

Toward a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt

Greenbelt Task Force

Discussion Paper

*A Framework for Consultation
May 2004*

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Introduction

The Greenbelt Protection Act, 2004

In December 2003, the Government of Ontario introduced Bill 27, the proposed Greenbelt Protection Act, 2004, as the first step toward establishing a permanent greenbelt in southern Ontario. The greenbelt would protect environmentally sensitive lands and farmlands, and help manage and contain urban growth.

Good planning for environmental and agricultural protection, and sustainable development, would result in economic benefits to the residents of the Golden Horseshoe. The Government of Ontario has recognized this with the introduction of this legislation.

If passed by the Legislature, the act would create a proposed Greenbelt Study Area. Inside the study area, a moratorium on changes from rural to urban uses would allow time for consultation with stakeholders and the public on what the greenbelt should entail, while protecting rural areas from further urbanization. The moratorium will expire in December 2004. The proposed legislation recognizes:

- the environmental and agricultural significance of the proposed Greenbelt Study Area to the people of Ontario;
- the proposed Greenbelt Study Area's importance as a source of food, water, natural heritage systems, greenspace, recreation and natural resources, which enhance quality of life; and

- the importance of continuing to protect the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The Proposed Greenbelt Study Area

The proposed Greenbelt Study Area is a smaller area located within the central Ontario growth management area. The study area includes lands under the jurisdiction of the Greater Toronto Area regions of Durham, York, Halton and Peel; the cities of Toronto and Hamilton; the tender fruit and grape lands as designated in the Region of Niagara's official plan; the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

The Golden Horseshoe's major urban areas, as well as its hamlets, villages and towns, are all a part of the study area. In countryside areas, it includes farmlands and rural areas, cultural and natural heritage features, provincial and regional parks, and rivers and river valleys. It also includes highways and railways, transmission lines and fibre optic cables, as well as the many other activities and landscapes that contribute to a vital countryside.

Ultimately, the provincial government will decide what to propose for the greenbelt, within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area. The task force, however, will provide recommendations to the government, and welcomes your comments on what lands should be included, or not included, in the greenbelt.

The Greenbelt Task Force

In February 2004, John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, established the 13-member Greenbelt Task Force. The task force, whose members represent a diverse group of stakeholders, will develop recommendations on how the province could most effectively establish a permanent Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt.

The task force met 13 times, and consulted with municipal leaders, in March and April 2004. It considered many approaches to greenbelt protection, and has outlined a number of proposed approaches for a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt in this discussion paper.

Members

Robert MacIsaac, Chair, Mayor of the City of Burlington

Michael Bunce, Associate Professor of Geography, University of Toronto at Scarborough

Jim Faught, Executive Director, Ontario Nature

Mary Lou Garr, Regional Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Natalie Helferty, Ecologist, Natural Heritage Consulting

Carol Hochu, President, Aggregate Producers Association of Ontario

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Deborah Schulte, Humber Watershed Alliance

David J. Stewart, President, Mattamy Homes

Alan C. Veale, former Director (Commissioner) Planning and Development, Regional Municipality of Niagara

Donald J. P. Ziraldo, Co-Founder and President, Inniskillin Wines

Vision and Goals

The Greenbelt Task Force developed the following vision and goals statements in its initial meetings. These statements were used as a guide during the task force's pre-consultation discussions, and to test proposed recommendations.

VISION

The Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt will be a permanent and sustainable legacy for current and future generations. The greenbelt will enhance our urban and rural areas with a continuous and connected system of open spaces that:

- protects and enhances environmentally sensitive lands and natural heritage systems;
- recognizes the region's social, natural and economic needs;
- sustains and nurtures the region's agricultural sector;
- conserves for sustainable use the region's significant natural resources; and
- continues to provide high-quality and compatible recreational and tourism opportunities.

GOALS

The greenbelt will enhance quality of life by serving an array of functions across the Golden Horseshoe region, including:

- providing greenspace between, and links to, open space within the region's growing urban areas;
- protecting, sustaining and restoring the ecological features and functions of the natural environment;
- preserving viable agricultural land as a continuing commercial source of food and employment by recognizing the critical importance of the agriculture sector's prosperity to the regional economy;
- sustaining the region's countryside and rural communities;
- conserving and making available natural resources critical for a thriving economy; and
- ensuring that infrastructure investment achieves the environmental, social and economic aims of the greenbelt.

Stakeholder and Public Consultations

Before delivering its final recommendations, the task force wants to hear a broad range of views on the issues and proposed approaches in this discussion paper.

In May and June 2004, the task force will host public meetings and stakeholder workshops across the Golden Horseshoe. A meeting schedule and more information on how you can participate is outlined in “Next Steps,” the last section of this discussion paper.

The task force will consider views and ideas expressed at these meetings, as well as written submissions, in crafting its final recommendations. The government expects to propose a definitive approach to a green-belt based on task force recommendations this fall. The public will have a chance to comment on the proposed approach before the government takes action.

Background and Context

Central Ontario and the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt

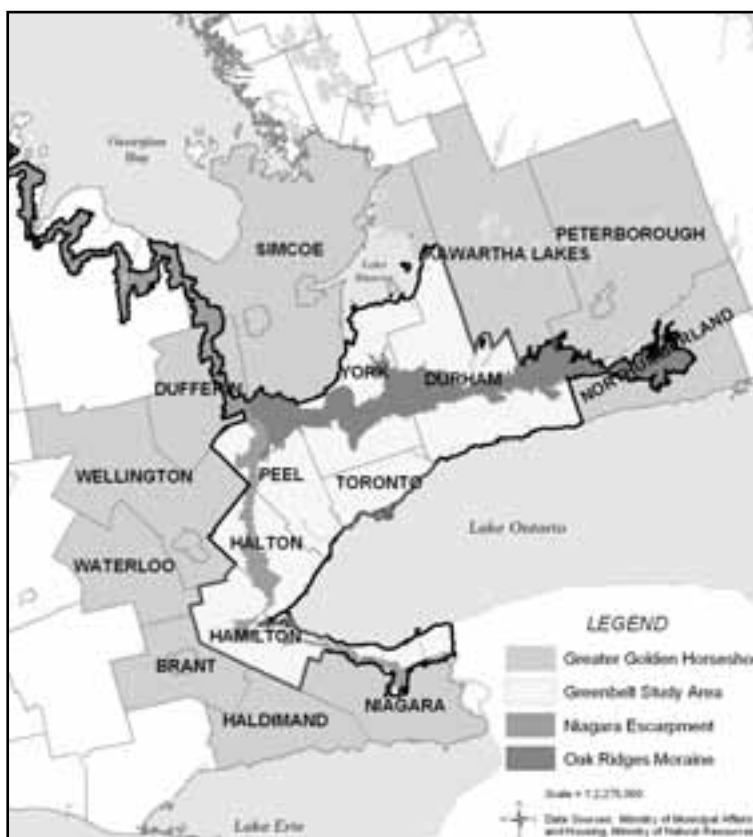
Central Ontario is experiencing strong population growth that is expected to continue into the future. The population, estimated at 7.5 million in 2001, is forecast to grow to 11 million by 2031 (Ministry of Finance). Central Ontario's population growth will likely be 80 per cent of the province's overall population growth during this period.

