



Greenbelt Plan (2017)



GREENBELT PLAN (2017)

May 2017

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The *Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH)* is one of the most dynamic and fast growing regions in North America – it is currently home to over two-thirds of Ontario’s and more than one-quarter of Canada’s population. The region attracts people from around the world, offering a diverse economy and a high quality of life.

The *GGH* is located in the heart of the Great Lakes region. It contains many of Canada’s most ecologically and hydrologically significant natural environments and scenic landscapes, including the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment. These natural areas clean the air, provide drinking water, provide diverse flora and fauna habitats, including pollinators, and they provide opportunities for 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 Greenbelt was introduced in 2005 to help shape the future of this region. The Greenbelt is the cornerstone of Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan (Growth Plan) which 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 current and future generations.

The Greenbelt Plan, together with the ORMCP and the NEP, 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 includes lands within, and builds upon the ecological protections provided by, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP).

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

These plans work in concert with Ontario’s Climate Change Strategy, 2015, the government’s commitment to meet its long-term targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Protecting agricultural lands, water resources and natural areas,

supporting the achievement of *complete communities* that are compact, walkable and, where appropriate, transit-supportive will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and work towards low-carbon communities, and the long-term goal of net-zero communities. Greenhouse gas emissions can be offset by carbon sinks found in the Greenbelt, which can include agricultural lands, *green infrastructure* and other natural areas.

The First Nations and Métis communities within the Great Lakes region are essential partners. They have a unique relationship with the land and its resources. Ontario, including the area covered by the Greenbelt Plan, is largely covered by a number of Treaties that provide for treaty rights. In addition, Aboriginal communities may have Aboriginal rights within the Plan area. Ontario recognizes the unique role that Indigenous peoples have had and will continue to have in the growth and development of this region. Through their historic relationship with the lands and resources, Indigenous communities have gained traditional knowledge that is of significant value to the planning decisions being made today.

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

The Protected Countryside lands identified in the Greenbelt Plan are intended to enhance the spatial extent of agriculturally and environmentally protected lands 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 Plan) is made up of an *Agricultural System* and a *Natural System*, together with a series of *settlement areas*.

The *Agricultural System* is a group of inter-connected elements. It has two components: the agricultural land base, which is comprised of *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands* that together create a continuous, productive land base for agriculture, and the *agri-food network*, which includes *infrastructure*, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food sector. The *Natural System* identifies lands that support both natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions, including providing for pollinator habitat, which is an essential support for agricultural production and for ecosystems. Both systems maintain connections to the broader agricultural and natural systems of southern Ontario.

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 healthier, safer, more equitable and more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

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 assist in recognizing the importance of connections to Lake Ontario and other areas in southern Ontario.

The schedules in this Plan show lands, *settlement areas*, 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 *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 Growth Plan.

1.2 Vision and Goals

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;

- 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 among 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 unique nature of *specialty crop areas* as our vital fruit and vegetable growing regions, which include:
 - i. The Niagara Peninsula *specialty crop area*, a destination for and centre of agriculture focused on the agri-food sector and agri-tourism related to grape and tender fruit production; and
 - ii. The Holland Marsh *specialty crop area*, a centre of agriculture focused on the agri-food sector related to vegetable 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 *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 *agri-food network* and improvement to and management of the agricultural land base; and

- f) Enhancing the strengths of the *Agricultural System*, 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 *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
- 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) 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 *settlement areas*;
- b) Sustaining the character of the countryside and rural communities;
- c) Support for the achievement of *complete communities* that promote and enhance human health and social well-being, are economically and environmentally sustainable, moving towards low-carbon communities, with the long-term goal of 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 Plan and the Growth Plan and improves integration with land use planning while seeking to minimize environmental impacts;
- 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 that includes incorporating techniques to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and increasing the resilience of *settlement areas* and *infrastructure* within the Greenbelt.

1.2.3 Urban River Valley Goals

To integrate the Greenbelt into urban areas that were not part of the Greenbelt's initial boundaries, 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 ecologically 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 the Greenbelt Plan for all or part of the Greenbelt Area.

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

1.4 How to Read this Plan

1.4.1 General

This Plan informs decision-making to permanently protect the agricultural land base and the ecological and hydrological features, areas and functions occurring on this landscape. Although primarily implemented through Ontario's land use planning system, including official plans, this Plan is not solely a land use plan. Certain policies of this Plan contemplate implementation by both the Province and municipalities through other related tools, regulations, policies and guidelines.

This Plan consists of policies, schedules, definitions and appendices. It also includes non-policy contextual commentary to provide background and describe the purpose of the policies.

Relationship with the Provincial Policy Statement

The PPS provides overall policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use and development in Ontario and applies to the Greenbelt, except where this Plan or another provincial plan provides otherwise.

Like other provincial plans, this Plan builds upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS and provides additional and more specific land use planning policies to address issues facing specific geographic areas in Ontario. This Plan is to be read in conjunction with the PPS. The policies of this Plan take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise. Where the policies of this Plan address the same, similar, related or overlapping matters as policies in the PPS, applying the more specific policies of this Plan satisfies the requirements of the more general policies in the PPS. In contrast, where matters addressed in the PPS do not overlap with policies in this Plan, those PPS policies must be independently satisfied.

Relationship with Other Provincial Plans, Legislation and Regulation

This Plan must also be read in conjunction with other provincial plans, related planning mechanisms, regulations and standards of conservation authorities, other agencies and the federal government. This includes the Growth Plan, the ORMCP and the NEP as well as the Parkway Belt West Plan and the Central Pickering Development Plan. Other plans, including the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan under the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008* and some source protection plans under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*; upper-, lower- and single-tier official plans; zoning by-laws; Minister's zoning orders under the *Planning Act* as well as other pertinent legislation (e.g. the federal *Rouge Urban Park Act*) and regulations (e.g. those under the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* and *Conservation Authorities Act*) also apply within the Greenbelt.

Within the Greenbelt Area, there may be other provincial, federal or agency plans, regulations or standards that also apply. An application, matter or proceeding related to these plans, regulations or standards shall conform with the Greenbelt Plan. However, where the plans, regulations or standards are more restrictive than this Plan, the more restrictive provision shall prevail.

With respect to the Growth Plan specifically, the policies of that Plan that address the same, similar, related or overlapping matters as this Plan do not apply within the Greenbelt Area, except where the policies of this Plan provide otherwise. In contrast, where matters addressed in the Growth Plan do not overlap with policies in this Plan, those Growth Plan policies must be independently satisfied.

Read the Entire Plan

This Plan is to be read in its entirety and the relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. The language of each policy will assist decision-makers in understanding how the policies are to be implemented. While some policies refer to other policies for ease of use, these cross-references do not take away from the need to read the Plan as a whole. There is no implied priority in the order in which the policies appear.

Consider Specific Policy Language

Each policy provides direction on how it is to be implemented, how it is situated within this Plan and how it relates to other policies. The choice of language in the policies is intended to distinguish between the types of policies and the nature of implementation.

Policies Represent Minimum Standards

The policies of this Plan represent minimum standards. Within the framework of the provincial policy-led planning system, decision-makers are encouraged to go beyond these minimum standards to address matters of importance, unless doing so would conflict with any policy of this Plan.

Defined Terms and Meanings

Italicized terms in this Plan are defined in section 7. For non-italicized terms, the normal meaning of the word applies. Defined terms are intended to capture both singular and plural forms of these terms in the policies.

Guidance Material

Guidance material may be issued to assist decision makers with implementing the policies of this Plan. Information, technical criteria and approaches outlined in guidance material are meant to support, but not add to or detract from, the policies of this Plan.

1.4.2 Structure of the Plan

The Greenbelt Plan consists of:

Section 1 – 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 – 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 as Protected Countryside in this Plan. It describes how lands in the three other 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.

Section 3 – Geographic-Specific Policies in the Protected Countryside: Sets out the three key inter-related policy areas in the Protected Countryside designation that are spatially based: the *Agricultural System*, the Natural System and *settlement areas*.

The *Agricultural System* is comprised of the agricultural land base (*prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands*) and the *agri-food network*, which has components (*infrastructure*, services and assets) 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 *prime agricultural areas* and *rural lands* based on provincial mapping and guidance in accordance with section 5.3.

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 is an overlay on top of the *prime agricultural area*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands* designations contained in official plans. As such, permitted uses are those set out within the *prime agricultural area* and *rural lands* policies of this Plan and designations of official plans, subject to the Natural System policies of this Plan.

