Collection of Information

Any collection of personal information for the Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review is in accordance with subsection 39(2) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It is collected under the authority of the legislation establishing the four plans for the purpose of obtaining input on revisions to the plans.

If you have questions about the collection, use, and disclosure of this information please contact:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Senior Information and Privacy Advisor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2E5
416-585-7094

Organizations and Businesses:

Comments or submissions made on behalf of an organization or business may be shared or disclosed. By submitting comments you are deemed to consent to the sharing of information contained in the comments and your business contact information. Business contact information is the name, title and contact information of anyone submitting comments in a business, professional or official capacity.

Individuals:

Personal contact information will only be used to contact you and will not be shared. Please be aware that any comments provided may be shared or disclosed once personal information is removed. Personal information includes your name, home address and personal e-mail address.
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing


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