Population growth and economic growth provide more choices about where to live and work. They also generate investment,

income, tax revenue and innovation. Property values rise. Growth also provides opportunities to revitalize underused lands and achieve social objectives.

But when rapid growth is not accompanied by long-term planning on a regional scale, inefficient development patterns can result. These patterns include increased air and water pollution, loss of greenspace and agricultural land, inefficient infrastructure investment, and fewer transportation options and an over-reliance on the private automobile resulting in traffic congestion.

Studies have shown that if current trends persist in central Ontario, in the next 30 years, travelling in rush hour will take 45 per cent longer than it does now. In addition, development will consume another 1,069 square kilometers of mainly prime agricultural land, an area nearly twice the size of the City of Toronto.



Regional Planning – An Ontario Tradition

There is a solid tradition of land-use planning in Ontario. In central Ontario, growth management and the concept of a regional structure and land-use plan to guide growth for the region date back to the late 1960s. Some of the major exercises for the Greater Toronto Area include: *Toronto Centred Region Plan / Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex* (Design for Development), 1970 & 1974; *Shaping Growth in the GTA/GTA Vision*, 1992; and *Report of the GTA Task Force (Golden Report)*, 1996.

This history has resulted in growth and development that some would argue has been quite well-managed. Compared to many American jurisdictions, this region has achieved higher densities, greater transit usage, and more vibrant downtowns. It has also maintained healthier environmental and social conditions.

However, residents of central Ontario are experiencing increased traffic congestion and longer commutes, increasingly threatened water quality, escalating costs to maintain infrastructure, and loss of agricultural lands, greenspace, and natural heritage features. These challenges undermining quality of life also threaten the region's economic competitiveness and its ability to attract wealth-generating industries.

Ontario also has some of the world's most sophisticated greenbelt models in the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Parkway Belt West Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Ottawa National Capital Commission greenbelt.

We must make critical decisions about land use in Ontario. As our province continues to grow, steps must be taken to protect natural systems, heritage features and greenspace; the environmental quality of our air, water and soil; agricultural lands and viable rural communities; and recreational opportunities to ensure that our communities remain strong, healthy, prosperous and livable.

Greenbelt Case Studies

Many growing metropolitan areas have established greenbelts to protect greenspace, agricultural lands, recreational opportunities, cultural and natural heritage features, and resources.

Greenbelts are composed of land located around urban centres or along urban growth corridors that is protected by various restrictions on development. Most greenbelts have been established to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, valuable resources such as farmland, forests and mineral resources, and the unique character of rural areas.

A greenbelt can be a tool in curtailing urban encroachment and protecting the environment, productive agricultural areas and greenspace; and improving quality of life for urban and rural populations. A greenbelt can be a key component of a growth management strategy that directs urban development into existing or designated urban areas, increasing the efficiency of the region's existing infrastructure and services.

In addition to growth management considerations, the protection of a greenbelt can provide other significant benefits. A greenbelt may include agricultural lands and natural

resources, environmentally sensitive lands, areas of natural and scientific interest, habitats of vulnerable, threatened and endangered species, valley and stream corridors, and woodlands. Preserving these lands can maintain or enhance the biodiversity, health, resiliency and connectivity of the natural environment, improving the overall health of human communities.

A greenbelt can contribute to local and regional economic vitality by improving environmental quality, protecting agricultural lands, attracting potential employees, providing recreational opportunities and encouraging reinvestment. It can enhance the quality of life of a metropolitan area and its global competitiveness.

Related Provincial Initiatives

There are a number of ongoing and emerging provincial government initiatives involving the proposed Greenbelt Study Area that require coordination and integration.

STRONG COMMUNITIES

The government is committed to building strong communities across Ontario. A number of initiatives are under way to support strong communities, including a rural development program, amendments to the *Planning Act*, rent reform and federal-provincial negotiations on a “new deal” for municipalities.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (PIR) is developing a growth management plan that includes a network of regional nodes and corridors as areas to target for intensification and transit investment in an effort to reduce the demand for new land.

The growth management plan will also outline the long-term infrastructure and service needs of our communities, which can be costly. Some communities in central Ontario are currently experiencing degraded infrastructure systems, and volume-related constraints on, for example, water and wastewater services. These communities cannot accommodate future growth without major capital upgrades. Transportation investments are also required to service growth needs.

TRANSPORTATION

In addition to the growth management initiative, the government is developing a transportation strategy for the Golden Horseshoe.

As with the growth management plan, the transportation strategy will support improved public transit and will identify critical investments required to support the region’s long-range infrastructure requirements to ensure the efficient movement of people, goods and services throughout the Golden Horseshoe.

As with other linear features, the routing of transportation corridors is a complicated process of attempting to link communities while protecting sensitive areas.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION

In mid-February 2004, the Ministry of the Environment began consultations on how best to deliver watershed-based source protection as a way of securing the long-term quality and quantity of water resources throughout the province. Although this initiative extends beyond the Golden Horseshoe and the proposed Greenbelt Study Area, it may result in policy, procedures and legislative changes that could affect the greenbelt.