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 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* based on policy direction provided by the Growth Plan. 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 are within one of the following policy areas: *specialty crop areas*, *prime agricultural areas*, *rural lands*, Towns/Villages or Hamlets. In addition, lands may also be subject to the Natural Heritage System, Water Resource System, *key hydrologic areas*, *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* policies of this Plan.

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

Section 4 – 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 – Implementation: Provides a description of:

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

Section 6 – 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.

Section 7 – Definitions: Sets out definitions used in the Plan.

1.4.3 How to Use 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* or 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. 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. 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 Urban River Valley designation on Schedule 1. If so, the specific policies set out in section 6 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. 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. To

determine the precise *settlement area* boundaries, reference should be made to official plans. If lands are located in a Town/Village or Hamlet, refer to the policies of the applicable official plan.

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 official plans that are in effect to determine if the lands are designated *prime agricultural area* or *rural lands* (or a similar designation). Once this determination is made, refer to the *Agricultural System* policies (section 3.1) to determine if there are any additional restrictions or requirements relating to *prime agricultural areas* or *rural lands*.

Refer to Schedule 4 of this Plan to determine if the lands are located within the Natural Heritage System, which is an overlay on top of the agricultural land base designations of the *Agricultural System* within official plans. If so, refer to the Natural System policies (section 3.2).

Refer to 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 areas* on the lands. If so, refer to the policies of sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.5.

3. Determine which policies of section 4 may apply to the lands based on the type of use or whether lot creation is proposed.
4. Determine how the policies of this Plan apply to matters that may be subject to transition under the provisions of the *Greenbelt Act, 2005* in conjunction with the policies of section 5.
5. Determine how the other policies of section 5 may apply to the lands, including whether there are any boundary interpretation policies to be considered. This includes, but is not limited to, the Rouge National Urban Park Management Plan, 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 Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Area, as defined by Ontario Regulation 59/05, is governed by the Greenbelt Plan. It 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, such lands are deemed to be within the Protected Countryside and all of the policies of the Greenbelt Plan, except section 6, 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 the Greenbelt Plan, except Section 6.

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 and the Protected Countryside policies do not apply except as set out in that section.

3

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

3.1.1 Description

The Protected Countryside contains an *Agricultural System* that provides a continuous, productive and permanent agricultural land base and a complementary *agri-food network* that together enable the agri-food sector to thrive. Many of the farms within this system also contain important natural heritage features, including areas that support pollinators, and hydrologic features. The stewardship of these farms facilitates both environmental benefits and agricultural protection. The agricultural land base 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 land base is comprised of *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands*. The *agri-food 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 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.

The Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area and the Holland Marsh are *specialty crop areas*. 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 official plans to permanently protect these areas for agriculture.

Rural 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.

When official plans are brought into conformity with this plan, the mapping of the *Agricultural System* may only be refined and augmented in a manner that is consistent with the policies of section 5.3.

3.1.2 Specialty Crop Area Policies

For lands falling within *specialty crop areas* of the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. All types, sizes and intensities of *agricultural uses* and *normal farm practices* shall be promoted and protected and a full range of *agricultural uses*, *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* are permitted based on the provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas. Proposed *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations.
2. Lands shall not be redesignated in official plans for non-agricultural uses. Non-agricultural uses may be permitted subject to the 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 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. Where *agricultural uses* and non-agricultural uses interface, land use compatibility shall be achieved by avoiding or, where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the *Agricultural System*, based on provincial guidance. Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed.
6. The geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the *agri-food network* shall be maintained and enhanced.

3.1.3 Prime Agricultural Area Policies

For lands falling within *prime agricultural areas* of the Protected Countryside, the following policies shall apply:

1. All types, sizes and intensities of *agricultural uses* and *normal farm practices* shall be promoted and protected and a full range of *agricultural uses*, *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* are permitted based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas. Proposed *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall be compatible with and shall not hinder surrounding agricultural operations.
2. Lands shall not be redesignated in official plans for non-agricultural uses except for:
 - a) Refinements to the *prime agricultural area* and *rural lands* designations, subject to the policies of section 5.3; or
 - b) *Settlement area* boundary expansions, subject to the policies of section 3.4.
3. 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, 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. Where *agricultural uses* and non-agricultural uses interface, land use compatibility shall be achieved by avoiding or, where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the *Agricultural System*, based on provincial guidance. Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed.
6. The geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the *agri-food network* shall be maintained and enhanced.

3.1.4 Rural Lands Policies

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

1. *Rural lands* support and provide the primary locations for a range of recreational, tourism, institutional (including cemetery) 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 policies of section 4.5. Notwithstanding this policy, official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to the types of uses permitted on *rural lands*, subject to the policies of section 5.3.
2. *Rural lands* may contain existing agricultural operations and provide important linkages between *prime agricultural areas* as part of the overall *Agricultural System*. *Normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural uses*, *agriculture-related uses* and *on-farm diversified 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 all these uses shall be based on provincial Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas.
3. *Settlement area* expansions may be permitted into *rural lands*, subject to the policies of section 3.4.
4. Other uses may be permitted subject to the policies of sections 4.1 to 4.6. Where non-agricultural uses are proposed, with the exception of a *mineral aggregate operation*, the completion of an *agricultural impact assessment* should be considered.
5. *New multiple lots or units for residential development* (e.g. estate residential subdivisions and adult lifestyle or retirement communities), whether by plan of subdivision, condominium or severance, shall not be permitted on *rural lands*. Official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to residential severances. Official plans shall provide guidance for the creation of lots on *rural lands*. Regardless, new lots for any use shall not be created if the creation would extend or promote strip development.
6. 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*.

7. Where *agricultural uses* and non-agricultural uses interface, land use compatibility shall be promoted by avoiding or, if avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the *Agricultural System*, based on provincial guidance. Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed.
8. The geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the *agri-food network* shall be maintained and enhanced.
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 Agri-food Network

1. Integrated planning for growth management, including goods movement and transportation planning, shall consider opportunities to support and enhance the *Agricultural System*.
2. Municipalities are encouraged to implement regional agri-food 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 *agri-food network*, by:
 - a) Providing opportunities to support access to healthy, local, and affordable food, urban and near-urban agriculture, food system planning and promoting the sustainability of agricultural, agri-food and agri-product businesses while protecting agricultural resources and minimizing land use conflicts;
 - b) Protecting, enhancing or supporting opportunities for *infrastructure*, services and assets. Where negative impacts on the *agri-food network* are unavoidable, they shall be assessed, minimized and mitigated to the extent feasible; and
 - c) Establishing or consulting with agricultural advisory committees or liaison officers.

3.1.6 Agricultural System Connections

The *Agricultural System* is connected both functionally and economically to the agricultural land base and agri-food sector across municipal boundaries and 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 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 collaborate with each other to support the *Agricultural System*. As well, consideration should be given to activities and changes in land use, both within and in proximity to the Greenbelt, and how they 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

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 provide essential ecosystem services, including water storage and filtration, cleaner air, habitat, support for pollinators, carbon storage and resilience to climate change. The Natural System policies contribute to conserving Ontario's biodiversity and maintaining the *ecological integrity* of the Greenbelt.

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

1. The system is connected to and/or supports broader natural systems in southern Ontario such as the Great Lakes Coast, the Carolinian Zone, the Kawartha Highlands and the Algonquin to Adirondacks Corridor;
2. The system builds upon and is connected to other *GGH*-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 *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, 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 and functions 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** 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 that 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 issued pursuant to 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 areas 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 hydrological 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 Niagara Escarpment and base of the Oak Ridges Moraine;
- 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, 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 *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 impacts* on *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* or their functions;
 - b) *Connectivity* along the system and between *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* located within 240 metres of each other will be 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;
 - d) Except for uses described in and governed by the policies of sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.2,
 - i. The disturbed area, including any buildings and structures, of the *total developable area* will not exceed 25 per cent (40 per cent for golf courses); and
 - ii. The impervious surface of the *total developable area* will not exceed 10 per cent; and
 - e) At least 30 per cent of the *total developable area* will remain or be returned to *natural self-sustaining vegetation*, recognizing that section 4.3.2 establishes specific standards for the uses described there.

4. The Natural Heritage System, including the policies of section 3.2.5, does not apply within the existing boundaries of *settlement areas*, but does apply when considering expansions to *settlement areas* 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.
5. 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.
6. Towns/Villages are not permitted to expand into the Natural Heritage System.