HERITAGE

In April 2004, the government introduced Bill 60, the proposed Ontario Heritage Amendment Act, 2004, which, if passed, would in addition to other matters give the province and municipalities new powers to stop demolition of heritage sites, subject to an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

PLANNING REFORM

The government will be consulting on its proposed Planning Reform initiative in the late spring. The components of this review include Bill 26, the proposed Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act, 2004, any additional planning reforms that may be necessary, the five-year review of the Provincial Policy Statement, Ontario Municipal Board Reform and implementation tools that may be needed to achieve the government's strong communities objectives.

The "Layers" of a Greenbelt

The Greenbelt Task Force considered five "layers" for the proposed greenbelt that will provide a framework for stakeholder and public consultations. These are:

- environmental protection;
- agricultural protection, including tender fruit and grape lands and the Holland Marsh;
- transportation and infrastructure;
- natural resources, particularly mineral resources; and
- culture, tourism and recreation opportunities.

In addition, two overarching themes include:

- Ontario's growth management and other related initiatives as the context for development of a permanent Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt; and
- implementation and administration approaches, models and tools for establishing and administering a greenbelt.

While each "layer" has its own section in this discussion paper, no priority should be implied by the order or content of the sections. Different functions are likely to be more or less important or relevant in different areas of the proposed greenbelt.

Environmental Protection

Environmental Features

The task force recognizes that the proposed Greenbelt Study Area contains significant natural heritage features including wetlands, kettle lakes, rare and threatened animals, and plants and habitat. It also features river and valley systems connecting the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment, an internationally recognized area of ecological importance, to the Great Lakes and Lake Simcoe.

Protecting greenspace helps to ensure the maintenance or enhancement of a number of important environmental benefits that contribute to healthy communities and an enhanced quality of life, including:

- biodiversity through protection and restoration of representative natural areas, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and connectivity;
- clean air and clean, abundant water;
- varied and scenic landscapes; and
- outdoor recreation opportunities, including places to enjoy and learn about nature and the outdoors.

Studies on the Environment

Over the last few decades, many have advocated for a more comprehensive, systemic approach to protecting the environmental health of landscapes in southern Ontario (e.g. Toronto Centred Region; Crombie Commission; Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee's Kanter Report, *Greenspace for All*).

More recently, various groups have articulated a natural systems approach to environmental protection for southern Ontario, proposing the protection of significant environmental areas through an ecological or greenspace system (e.g., Environmental Commissioner of Ontario's Report 2003; Nature Conservancy of Canada's *Conservation Blueprint* project; Federation of Ontario Naturalists' paper *Southern Ontario Greenway Strategy*, 2004; the Neptis Foundation paper *Greenlands in the Central Ontario Zone*, 2003). The system would recognize the importance of protecting and enhancing core water and land areas and the connections or linkages between them, including linkages to Lake Ontario.

A Systems Approach to Natural Heritage and Water Resources

The proposed greenbelt provides an opportunity to enhance environmental protection in southern Ontario through a natural systems approach.

- **Natural heritage system** – protecting and enhancing the health, diversity, abundance and connectivity of natural heritage features and functions. This includes:
 - the consideration of a continuous natural heritage system which involves identifying, protecting and enhancing core natural areas, or areas containing the greatest concentrations of

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- significant natural heritage features, and providing connections and linkages between them, such as those reflected in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) and major river and valley systems; and,
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- the identification and protection of individually significant natural heritage features and functions, such as wetlands, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), and significant woodlands, throughout the study area.
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- **Water resources system** – protecting and, where necessary, improving and restoring a clean and abundant water supply, including healthy functioning aquatic ecosystems. This includes:
 - a water resources system to protect and improve the health and sustainability of hydrological integrity. This could include the identification and protection of source areas, sensitive headwaters, riparian corridors, etc. It would also require integration between the greenbelt and the broader water resource systems being developed through source water protection and watershed management, such as the ORMCP;
 - the identification and protection of significant hydrological features, such as wetlands, streams, lakes, aquifers, recharge areas and springs, and their associated hydrological functions; and,
 - a coordinated approach to assessing impacts of land-use change on water quality, water quantity and related hydrological functions, such as watershed management and lake-basin management, throughout the study area.
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- **Landform conservation** – protecting the diversity and character of the natural and open rural landscape, including the unique and sensitive landforms of the area. This includes:
 - the development of a landform conservation strategy to identify and protect areas of unique, distinctive and complex natural systems within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area, such as the NEP and ORMCP; and
 - the identification, protection and enhancement of some of the more unique and sensitive landform features, such as earth science ANSIs, distinctive geological and geomorphic features, vistas and panoramas.
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- **Network of open space** – identifying existing and potential public parks and open spaces, such as Bronte Creek Provincial Park, Rouge Park, the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve and conservation authority lands, that can be maintained and secured to support a natural system for future generations. This could include:
 - a system of public parks, open space and trails across the proposed Greenbelt Study Area that meet a number of objectives, including environmental protection, outdoor recreation, recreational opportunities, tourism benefits, public access and cultural and natural heritage appreciation within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area; and/or
 - a system of natural areas, other open areas or depleted mineral aggregate operations where there is an opportunity to restore such areas to a more natural condition.
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To ensure the long-term protection of both the features and functions of a natural system, compatible uses such as aggregate extraction, agriculture and recreation can co-exist with environmental protection, provided they do not hinder the integrity of the system. Over the years, farmers have been stewards of many agricultural and natural features that co-exist with their agricultural operations.

In developing a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, the task force envisions that the suggested approaches for environmental protection will be integrated with the proposed approaches for: mineral aggregates; tender fruit and grape lands, and agriculture; transportation and infrastructure; and culture, recreation and tourism opportunities to ensure a diversity of greenbelt functions are achieved.

Management Tools for Environmental Protection

The development and management of a greenbelt for environmental protection needs to be achieved through a range of management tools used in combination with one another.

PLANNING CONTROLS

The use of planning controls will be discussed in greater detail in other parts of this paper.

NON-PLANNING TOOLS

Non-planning mechanisms can be used in tandem with a land-use planning frame-

work to achieve the overall objective of environmental protection in the greenbelt area. These could include:

- developing a **greenbelt parks and trail strategy** to identify potential sites for future parks, and opportunities to make greenbelt lands accessible to the public. Continued implementation efforts in these areas will result in additional environmental protection and socio-economic benefits, such as nature and tourism. Beyond these two areas, there are other provincial, regional and local park and trail systems, such as Rouge Park, that could become the “backbone” of a more extensive parks and open space system across the proposed Greenbelt Study Area. It should be noted that not all areas of publicly owned greenlands should be accessible to the public, since there may be conflicts between conservation and recreational opportunities;
- developing a **greenbelt acquisition and stewardship strategy** to help guide resource allocation and provide consistent direction for stewardship programs within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area. The Neptis Foundation’s Greenlands paper (2002) recommends that a central body be responsible for coordinating acquisition and land stewardship initiatives in order to pool the financial resources and expertise of government and non-government organizations. However, it is recognized that both the Niagara Escarpment Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan have already established coordinating bodies and have mechanisms in place;

- requiring municipalities to pass **tree conservation bylaws** to prohibit or regulate the harm, destruction or removal of trees, particularly in areas where urban forest cover is rapidly diminishing and/or where woodlands are not managed. The proposed Greenbelt Protection Act, 2004 allows for a Minister's regulation to prohibit the cutting or removal of trees in the proposed Greenbelt Study Area; and
- requiring municipalities to pass **site alteration bylaws** to prohibit or regulate the placing or dumping of fill; the removal of topsoil, including peat; and the alteration of the grade of land, particularly where land disturbance activities negatively impacts environmental features and functions. The proposed Greenbelt Protection Act, 2004 allows for a Minister's regulation to prohibit site alteration and the grading of land in the proposed Greenbelt Study Area.

Proposed Approaches to Environmental Protection

The task force is considering a systems approach for environmental protection in the greenbelt:

SCALE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WITHIN THE GREENBELT

The Province, in consultation with key stakeholders, should define a system of natural and hydrological features and functions.

This system should include:

- *provincially significant and/or major natural heritage and hydrological features and functions (e.g., Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, Rouge Valley); and*
- *connections between these major features and functions, including public park/open space lands and stream/river valley linkages to major water bodies such as the Great Lakes and Lake Simcoe.*

And this system could include:

- *regionally significant features and functions (e.g., portions of the Iroquois shoreline).*

PRIORITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The system of natural heritage and hydrological features and functions within the greenbelt will have a hierarchy of environmental protection:

- *sensitive areas, as defined by the province in consultation with key stakeholders, where only very limited uses (e.g., conservation, existing agriculture) would be permitted; and*
- *less sensitive areas where a variety of compatible uses, consistent with the objectives of the greenbelt, would be permitted.*

Agricultural Protection

Ontario enjoys many social, economic and environmental benefits from the agricultural sector, including exports and employment from the agricultural economy, environmental stewardship, connectivity for wildlife species, locally-produced food and specialty crops, and support for a strong rural character in communities outside of the urbanized core.

Protecting agricultural lands within a greenbelt is an important part of ensuring a healthy, working agricultural sector in the Golden Horseshoe for future generations.

Prime Agricultural Lands

Southern Ontario's prime agricultural areas are composed of Class 1, 2 and 3 soils, and are considered to be some of the best land in the world. They are a finite resource. Prime agricultural lands make up only 12 per cent of Ontario's land base, and only five per cent of Canada's total land base.

Outside of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) area, the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) area, and the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve, the majority of the non-urban lands in the proposed Greenbelt Study Area are classified as prime agricultural lands.

The proximity of farmland to existing urban areas and the attractiveness of level farmland for new development have resulted in competition for land uses. Many in the agricultural sector have identified the pressures of lot fragmentation and urban development on agricultural lands, and have pressed for clear action to address these challenges

(e.g., Niagara Agricultural Task Force report *Securing A Legacy for Niagara's Agricultural Land*, 2003; Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario report *Closer to the Heart*, 2002; GTA Federations of Agriculture in the *GTA Agricultural Action Plan*, 2004, and Caldwell and Weir's *Ontario's Countryside* report on severance activity). Urban boundary encroachments, non-farm uses, land speculation and lot-by-lot severances have, over time, incrementally consumed prime agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses.

Specialty Crop Areas and the Niagara Tender Fruit and Grape Lands

While prime agricultural land is a finite resource that should be protected from development pressures, specialty crop areas such as the tender fruit and grape lands and the Holland Marsh are unique, and represent a significantly smaller portion of the land base.

The Niagara region supports a diverse and strong agricultural community that includes not only tender fruit and grape production, but also greenhouse produce, field crops and livestock. The tender fruit and grape lands located in the Niagara region, and a portion of Hamilton, however, have long been regarded as a nationally unique agricultural resource, and have become a major tourist draw and a focal point for local and regional economic development.

While the importance of these lands has been recognized in local and regional land-use planning, economic development activities that have brought prosperity to the region have also brought non-farm development and other pressures associated with urbanization.

The tender fruit and grape lands in the proposed Greenbelt Study Area described in Bill 27 are based on the Region of Niagara's Official Plan designations for "good tender fruit and good grape lands." These regional official plan land-use designations were put in place in the 1980s. The "good grape lands" designation to the south of the Niagara Escarpment may need to be reviewed and more closely defined.

The Viability of Agriculture

Preserving agricultural lands is only one aspect of creating the conditions for agricultural communities to thrive. The GTA Agricultural Action Plan and the Niagara Agricultural task force have identified that many approaches and tools are necessary to foster and support a strong, vibrant and healthy agricultural economy. Examples of the approaches and tools used in other jurisdictions include land trusts, conservation easements, financial incentives, supportive infrastructure investment, education and marketing, as well as land-use plans and zoning.

The task force recognizes the importance of ensuring the viability of agriculture, and recognizes that land-use provisions alone are not enough to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture within the greenbelt. Ensuring that prime agricultural areas are

sufficiently stable and protected is a key part of providing more certainty to the agricultural sector.

Proposed Approaches to the Protection of Agricultural Lands

The task force is considering the following approach to protecting agricultural lands in the greenbelt:

ECONOMIC VIABILITY

Land-use planning alone is insufficient to ensure that agricultural lands within the greenbelt will be farmed. There is an array of issues adversely affecting agriculture across the province that need to be addressed in a holistic way.

The task force recommends that a provincial task force on agriculture be created immediately to develop agricultural policies that will ensure a viable agricultural industry across the greenbelt and the rest of Ontario.