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 shall consider all hydrologic features, areas and functions and include a systems approach to the inter-relationships between and/or among *key hydrologic features* and *key hydrologic areas*.
2. Watersheds are the most meaningful scale for hydrological planning. Municipalities, partnering with conservation authorities as appropriate, shall ensure that *watershed planning* is undertaken to support a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to the protection, enhancement or restoration of the quality and quantity of water within a watershed.
3. Water Resource Systems shall be identified, informed by *watershed planning* and other available information, and the appropriate designations and policies shall be applied in official plans to provide for the long-term protection of *key hydrologic features*, *key hydrologic areas* and their functions.
4. Decisions on allocation of growth and planning for water, wastewater, and stormwater *infrastructure* shall be informed by applicable *watershed planning* in accordance with the Growth Plan.
5. 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 shall be integrated with *watershed planning* and management in the NEP, the ORMCP and the Growth Plan.

6. Municipalities shall 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.

3.2.4 Key Hydrologic Areas

Key hydrologic areas are areas which contribute to the *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; and*
- *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 has been demonstrated that the *hydrologic functions*, including groundwater and surface water quality and quantity, of these areas shall be protected and, where possible, improved or restored through:
 - a) The identification of planning, design and construction practices and techniques;
 - b) Meeting other criteria and direction set out in the applicable *watershed planning or subwatershed plan*; and
 - c) Meeting any applicable provincial standards, guidelines and procedures.
2. Section 3.2.4.1 does not apply to *major development* that is a new or expanding building or structure for *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses or on-farm diversified uses* where the total impervious surface does not exceed 10 per cent of the lot.

3.2.5 Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features Policies

Key natural heritage features include:

- *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 (including habitat of special concern species);*
- *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 policies of section 4.

2. Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside, *key hydrologic features* are defined by and subject to the policies of section 3.2.5.
3. Beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside, *key natural heritage features* are not subject to the policies of section 3.2.5, but are to be defined pursuant to, and subject to the policies of, the PPS.
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 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 or a hydrological evaluation which identifies 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. A proposal for new *development* or *site alteration* within the Natural Heritage System is not subject to section 3.2.5.5 where the only *key natural heritage feature* is the *habitat of endangered species and threatened species*.
7. Notwithstanding section 3.2.5.5, new buildings and structures for *agricultural, agriculture-related* or *on-farm diversified uses* are not required to undertake a natural heritage or hydrologic evaluation if a minimum 30 metre *vegetation protection zone* is provided from a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*. In addition, these uses 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. However, *agricultural, agriculture-related* and *on-farm diversified uses* shall pursue best management practices to protect and/or restore *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and functions.

8. Notwithstanding sections 3.2.5.4 and 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 *permanent and intermittent streams*, where:
- a) The *permanent or intermittent stream* also functions as an agricultural swale, roadside ditch or municipal drain as determined through provincially approved mapping;
 - b) A minimum 15 metre *vegetation protection zone* is established between the building or structure and the *permanent or intermittent stream*; however, this *vegetation protection zone* is not required to be maintained as *natural self-sustaining vegetation* if the land is and will continue to be used for agricultural purposes;
 - c) There is no alternative location for the building or structure on the property without impacting lands that are in specialty crop production;
 - d) A new individual on-site sewage system will not be located within 30 metres of the stream; and
 - e) *Agricultural, agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses* shall pursue best management practices to protect or restore *key hydrologic features* and functions.

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, including the Natural Heritage System that will be issued pursuant to the Growth Plan. The Greenbelt's Natural Heritage System also connects to those areas designated as Urban River Valley in this Plan.

The external connections are generally depicted by a dotted green line on Schedules 1, 3 and 4 and Appendices 1 and 2 but are not within the regulated boundary of the Greenbelt Plan. Many of the external connections shown on 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 of this Plan.

1. 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:

- a) 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;
 - b) Promote and undertake appropriate planning and design to ensure that external connections and Urban River Valley areas are maintained and/or enhanced; and
 - c) Undertake *watershed planning*, which integrates supporting ecological systems with those systems contained in this Plan.
2. 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:
- a) 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;
 - b) In considering land conversions or redevelopments in or abutting an urban river valley, strive for planning approaches that:
 - i. 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);
 - ii. Increase or improve *fish habitat* in streams and in the adjacent riparian lands;
 - iii. 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
 - iv. Seek to avoid or, if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts associated with the quality and quantity of urban runoff into the valley systems; and
 - c) 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.

3. 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, *connectivity* and functions of *key natural heritage features*, *key hydrologic features* and *key hydrologic areas* of those portions of the Lake Iroquois shoreline within their approved urban boundaries.

3.2.7 The Rouge River Watershed and Rouge National Urban Park

The Rouge River watershed is of particular significance within the Protected Countryside because of the extensive public investment in establishing Rouge National Urban Park, the efforts of all levels of government in preparing past and current plans in the Rouge watershed and the Park, and the environmental restoration and sustainability efforts within both the watershed and the Park.

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 metre wide corridor for the Little Rouge River as the main ecological corridor between Lake Ontario and the southerly boundary of the ORMCP. It also includes several other Rouge River tributaries.

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 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 use planning and resource management documents.

Rouge National Urban Park has been established for the purposes of protecting and presenting for current and future generations the agricultural, natural and cultural heritage of the Park and its diverse landscapes. The Park will play a role in linking Lake Ontario with the Oak Ridges Moraine. Upon lands being transferred to the Park they will become federally administered, the *Rouge National Urban Park Act* and Management Plan will be the guiding documents

and the Greenbelt Plan or other provincial plans/policies will not apply. Until such transfers, provincial plans and policies continue to apply, and will continue to apply to lands not proposed for transfer, such as roads, hydro corridors and other public and private lands.

Ontario will work collaboratively with Parks Canada, municipalities and other relevant agencies and organizations to ensure ecological integrity is the first management priority for the Rouge National Urban Park while also supporting ongoing agricultural activities and sustainable farming practices. Planning of surrounding lands outside of the Rouge National Urban Park should be undertaken in a manner that considers the interface with and supports the vision and the ecological and other functions of the Park. This includes connections to surrounding natural heritage, agricultural and open space and trail systems, together with transportation *infrastructure*, visitor facilities and cultural heritage. In particular, *infrastructure* traversing the Park should be planned, designed and constructed to limit and mitigate impacts, support recreational uses and promote environmental restoration opportunities.

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 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 landowners 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 co-operate with all landowners. This includes

measures to prevent trespassing on farm properties to avoid risks to farm biosecurity and crop damage.

Throughout the Greenbelt, there is existing public parkland and open space, such as the Rouge National Urban Park, 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 achievement of *complete communities* in *settlement areas* across the Greenbelt.
2. Encourage the development of a trail plan and a co-ordinated 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.
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 parks plans 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;
 - e) Protecting the recreation and tourism values of waterfront areas as a high priority; and
 - f) Supporting urban agriculture and other 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) Protecting farmland and supporting and ensuring compatibility with agriculture; and
 - g) Ensuring the protection of the *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and functions of the landscape.

Federal parks, 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

3.4.1 Description

Settlement areas within the Greenbelt support and provide significant economic, social and commercial functions to *prime agricultural areas* and *rural lands*. 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 achievement of *complete communities* that move towards low-carbon communities, with the long term goal of net-zero communities.

The achievement of *complete communities* shall in part be supported 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 Protected Countryside.

Towns/Villages and Hamlets are identified on Schedule 1. To determine the precise *settlement area* boundaries, reference should be made to 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 General Settlement Area Policies

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

1. *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 should collaborate, where possible, to support components of the *Agricultural System (infrastructure, services and assets)* and access to local, healthy food.
5. Municipalities shall integrate climate change considerations into planning and managing growth in *settlement areas* in accordance with the policies in subsection 4.2.10 of the Growth Plan.
6. Municipalities should develop excess soil reuse strategies as part of planning for growth and development.
7. Municipal planning policies and relevant development proposals shall incorporate best practices for the management of excess soil generated and fill received during *development or site alteration*, including *infrastructure* development, to ensure that:
 - a) Any excess soil is reused on-site or locally to the maximum extent possible and, where feasible, excess soil reuse planning is undertaken concurrently with development planning and design;
 - b) Appropriate sites for excess soil storage and processing are permitted close to areas where proposed development is concentrated or areas of potential soil reuse; and
 - c) Fill quality received and fill placement at a site will not cause an adverse effect with regard to the current or proposed use of the property or the natural environment, and is compatible with adjacent land uses.

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, 3.2.3, 3.2.6, 3.3 and 3.4.2.
2. 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. 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 the policies 2.2.8.2 and 2.2.8.3 of the Growth Plan.

3.4.4 Hamlet Policies

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

1. Hamlets 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, 3.2.3, 3.2.6, 3.3 and 3.4.2. Limited growth is permitted through infill and *intensification* of Hamlets subject to appropriate water and sewage services.