This task force should comprise a broadly based group of stakeholders and be led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, with membership from the Ministries of Finance, Municipal Affairs and Housing, Natural Resources, Environment, Consumer and Business Services, federal departments and others as required.

This task force should provide an interim report to address greenbelt issues by October 2004.

CONTEXT FOR PROTECTION

Agricultural lands should be protected within the context of a provincial growth management plan to reduce the pressure on prime agricultural lands.

- *Growth should be focused around centres and along corridors to intensify development.*
- *Infill, intensification and redevelopment, including brownfields, should be supported within urban boundaries.*

LAND-USE POLICIES

Before prime agricultural lands may be considered for development, a comprehensive review should be required to demonstrate that existing urban-designated areas lack sufficient supply of land available through intensification and redevelopment.

Lot creation should be eliminated for residential infill on agricultural lands. Clearer direction or refined definitions should further restrict lot creation for all or some uses (e.g., retirement, agricultural-related, surplus farm dwellings, and severances for a farm parcel or farm-splits).

Land-use policies should be supportive of agriculture and should be consistent across the greenbelt, including areas within Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Secondary agricultural uses and agriculture-related uses should be clarified to ensure that they meet the needs of agriculture but do not erode the viability of the prime agricultural areas.

A range of approaches should strengthen protections for prime agricultural lands by:

- *tightening the definition, scale and range of secondary and agricultural-related land uses for good tender fruit and good grape lands;*
- *directing selected agricultural-related uses to settlement areas and designated areas; and*
- *exploring innovative support mechanisms and incentives for limiting secondary uses of prime agricultural lands.*

The type and location (or both) of non-residential uses for which prime agricultural areas could be re-designated or converted will be limited to ensure that the uses meet the needs of the agricultural community and do not erode the viability of the prime agricultural areas. Where possible, these uses should be directed to settlement areas.

TENDER FRUIT AND GRAPE LANDS AND HOLLAND MARSH

The entire Holland Marsh (including the portion outside the proposed Greenbelt Study Area) and the tender fruit and grape lands should be permanently protected by restricting settlement area boundary expansions.

In these areas, the range of land uses and location of “limited non-residential” uses should be restricted to those that are absolutely necessary to support agricultural uses in specialty crop areas.

OTHER AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Other agricultural lands that should be permanently protected in the greenbelt are prime agricultural lands (Class 1, 2, 3) having contiguous area sufficiently large to support the integrity of the agricultural economy and rural landscape.

In making this determination, the Province should have regard for:

- *fragmentation;*
- *urban/suburban encroachments;*
- *loss of agricultural support mechanisms;*
- *the province's growth management initiative; and*
- *rural economic development.*

COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES

A permanent greenbelt should support the protection of the agricultural land base through land-use policy mechanisms and complementary infrastructure and economic development initiatives such as:

- *research and education programs;*
- *promotion and marketing initiatives; and*
- *supporting infrastructure necessary for agriculture (e.g., roads, water, power, gas, drainage).*

TAXATION AND FINANCIAL TOOLS

The Province should assess potential changes to taxation policies and other financial tools to support agriculture, such as:

- *reviewing the property assessment system as it applies to the valuing of farmland; and*
- *easements and land trusts.*

Transportation and Infrastructure

Major infrastructure facilities that have influenced and supported past growth are located within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area. These facilities will continue to influence future growth, as well as the forms and locations of new, connecting infrastructure facilities.

Major water and sewer systems that serve millions of residents; the Pearson and Hamilton international airports; transportation arteries such as the Queen Elizabeth Way and highways 401, 403, 404, 406, 407 and 427; major commuter and freight rail lines; the Parkway Belt West utility corridor; electrical generation plants and major transmission corridors; and natural gas and fibre-optic cable installations are located within the Golden Horseshoe area.

The Breeze ferry, starting service from Rochester to Toronto this spring, should prompt discussion of an unexplored future transportation route. In addition, the wind turbine at Exhibition Place raises the possibility of new wind farms and other alternative energy technologies to supply the power that new growth will demand.

The Regulatory Environment

There is currently a complex regulatory environment for infrastructure.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the *Planning Act* provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land-use planning and development. These include policies intended to ensure that:

- natural heritage features and areas are protected from incompatible development;
- prime agricultural lands are protected;
- efficient, cost-effective development and land-use patterns are employed to develop strong communities and provide for housing;
- appropriate and adequate infrastructure and transportation services provision are provided across the province; and
- mineral aggregate resources are available for extraction as close to market as possible.

The Provincial Policy Statement is currently undergoing a legislated five-year review.

Within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area there are also three specific plans, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) and the Parkway Belt West Plan (PBWP), that provide additional and specific provincial policy direction.

The ORMCP and the NEP were designed explicitly to protect and enhance significant natural features and accordingly, they establish high thresholds for infrastructure, transportation and mineral aggregate resources use. The ORMCP and the NEP supersede other provincial legislation and policies as well as municipal official plans and zoning bylaws in the event of a conflict. The PWBP provides, in part, for major infrastructure facilities across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Municipal official plans articulate local and/or regional interests and approaches to managing future growth, protecting the

environment, and providing for infrastructure and mineral aggregate resource extraction, in keeping with the provincial framework.

In addition to the provincial land-use planning framework, there are also other pieces of legislation that apply to infrastructure, including the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Environmental Protection Act*, *National Energy Board Act*, *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act*, *Ontario Water Resources Act*, *Source Water Protection Act*, *Drainage Act*, and the *Aggregate Resources Act*.

These acts provide detailed procedures and processes to guide decision-making on possible locations and the development of infrastructure facilities, as well as the manner in which resources are extracted, to minimize potential impacts on the environment.

Transportation-Related Initiatives

In addition to the existing provincial legislative framework, there are many key ongoing and emerging initiatives that relate to the greenbelt and the provision of infrastructure and resources. These include a transportation strategy and a growth management plan.

The transportation strategy will support improved public transit and critical investments for the region's long-range infrastructure requirements.

As well, the Province is currently consulting on the delivery of source water protection planning as a way of securing quality water sources for the long term throughout Ontario.

The Province is taking inventory of the location and ownership of existing hydro transmission corridors transferred to the Province from Hydro One to explore options for provincial and inter-regional secondary uses such as linear transportation, transit and infrastructure, as well as open spaces, parks and trails, or other recreational uses. The province has requested that municipalities indicate their secondary use interests to the province as part of this project.

Finally, it is important to note that the development of a greenbelt should not weaken the existing provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Principles

The task force set the following principles to guide its consideration of approaches for infrastructure in the greenbelt.

1. Recognition that the greenbelt should not be viewed as a land reserve for future infrastructure needs;
2. Recognition that the proposed Greenbelt Study Area is also the fastest growing region in Canada and a foundation for the provincial and national economies, therefore, infrastructure will be needed to support this growth;
3. Look first to alternatives that maximize the capacity of existing infrastructure;

-
4. Where new infrastructure is determined to be necessary, minimize social, economic and environmental impacts, respect natural features, preserve open space and seek creative approaches to design; and
 5. Control growth through planning tools.

Proposed Approaches to Transportation and Infrastructure

The task force is considering the following approach for transportation and infrastructure in the greenbelt:

If it is consistent with the Greenbelt Task Force vision and goals, the Province's growth management plan and the coordination of provincial, regional and municipal infrastructure planning, then infrastructure (including highways, water, sewer, power, alternative energy facilities, telecommunications/cell towers, waste/recycling facilities, etc.) would be permitted in the greenbelt.

Locate infrastructure only in areas where there is a demonstrated need.

The Province should review the way in which need for infrastructure is assessed, to ensure proposed infrastructure reinforces growth management and greenbelt objectives.

The Province should also review the environmental assessment process to ensure that the consideration of alternatives reflects emerging technologies, innovative designs, and an appropriate balance of roads and transit.

Natural Resources

The proposed Greenbelt Study Area is abundant with a number of important natural resources, including forestry, water and wildlife. While the task force has concentrated its discussions primarily on mineral resources, we welcome comments on other natural resources as well.

Mineral Resources

The most significant non-renewable resource in the proposed Greenbelt Study Area is aggregates, including limestone, sand, gravel, clay, shale and sandstone. Extraction of these minerals and other related operations are licensed under the *Aggregate Resources Act*. Aggregates are identified in the Provincial Policy Statement as a key provincial interest for wise use and protection over the long term.

Mineral aggregates provide essential building materials for growth. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) aggregate mapping and its 1992 State of the Resource Report, there are significant aggregate resource deposits in the Golden Horseshoe region that directly supply the housing and manufacturing industries.

More than 75 per cent of mineral aggregates used in the greenbelt area come from the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment areas. The region also contains most of the province's shale resources, the raw material for the brick industry.

The Regulatory Environment

Over the past decade, the regulatory environment for aggregate extraction has become increasingly sophisticated,

resulting in fewer new licenses for quarries. Most existing quarries were established in the 1950s, and are reaching the end of their deposits.

Mineral aggregate resources are non-renewable resources. Their proximity to market is one of the most significant factors in their overall cost. Since more than 90 per cent of mineral aggregate is moved by truck, transportation is one of the main factors in the cost of the resource not only in direct cost to the consumer, but also in its impacts on air quality. Shipping mineral aggregates long distances increases energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Proper planning for near-market extraction can reduce negative environmental impacts.

In recognition of the value of mineral aggregate resources for current and future uses, Section 2.2.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement states that "Mineral resources will be protected for long term use" and section 2.2.3.1 provides that "As much of the mineral aggregate resource as is realistically possible will be made available to supply mineral resource needs, as close to markets as possible."

In the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), Escarpment Rural Area, mineral resource extraction may be permitted subject to an amendment to the NEP. The plan contains a set of standards and criteria for evaluating amendment applications to ensure that such amendments are justified. They also provide assurances that, if introduced, any new mineral extractive operation or associated accessory use will have minimal impact on the escarpment environment, and the lands will ultimately be rehabilitated and used in a manner compatible with the surrounding landscape.

Within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), mineral aggregate operations are permitted throughout the ORM except in the Natural Core Areas designated in the plan. Proposed mineral aggregate operations in the other three land-use designations must demonstrate:

- the maintenance, improvement or enhancement of the quality and quantity of ground/surface water;
- proper site rehabilitation to agricultural or natural purposes;
- the maintenance of the health, size and diversity of key natural heritage features; and
- proper rehabilitation of areas with identified landform attributes.

Site Rehabilitation

As pits and quarries reach depletion, it is important to ensure, through rehabilitation, that future uses are compatible with, or will contribute to, the objectives of any greenbelt protection plan.

Examples of rehabilitation for different purposes include the Lafarge Fonthill Pit, now a tender fruit orchard; an experimental vineyard at Vineland Quarries; the Royal Botanical Gardens; and Kerncliff conservation area in Halton Region.

As proposals for a permanent greenbelt are developed from the layering of the environmental, agricultural, cultural, recreation and heritage functions described in this paper, aggregate operations can be considered a “temporary use.” These key non-renewable

resources may be identified and protected for future use, and sites can ultimately be returned to natural, agricultural or recreational purposes — the use that best suits the greenbelt area in which they are situated.

Proposed Approaches to Natural Resources

The task force is considering the following approach to future resource needs:

Given the importance of the availability of aggregates close to market, as identified in the Provincial Policy Statement, high potential aggregate areas should be a consideration for inclusion in the greenbelt and should be protected from incompatible land use.

Aggregate extraction in the greenbelt should be subjected to a more rigorous approach to rehabilitation. Depleted mineral aggregate operations should more aggressively be brought into uses that would support or enhance the objectives of greenbelt protection.

The Province should clarify appropriate provincial and official plan policies surrounding new licenses for aggregate extraction.

The Province should review the licensing process to facilitate new supply and ensure the integrity of hydrogeological and ecological systems, features and functions, taking into account the requirement to rehabilitate.

Culture, Recreation and Tourism

Features, Attractions and Opportunities

The proposed Greenbelt Study Area contains important cultural heritage, recreation and tourism features and attractions.

- The area is home to the Bruce Trail, the Oak Ridges Trail, the Royal Botanical Gardens, internationally recognized bird-watching areas, and the reconstructed Iroquois Village at Crawford Lake Conservation Area.
- The Niagara peninsula boasts Niagara Falls, and a thriving food and wine industry.
- The Niagara Escarpment, designated as a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations for its distinctive natural landscape and internationally significant ecosystem, provides opportunities for numerous recreational activities.
- Large tracts of regional, county and conservation authority forests have been established on the Oak Ridges Moraine that provide tremendous opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hiking and nature viewing.