3.4.5 Additional Policies for Settlement Area Expansion

For *settlement areas* within the Protected Countryside, notwithstanding the policies of section 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 policies of section 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. 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 General Policies for the Protected Countryside

4.1 Non-Agricultural Uses

The *rural lands* of the Protected Countryside are intended to continue to accommodate a range of commercial, industrial and institutional (including cemetery) 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 areas* 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 sections 4.2 to 4.6 of this Plan.
2. Proposals for non-agricultural uses must demonstrate that:
 - a) The use is appropriate for location on *rural lands*;
 - 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* or *key hydrologic features* or their functions; and
 - d) There are no *negative impacts* on the biodiversity or *connectivity* of the Natural Heritage System.
3. With the exception of *mineral aggregate operations*, where non-agricultural uses are proposed on *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, nutrient and biocide use shall 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 developed shoreline areas of Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe, Lake Scugog and other inland *lakes* contain substantial amounts of both seasonal and permanent residential development. The developed shoreline areas of *lakes* (including their littoral zones) are particularly important and sensitive because they include *key natural heritage* and *hydrologic features* and functions, benefits to water quality and quantity, *cultural heritage resources*, vital human services and recreational opportunities, including trail systems. Climate change is expected to be an important consideration in shoreline management given projected declines in Great Lakes water levels.

Policy 4.2.4.5 of the Growth Plan applies to developed shoreline areas within the Protected Countryside.

4.2 Infrastructure

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 the *GGH*. The Growth Plan provides the policy framework to guide *infrastructure* planning and investments to support and accommodate forecasted growth in a manner that is integrated with land use planning and environmental protection.

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. Identifying *infrastructure* risks and vulnerabilities and undertaking 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* or 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:
 - a) It supports agriculture, recreation and tourism, Towns/Villages and Hamlets, 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 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* on 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 co-ordination with different *infrastructure* services shall be optimized so that the rural and existing character of the Protected Countryside and the overall hierarchy of areas where growth will be accommodated in the *GGH* established by the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan 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;
 - e) Where *infrastructure* does cross the Natural Heritage System or intrude into or result in the loss of a *key natural heritage feature*, *key hydrologic feature* or *key hydrologic areas*, including related *landform features*, planning, design and construction practices shall minimize *negative impacts* on and disturbance of 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;
 - g) Where *infrastructure* crosses *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, an *agricultural impact assessment* or equivalent analysis as part of an environmental assessment shall be undertaken; and

- h) New waste disposal sites and facilities, and organic soil conditioning sites are prohibited in *key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features* and their associated *vegetation protection zones*.
- 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, key hydrologic features* and their associated *vegetation protection zones*.

4.2.2 Sewage and Water Infrastructure Policies

In addition to the policies of section 4.2.1, for sewage and water *infrastructure* in the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

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

4.2.3 Stormwater Management and Resilient Infrastructure Policies

In addition to the policies of section 4.2.1, for stormwater management *infrastructure* in the Protected Countryside the following policies shall apply:

- 1. Planning, design and construction of stormwater management *infrastructure* shall be carried out in accordance with the policies in subsection 3.2.7 of the Growth Plan.
- 2. Municipalities shall assess *infrastructure* vulnerability within Towns/ Villages in accordance with policy 3.2.1.4 of the Growth Plan.
- 3. Stormwater management systems are prohibited in *key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features* and their associated *vegetation protection zones*. The determination of appropriate *vegetation protection*

zones shall be defined in accordance with sections 3.2.5.4 and 3.2.5.5 of this Plan, which consider the area and nature of the feature being protected and the nature of the proposed stormwater management system.

Within those portions of the Protected Countryside that define the major river valleys that connect the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario, naturalized stormwater management systems may be permitted within the *vegetation protection zone* of a *significant valleyland*, provided they are located a minimum of 30 metres from the river or stream, and they are located outside of the *vegetation protection zone* of any other *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*.

4. 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) An integrated treatment approach will be used to minimize stormwater flows and mimic natural hydrology through lot level controls, *low impact development* and other conveyance techniques;
 - c) Applicable recommendations, standards or targets within a *subwatershed plan* or equivalent and water budgets will be complied with; and
 - d) Applicable objectives, targets, and any other requirements within a stormwater master plan will be met in accordance with the policies in subsection 3.2.7 of the Growth Plan.
5. The objectives of a stormwater management plan are to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and 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 activities 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, areas and their functions.

4.3.2 Non-Renewable Resource Policies

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

1. 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 for both economic and environmental reasons.
2. Activities related to the use of non-renewable resources are permitted in the Protected Countryside, subject to all other applicable legislation, regulations and 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.
3. Notwithstanding the policies of section 3.2, 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 new wayside pits and quarries, or any ancillary or accessory use thereto, shall be permitted

in the following *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*:

- i. *Significant wetlands*;
 - ii. *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 sections 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) Any application for a new *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 replace *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* that would be lost from the site with equivalent features on another part of the site or on adjacent lands;
 - iii. How the Water Resource System will be protected or enhanced; and
 - iv. How any *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features* and their associated *vegetation protection zones* not identified in section 4.3.2.3 (a), will be addressed in accordance with sections 4.3.2.6 (b), (c) and 4.3.2.7 (c); and
- c) An application requiring a new approval under the *Aggregate Resources Act* 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. In *prime agricultural areas*, applications for new *mineral aggregate operations* shall be supported by an *agricultural impact assessment* and, where possible, 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) The 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) 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
 - d) 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*.
6. For rehabilitation of new *mineral aggregate operation* sites in the Protected Countryside, the following policies apply:
 - a) The 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 enhanced
 - b) 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 enhanced; 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;
 - c) 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 section 4.3.2.6 (b); and
 - d) Outside the Natural Heritage System, and except as provided in sections 4.3.2.6 (a), (b) and (c), final rehabilitation shall 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. In *prime agricultural areas*, the site shall be rehabilitated in accordance with section 2.5.4 of the PPS.

7. Final rehabilitation for new *mineral aggregate operations* in the Natural Heritage System shall meet these additional policies:
 - a) Where there is no extraction below the water table, an amount of land equal to that under natural vegetated cover prior to extraction, and no less than 35 per cent 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. If the site is also in a *prime agricultural area*, the remainder of the land subject to the license is to be rehabilitated back to an *agricultural condition*;
 - b) Where there is extraction below the water table, no less than 35 per cent of the non-aquatic 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. If the site is also in a *prime agricultural area*, the remainder of the land subject to the license is to be rehabilitated in accordance with section 2.5.4 of the PPS; and
 - c) Rehabilitation shall be implemented so that the *connectivity* of the *key natural heritage features* and the *key hydrologic features* on the site and on adjacent lands shall be maintained or enhanced.
8. Operators are encouraged to consider and provide for public access to former aggregate sites upon final rehabilitation, where appropriate.
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 shall be permitted between Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area;
 - b) A new *mineral aggregate operation* or wayside 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 shall 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 shall be maintained or restored; and
- c) A new *mineral aggregate operation* or wayside pits and quarries shall only be permitted in the parts of the Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area not identified in 4.3.2.9 (a) and (b) where the applicant demonstrates the following:
 - i. The physical characteristics of the proposed site allow for the rehabilitation of the property back to an *agricultural condition* ; or
 - ii. If the physical characteristics of the proposed site will not allow for the rehabilitation of the property back to an *agricultural condition*, the applicant has considered 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 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 shall be maximized as a first priority to allow production of specialty crops.
- 10. 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 *subwatershed plan*.

4.4 Cultural Heritage Resources

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

- 1. *Cultural heritage resources* shall be *conserved* in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities.
- 2. Municipalities shall work with stakeholders, as well as First Nations and Métis communities, in developing and implementing official plan policies

and strategies for the identification, wise use and management of *cultural heritage resources*.

3. Municipalities are encouraged to consider the Greenbelt's vision and goals in preparing archaeological management plans and municipal cultural plans and consider them in their decision-making.

4.5 Existing Uses

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

1. All *existing uses* 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. Municipalities are encouraged to retain existing lots of record for *agricultural uses* and discourage non-agricultural uses where appropriate.
3. Outside of the Natural Heritage System, second dwelling units are permitted within single dwellings permitted in accordance with sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 or within existing accessory structures on the same lot.
4. 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 4.2.2.2, new municipal services are not required; and
 - b) The use does not expand into *key natural heritage features* or *key hydrologic features* or their associated *vegetation protection zones*, 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.
5. Expansions or alterations to existing buildings and structures for *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses* or *on-farm diversified uses* and expansions to existing 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 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.
- 6. 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 discouraged and may only be permitted for:
 - a) Outside *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, the range of uses permitted by the policies of this Plan;
 - b) Within *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*:
 - 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;
 - c) Acquiring land for *infrastructure* purposes, subject to the *infrastructure* policies of section 4.2;
 - 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 *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*;
 - e) Minor lot adjustments or boundary additions, provided they do not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling in *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and there is no increased fragmentation of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*; and
 - f) The severance of a *residence surplus to a farming operation* as a result of a farm consolidation, on which a habitable residence was an *existing use*, provided that:

- i. The severance will be limited to the minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate sewage and water services; and
- ii. 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.

5 Implementation

5.1 Status and Effect

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005* provides for the Greenbelt Plan to be 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.

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 Schedules, together with the text and commentary in sections 1 to 7, 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 conform with all applicable policies of this Plan.

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005* authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make 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 section 5, provide further direction on how this Plan applies to *existing uses*, 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 with this Plan.

5.2.1 Decisions on Applications Related to Previous Site-Specific Approvals

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 the *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 the *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 *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*, the *Planning Act* or the *Condominium Act, 1998* to conform with the policies in the Greenbelt Plan. Second, section 9 of the *Greenbelt Act, 2005* requires municipalities to amend their official plans to conform with the Greenbelt Plan.

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, the Natural Heritage System and the agricultural land base. Municipalities shall provide a map showing known *key natural heritage features* 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* 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 area of the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the NEP and the ORMCP. Within the Protected Countryside, upper- and single-tier municipalities shall refine and augment official plan mapping to bring *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, and *rural lands* into conformity with provincial mapping and implementation procedures. Until the province has completed mapping and the *Agricultural System* implementation procedures, municipalities shall continue to retain existing designations for *prime agricultural areas* within the Protected Countryside.

The *agri-food network* does not require land use designations in official plans. Municipalities are expected to provide policies to maintain and enhance the *agri-food network* and to identify the physical location of components of the *agri-food 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 the Greenbelt Plan, there is nothing in this Plan that limits the ability of decision-makers on planning matters 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 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.

It is intended that the numerical figures identified in this Plan be considered to be approximate and that, for the purposes of preparing official plans, zoning by-laws, subdivision 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 Boundaries, Schedules and Appendices

5.4.1 Boundary of the Greenbelt Plan

The boundary of the Greenbelt Plan, as shown on Schedules 1 to 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).

5.4.2 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 3.2.2.5. No further refinements to the boundaries of the Natural Heritage System can occur after a municipality has made this one-time refinement.

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

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

5.4.3 Schedules and Appendices

The Greenbelt Plan contains four schedules identifying:

1. The Greenbelt Area, 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 Appendices, for reference.

5.5 Plan Review

Through the requirement for a 10-year review, the Province is ensuring that the Greenbelt Plan will remain relevant over time.

The 10-year review of the Greenbelt Plan will be co-ordinated with the reviews of the NEP and the ORMCP.

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.

5.6 Amendments to Greenbelt Plan and Other Provincial Plans

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. 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 creates 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;
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, 3.2 and 3.3 of this Plan.

5.6.1 Growing the Greenbelt

5.6.1.1 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.

5.6.1.2 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 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.

5.6.1.3 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 were added to the Greenbelt after the Plan's initial approval in 2005. The addition of these major watercourses and coastal wetlands has reinforced the important linkages between the Greenbelt and Lake Ontario, as well as their connections to southern Ontario's broader regional natural heritage systems.

5.6.1.4 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.

5.7 Monitoring/Performance Measures

1. The Province, in consultation with municipalities, other public bodies and stakeholders and First Nations and Métis communities, shall develop a set of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the policies in this Plan. The Province shall monitor the implementation of this Plan, including reviewing performance indicators concurrent with any review of this Plan.
2. Municipalities shall monitor and report on the implementation of this Plan's policies within their municipality, in accordance with any reporting requirements, data standards and any other guidelines that may be issued by the Province.
3. The Province may require municipalities and conservation authorities to provide data and information to the Province, as collected in accordance with the policies of section 5.7.2, to demonstrate progress made towards the implementation of this Plan.

5.8 Greenbelt Council

The *Greenbelt Act, 2005* requires that the Minister of Municipal Affairs 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.

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

For lands falling within the Urban River Valley, the following policies shall apply:

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.

7 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).

Agri-food network

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

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 System

Means the system mapped and issued by the Province, comprised of a group of inter-connected elements that collectively create a viable, thriving agricultural sector. It has two components:

- a) 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; and

- b) an *agri-food network*, which includes *infrastructure*, services and assets important to the viability of the agri-food 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, 2014).

Agriculture-related uses

Means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are 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).

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 of the *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, transportation options and *public service facilities*. *Complete*

communities are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts (Growth Plan).

Connectivity

Means the degree to which *key natural heritage features* 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.

Conserved

Means the identification, protection, management and use of *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 (PPS, 2014).

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 interrelationship, meaning or association. Examples may include, but are not limited to, heritage conservation districts designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*; villages, parks, gardens, battlefields, mainstreets 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

Means *built heritage resources*, *cultural heritage landscapes* and *archaeological resources* that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.

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

Development

Means the creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures requiring approval under the *Planning Act*, but does not include:

- a) activities that create or maintain *infrastructure* authorized under an environmental assessment process; or
- b) works subject to the *Drainage Act* (Based on PPS, 2014 and modified for this Plan).

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.

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 feature* 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 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

Means:

- a) uses legally established prior to the date that the Greenbelt Plan came into force on December 16, 2004; or

- b) for the purposes of lands added to the Greenbelt Plan after December 16, 2004, uses legally established prior to the date the Greenbelt Plan came into force in respect of the land on which the uses are established.

Fish habitat

Means, as defined in the *Fisheries Act*, 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, 2014).

Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH)

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* (Growth Plan).

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

Means:

- 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, including life processes such as reproduction, rearing, hibernation, migration or feeding, as approved by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry; and
- places in the areas described in clause (a) or (b), whichever is applicable, that are used by members of the species as dens, nests, hibernacula or other residences (PPS, 2014).

Hazardous lands

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, 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.

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, 2014).

Infrastructure

Means physical structures (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, 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 3.2.5.

Key natural heritage features

Means a *key natural heritage feature* as described in section 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 and Forestry using evaluation procedures established by that Ministry, as amended from time to time.

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 to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution. It includes 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*.

Major recreational use

Means a recreational use that requires large-scale modification of terrain, vegetation or both and usually also requires 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) lands under license or permit, other than for wayside pits and quarries, issued in accordance with the *Aggregate Resources Act*;
- b) 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 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, 2014).

Municipal water services

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

New multiple 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, 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).

Permanent stream

Means a stream that continually flows in an average year.

Prime agricultural area

Means 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 land

Means *specialty crop areas* and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2, and 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, 2014).

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, 2014).

Public service facilities

Means land, buildings and structures for the provision of programs and services provided or subsidized by a government or other body, such as social assistance, recreation, police and fire protection, health and educational programs, and cultural services. *Public service facilities* do not include *infrastructure* (PPS, 2014).

Residence surplus to a farm operation

Means an existing habitable 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, 2014).

Rural lands

Means lands which are located outside *settlement areas* and which are outside *prime agricultural areas* (PPS, 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.

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.

Seepage areas and springs

Means 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 in accordance with the policies in the Growth Plan. Where there are no lands that have been designated for development, the settlement area may be no larger than the area where development is concentrated (Growth Plan).

Significant

Means:

- a) in regard to *wetlands* and *life science areas of natural and scientific interest*, an area identified as provincially significant using evaluation

procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, as amended from time to time;

- b) 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 and Forestry) identifies criteria relating to the forgoing;
- c) in regard to other features and areas in section 3.2.5 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; and

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* or equivalent in accordance with 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 grading, excavation and the placement of fill that would change the landform and natural vegetative characteristics of a site (PPS, 2014).

Specialty crop areas

Means areas designated using 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;
- b) farmers skilled in the production of specialty crops; 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).

Subwatershed plan

Means a plan that reflects and refines the goals, objectives, targets and assessments of *watershed planning* for smaller drainage areas, is tailored to subwatershed needs and addresses local issues.

A *subwatershed plan* should: consider existing development and evaluate impacts of any potential or proposed land uses and development; identify hydrologic features, areas, linkages and functions; identify natural features, areas and related *hydrologic functions*; and provide 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, objectives, actions, thresholds, targets and best management practices for development, for water and wastewater servicing, for stormwater management, for managing and minimizing impacts related to severe weather events, 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 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.

Threatened species

Means a species that is 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*, *key hydrologic features* 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, 2014).

Vegetation protection zone

Means a vegetated buffer area surrounding a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*.