The close proximity of these cultural, recreational and tourism amenities contributes to a high quality of life in the Golden Horseshoe area. However, there are pressures on these resources. If our urban areas continue to expand outward, the green spaces surrounding our urban communities could be degraded, or could disappear altogether. This would reduce the available number of cultural, recreational

and tourism opportunities at a time when more are needed to serve a rapidly growing population.

Culture

Cultural heritage resources include buildings, structures, and archaeological sites representing all periods of history and human endeavour. In the proposed Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt area, the people of the First Nations farmed, hunted and traded long before European settlers arrived. This area was home to the early settlers, and today, it attracts immigrants from around the world. Establishing a greenbelt would ensure the long-term preservation, use and enjoyment of the Golden Horseshoe's varied landscapes and diverse cultural and heritage resources.

Recreation

With its varied landscapes, a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt presents opportunities to support healthy communities through year-round public access to outdoor recreation resources. By protecting and enhancing hiking trails, cycle paths, canoe routes, skating rinks, parks and other recreational resources, a greenbelt could also promote a physically active lifestyle and generate associated health benefits. It would be a blueprint for healthy living in Ontario.

A greenbelt also offers an opportunity to secure and increase access to a range of outdoor recreational activities that depend on nature or natural settings such as fishing, bird watching, sailing, nature appreciation, cross-country skiing and camping.

Tourism

Existing cultural, recreation and tourism features and attractions within the proposed Greenbelt Study Area are important to Ontario's tourism industry. Agri-tourism and culinary tourism are growing niche markets that would build on, reinforce, and promote greenbelt strengths. The greenbelt could play a vital role in promoting Ontario as a premier four-season destination in both the domestic and international markets.

An integrated, system-wide planning approach to the greenbelt would limit development pressures and encourage sustainable growth and compatible land uses. This would help protect the Golden Horseshoe's irreplaceable cultural heritage and natural aspects – its open spaces, farms, woods, gardens, village streetscapes, historic structures, local museums and archaeological sites – so that they continue to benefit the millions who live nearby and those who visit Ontario.

Proposed Approaches to Culture, Recreation and Tourism

The task force is considering the following approach to culture, recreation and tourism:

The greenbelt should be a publicly valued and important venue for cultural heritage and related activities, recreation and

tourism in the Golden Horseshoe. This should be accomplished through promotion and marketing initiatives to support community economic development.

Culture, recreation and tourism opportunities should respect and be compatible with other greenbelt priorities (e.g., agriculture, natural resources and ecosystem protection) and should strengthen the vitality, integrity and profile of the greenbelt with:

- *recognized and promoted cultural sites, districts and landscapes important for community identity, history and character;*
- *a network of protected public open spaces where people can enjoy recreational and leisurely pursuits. This network includes:*
 - *provincial parks (e.g. Bronte Creek);*
 - *conservation areas;*
 - *navigable waterways; and*
 - *municipal parks and forests;*
- *private lands with recreation, tourism and conservation uses;*
- *a system of trails on public and private lands, supported by a provincial regulatory framework to address issues such as location and design, user conflicts, public safety and liability; and*
- *tourism destinations that support and depend on farms, natural areas and rural communities.*

Administration and Implementation

There are various examples of tools, approaches and models in Ontario, nationally and internationally on the implementation and administration of a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt that apply and layer the preceding approaches for protecting environmental, agricultural, specialty and unique crop lands, key aggregate deposits, and cultural, recreation and tourism opportunities.

The proposed greenbelt will set out where growth should not occur for the purposes of the growth management plan now in development. The greenbelt will also be integrated with the larger growth management plan area to enhance the environment, rural economy and quality of life for the region's growing population.

Ontario has a long and successful history of land-use planning initiatives on which to build. Initiatives of regional or landscape scale include:

The Parkway Belt West Plan (PBWP)

Originally the Parkway Belt West Plan Act (1978), but subsequently brought under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* (OPDA), this plan created a multi-use utility corridor, urban separator and open space system. It is administered by staff of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP)

Established under the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development*

Act (1973) (NEPDA), the plan's purpose is to protect the Niagara Escarpment and maintain lands in its vicinity as a continuous natural environment, and to ensure only development compatible with the natural environment occurs.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan is based on mapped land-use designations and related policies that balance environmental preservation with limited forms of compatible development. It also includes urban areas, but defers to municipal official plans for detailed land-use planning within the urban area.

The NEP also sets out an integrated Parks and Open Space strategy for securing and managing public lands, and includes much more detailed development control and performance standards. The development permit system was initiated in 1975.

Implementation occurs at two levels. First, municipalities are required to amend their official plans and bylaws where applicable to be in conformity with the NEP. Second, in order to implement the detailed development control and performance standards contained in the NEP, a Development Permit System is used. The system uses zoning and site plan approvals related to a permitted use granted at one time, as part of an integrated site-specific application process.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) is administered directly by the 17-member Niagara Escarpment Commission. The commission is a special-purpose body responsible to the Minister of Natural Resources. A staff of up to 22 persons supports the commission.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP)

Established under the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001*, the plan's objectives are protecting the ecological and hydrological integrity of the moraine, and ensuring that only land and resource uses that maintain, improve or restore the ecological and hydrological functions of the moraine are permitted.

The plan is based on four land-use designations: Natural Core, Natural Linkage, Countryside and Settlement. The Natural Core and Natural Linkage designations focus on maintaining and enhancing a major natural heritage system across the moraine.

Of note, the act does not permit land to be removed from the Natural Core or the Natural Linkage designated areas. Limits of settlement areas can only be expanded in the context of a change to the plan. They are considered fixed for at least a 10-year period, until the next scheduled plan review.

Municipalities are required to bring their official plans and comprehensive zoning bylaws into conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Municipalities then implement the provisions.

Other Jurisdictions

The task force also reviewed greenbelt examples from other jurisdictions, including London, England; New York/New

Jersey; Portland, Oregon; Napa County, California; Ottawa; and Vancouver.

Differing social, political, economic and environmental circumstances make it difficult to draw detailed comparisons to Ontario's situation. However, several generalized comments can be provided on these models.