Vulnerable

Means surface and/or ground water that can be easily changed or impacted (PPS, 2014).

Watershed planning

Means planning that provides a framework for establishing goals, objectives and direction for the protection of water resources, 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.

Watershed planning typically includes: watershed characterization, a water budget and conservation plan; nutrient loading assessments; consideration of climate change impacts and severe weather events; land and water use management objectives and strategies; scenario modelling to evaluate the impacts of forecasted growth and servicing options, and mitigation measures; an environmental monitoring plan; requirements for the use of environmental best management practices, programs, and performance measures; criteria for evaluating the protection of quality and quantity of water; 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 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.

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.

Wetlands are 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.

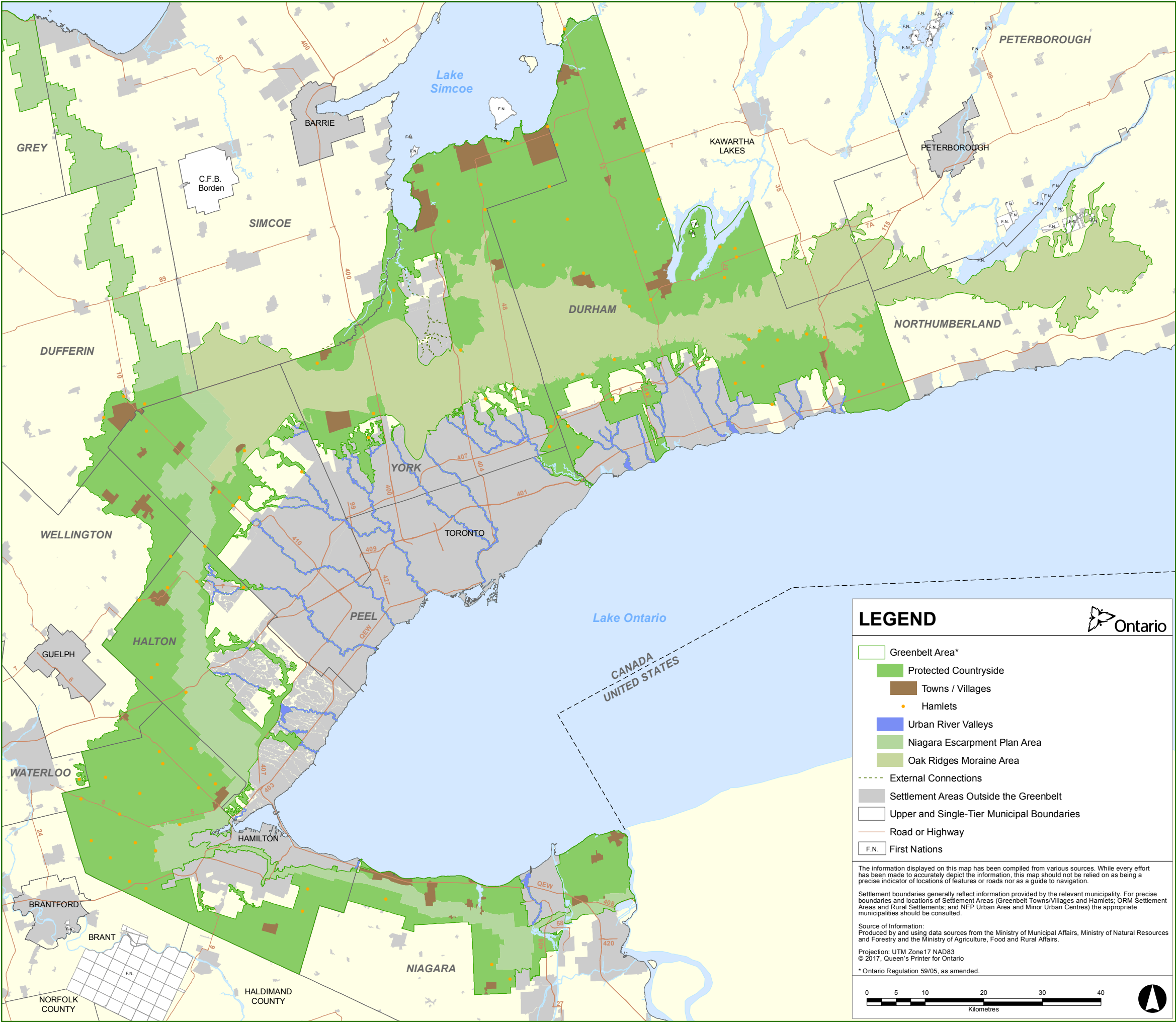
Wildlife habitat


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 or life cycle; and areas which are important to migratory or non-migratory species (PPS, 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 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 definition for "forest" (PPS, 2014).





LEGEND


 Greenbelt Area*


 Protected Countryside


 Towns / Villages


 Hamlets


 Urban River Valleys


 Niagara Escarpment Plan Area


 Oak Ridges Moraine Area

 External Connections

 Settlement Areas Outside the Greenbelt

 Upper and Single-Tier Municipal Boundaries

 Road or Highway

 F.N. First Nations

The information displayed on this map has been compiled from various sources. While every effort has been made to accurately depict the information, this map should not be relied on as being a precise indicator of locations of features or roads nor as a guide to navigation.

Settlement boundaries generally reflect information provided by the relevant municipality. For precise boundaries and locations of Settlement Areas (Greenbelt Towns/Villages and Hamlets; ORM Settlement Areas and Rural Settlements; and NEP Urban Area and Minor Urban Centres) the appropriate municipalities should be consulted.


Source of Information:
Produced by and using data sources from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

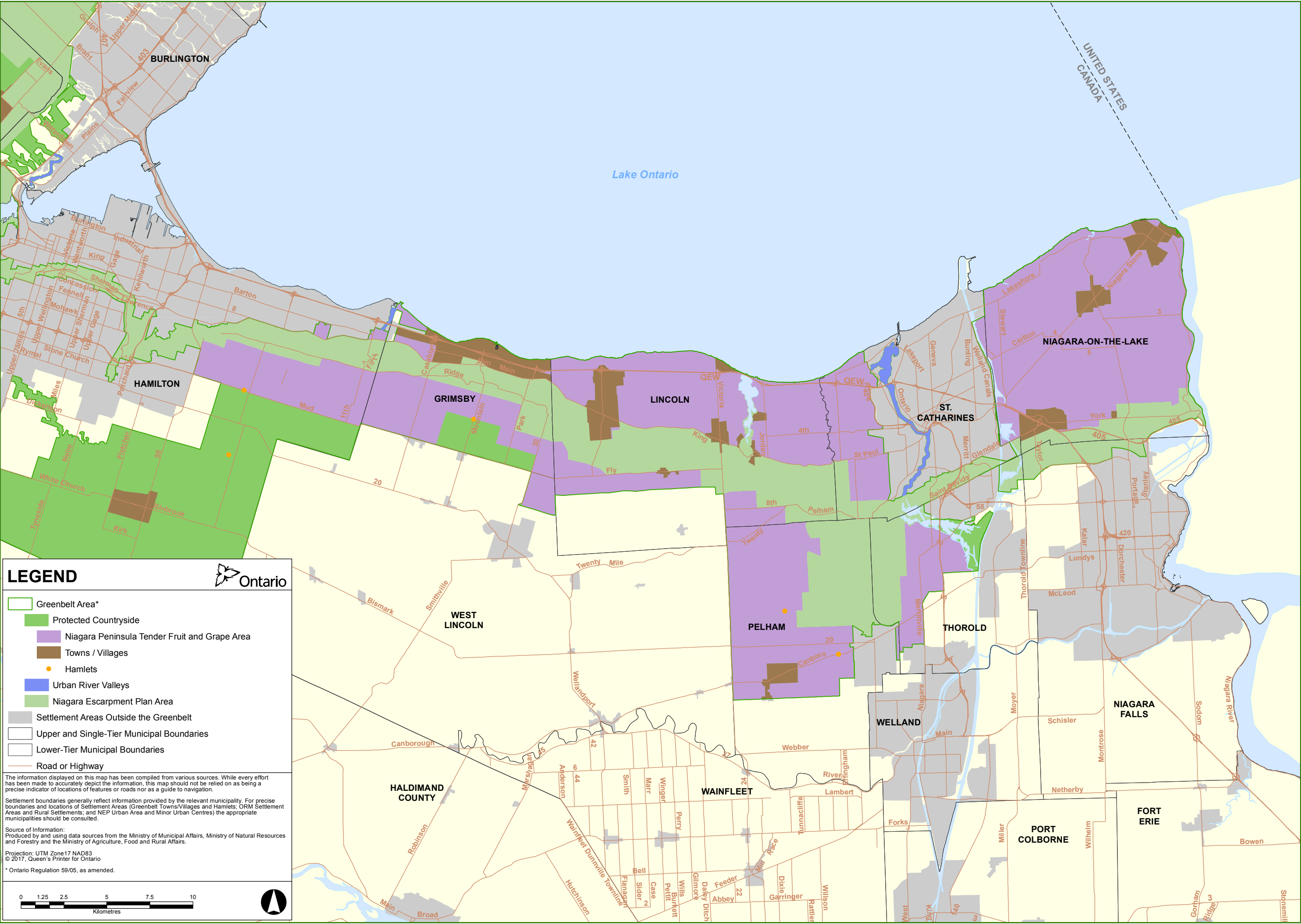
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* Ontario Regulation 59/05, as amended.

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Kilometres



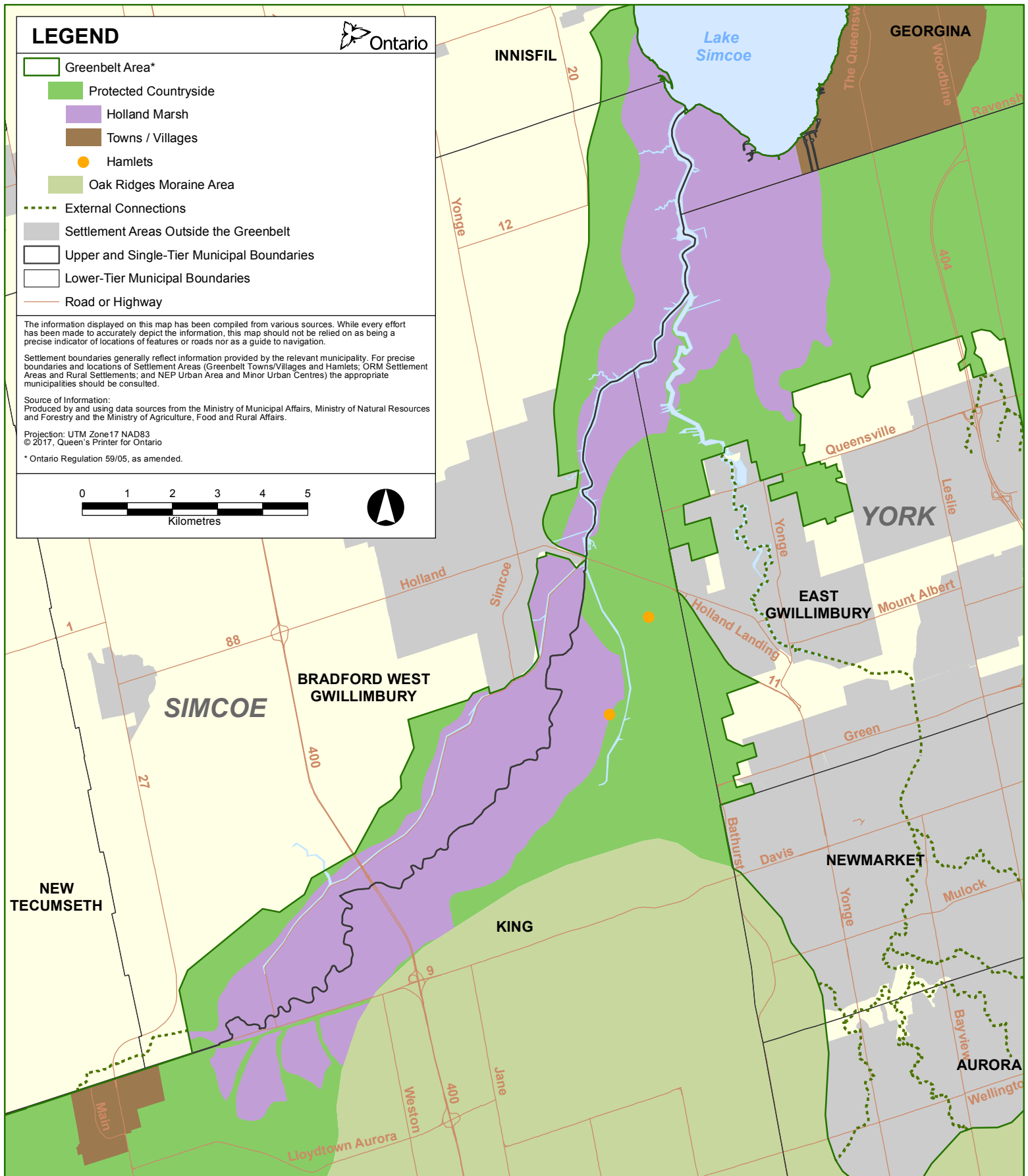


greenbelt

PLAN 2017

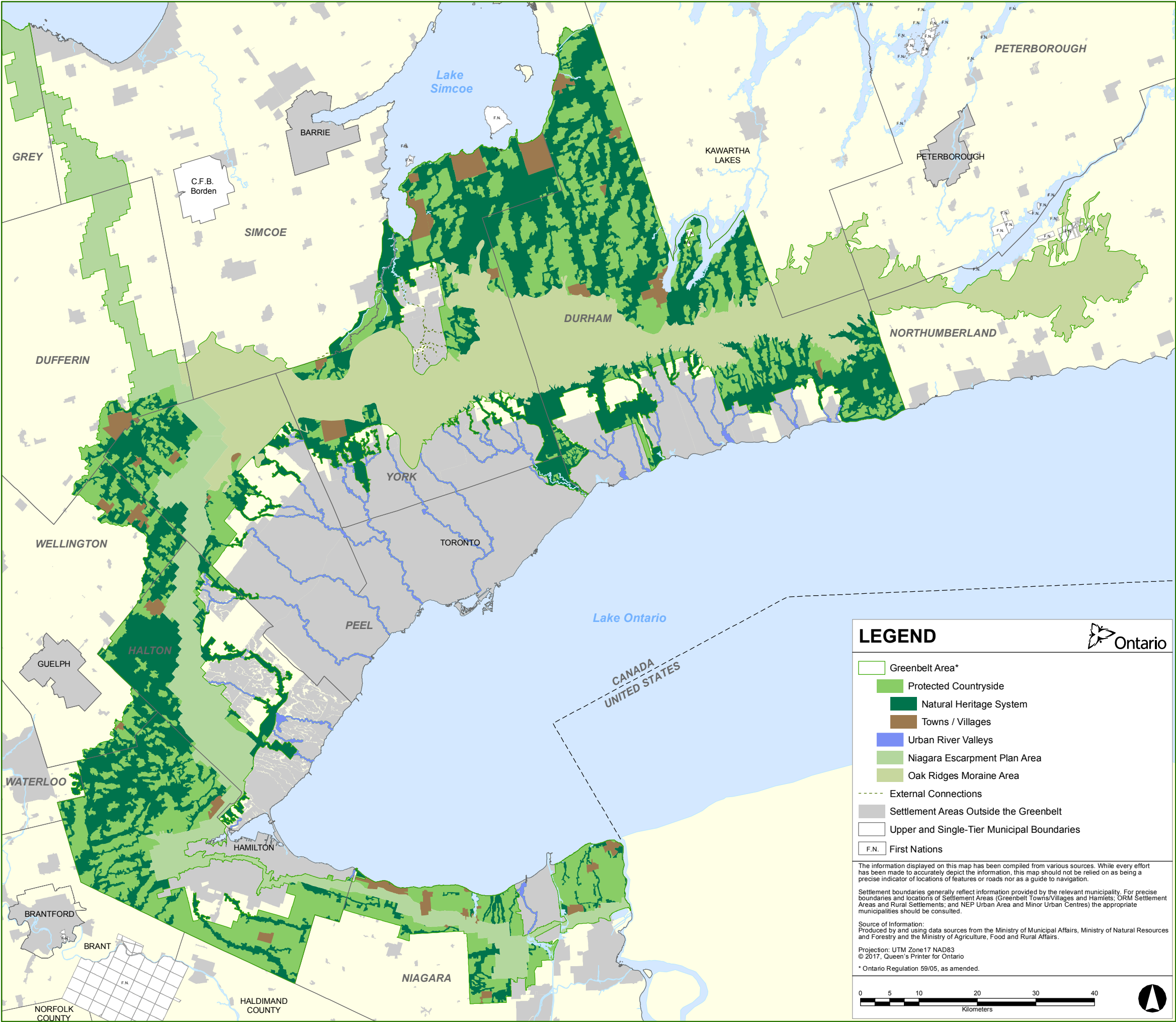
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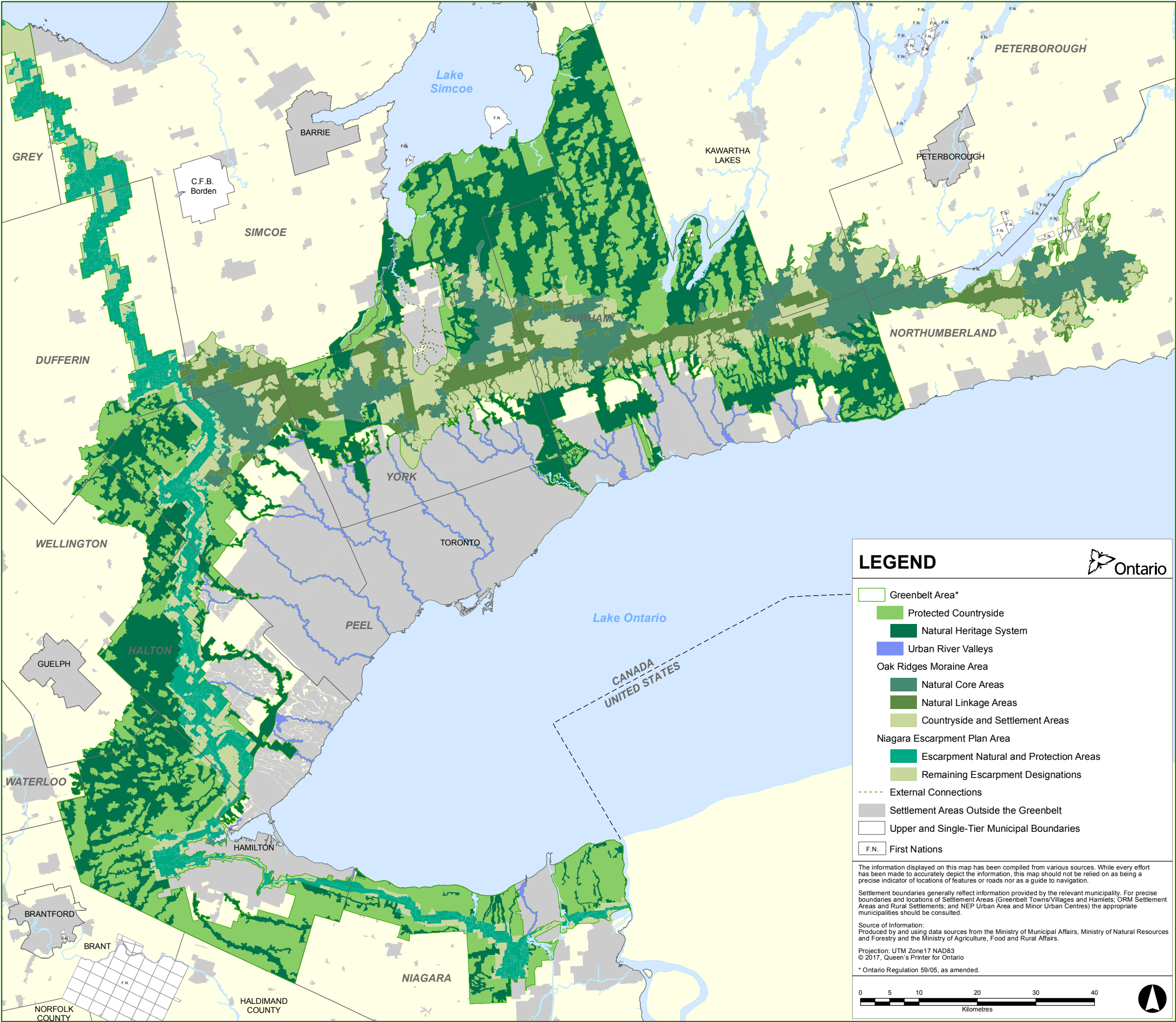
Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area



Schedule 3: Holland Marsh

greenbelt
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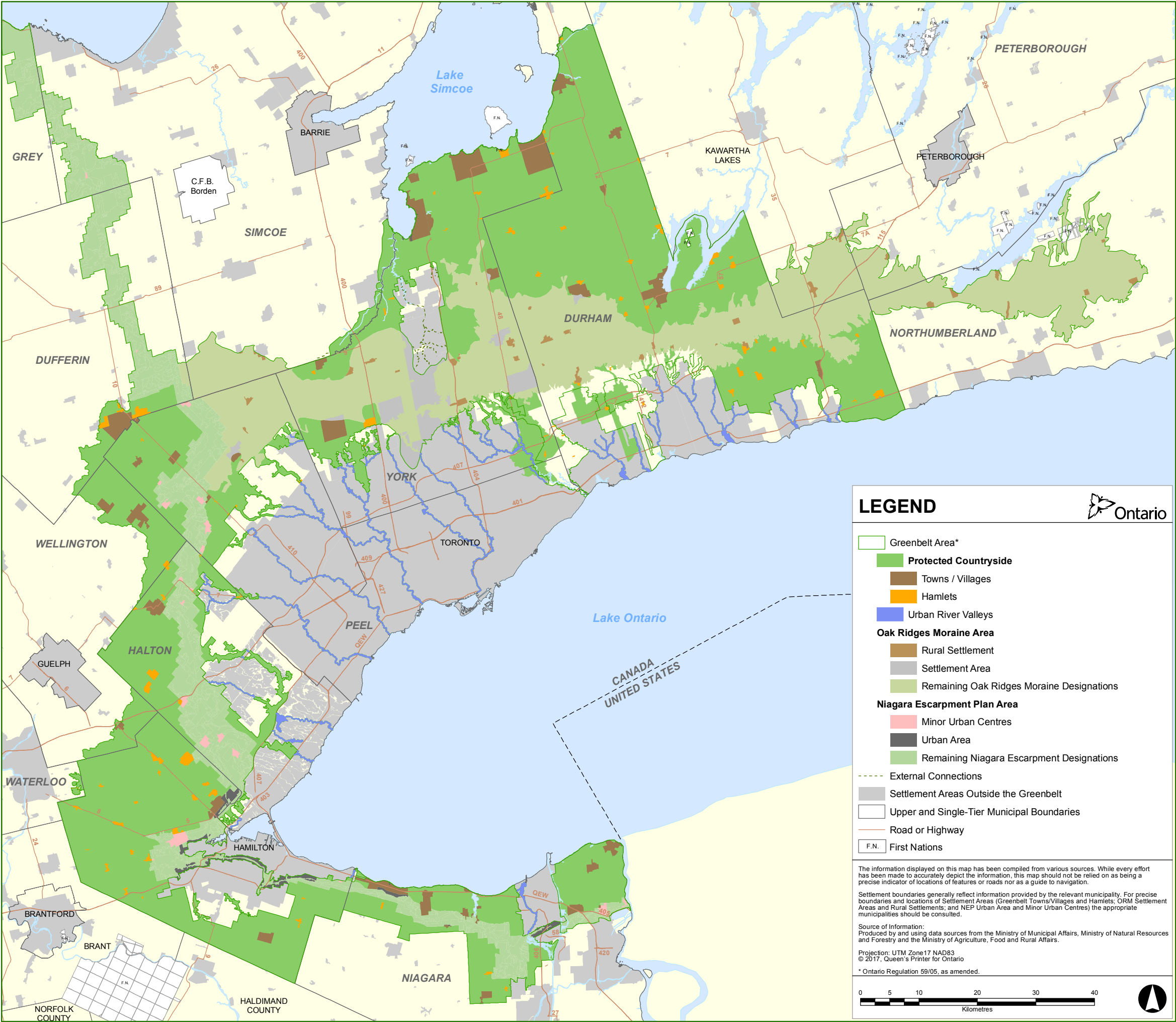



greenbelt


PLAN 2017


Appendix I:

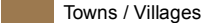
Schematic showing natural system connections among the Protected Countryside, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine

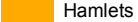



LEGEND

 Greenbelt Area*


 **Protected Countryside**


 Towns / Villages


 Hamlets

 Urban River Valleys


Oak Ridges Moraine Area

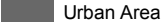
 Rural Settlement

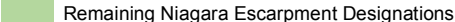
 Settlement Area


 Remaining Oak Ridges Moraine Designations

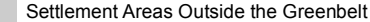
Niagara Escarpment Plan Area


 Minor Urban Centres

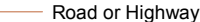
 Urban Area


 Remaining Niagara Escarpment Designations

 External Connections

 Settlement Areas Outside the Greenbelt

 Upper and Single-Tier Municipal Boundaries

 Road or Highway

 First Nations

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Appendix II:

Schematic showing settlements within Greenbelt Area

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

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