- To varying degrees, all models focus on protecting lands from urban growth pressures.
- All models have an overall plan or strategy as their basis.
- The London, Oregon and Vancouver examples all contain a component that is directly tied into the municipal land-use planning process. The Napa County model is implemented through the land-use planning system.
- The New York/New Jersey focus is more on land stewardship, technical assistance and the provision of funding for land securement, rather than land-use planning.
- The Ottawa greenbelt is a rare example of a publicly-owned greenbelt; most greenbelts do not involve government acquisition of greenbelt lands.
- The Oregon and Vancouver models also contain non-regulatory programs such as land securement and habitat enhancement works, in addition to land-use controls.

Regardless of the model and options chosen, the administration and implementation of a permanent greenbelt must be coordinated and integrated with other related provincial initiatives, particularly growth management, source-water protection, transportation planning and planning reform.

General Elements of Greenbelt Protection

Greenbelt implementation includes a variety of building blocks, which are sometimes used independently, but more often in combination. These elements are:

- **policy options** to establish the legal basis and a framework for greenbelt protection, include legislation that is greenbelt-specific or enabling; legislation-based plans to control and direct and/or guide land use, such as the *Niagara Escarpment Act* and plan (NEP), *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001* and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), Parkway Belt West Plan under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* (OPDA); and legislation-based policies, such as the Provincial Policy Statement or an area-specific provincial policy statement under the *Planning Act*;
- **implementation models** to discuss including:
 - an entirely new greenbelt entity, which would replace existing ORM and NEC arrangements;
 - an expansion of the NEC and ORM areas and plans to cover adjacent new areas;
 - maintenance of the current NEC and ORM arrangements as anchors, and the addition of new elements and connecting links under umbrella Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt legislation;
 - a Provincial Policy Model – a geographically specific provincial policy,

which would supersede the Provincial Policy Statement;

- **administrative options** determine who should implement and administer a greenbelt. These options could include a designated commission or agency; a provincial ministry; municipalities; a coordinating body; or some combination of these; and
- **implementation tools** to achieve the greenbelt's stated vision and goals, including regulatory mechanisms and performance standards to regulate development and activities; provincial guidelines; and non-regulatory programs to secure, protect or enhance land, or to provide for public use, where deemed appropriate.

Tools for Implementation

A variety of regulatory and non-regulatory tools may be useful to further the vision and goals of greenbelt protection. These include:

Regulatory Tools:

- *Planning Act* and municipal land-use planning mechanisms including official plans and zoning, such as Napa Valley's Agricultural Preserve and General Plan;
- Tree conservation, site alternation and topsoil removal bylaws under the *Municipal Act, 2001*;
- the regulation of waterways by conservation authorities;
- the *Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act*;
- Niagara Escarpment Commission development permits; and

- Guidelines such as the Foodland Guidelines, 1991 ORM Guidelines and Ministry of the Environment compatibility guidelines.

Non-Regulatory Tools:

It is likely that more than 90 per cent of a Golden Horseshoe greenbelt will be privately-owned lands where non-regulatory programs will be an integral part of implementation. The programs must represent greenbelt vision and goals while being respectful of landowner rights and interests.

It is envisioned that greenbelt implementation may occur through a range of non-regulatory tools including:

- Public education and land stewardship information, incentives and special programs, possibly coordinated by a proposed Greenbelt Trust Fund, and conducted by:
 - Ontario stewardship councils;
 - conservation authorities;
 - provincial and municipal governments; and
 - non-government organizations such as the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Nature, Land Trusts, Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ducks Unlimited.
- Land securement options of privately owned lands in cooperation with landowners include:
 - conservation easements;
 - donations of land;
 - bequests of land; and

- land acquisition on a “willing buyer/willing seller” basis.

Most of the land securement options will be eligible for the Ecological Gifts Program, a federal income tax program.

- Provincial tax incentive programs available now for landowners include:
 - the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program;
 - the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program; and
 - the Farm Property Taxation Policy.

Proposed Approaches to Administration and Implementation

The task force is considering the following approach to administration and implementation of the greenbelt:

The greenbelt should be implemented so as to ensure permanence, integrity and consistency in policy application while having regard to regional differences.

Implementation should be coordinated with the provincial growth management initiative and:

- *be initiated through legislation that creates a Greenbelt Protection Plan that knits together:*
 - *the Niagara Escarpment Plan,*
 - *the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and*

-
- other lands necessary to fulfill the objectives and goals of the greenbelt;
 - be administered by municipalities outside of the Niagara Escarpment Commission jurisdiction and incorporated into municipal official plans in a consistent manner across the greenbelt;
-
- take advantage of existing administrative structures and tools where possible;
 - have an appellate tribunal that has the expertise to uphold the integrity of the plan;
-
- assist municipalities with implementation work;
 - include fiscal measures which fulfill the objectives of the greenbelt, particularly concerning conservation and agricultural viability;
-
- involve a working group to process Greenbelt Task Force recommendations through to the creation of the greenbelt. This working group would include municipal staff and other expert stakeholders from across the greenbelt; and
-
- be subject to monitoring performance standards and a 10-year review.

Non-regulatory programs and tax incentives:

Where appropriate, landowners in the designated greenbelt area should be eligible for special incentives for restoration, protection and stewardship of their properties.

Next Steps

Contact Information

The greenbelt will be an important factor shaping southern Ontario's future. We want to hear from you.

This consultation document is available on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) Registry on the Ministry of the Environment's website at www.ene.gov.on.ca, and on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's website at www.greenbelt.ontario.ca. The discussion paper will be posted on the EBR for 60 days to provide the public with an opportunity to comment in writing.

Please send written submissions to:

Greenbelt Task Force

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
14th floor, 777 Bay Street,
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2E5

To send your comments directly, please e-mail: greenbelt@mah.gov.on.ca

Public Meeting Information

The Greenbelt Task Force invites you to attend one of the upcoming public meetings in 2004 to learn more and share your views and ideas on a greenbelt.

Date	Location
May 20	King City King City Community Centre 25 Doctors Lane
May 25	Oshawa Durham College Café 71, Gordon Willey Building 2000 Simcoe Street North
May 26	Hamilton Hamilton Convention Centre The Wentworth Room 1 Summers Lane
May 31	Caledon East Caledon Community Complex 6215 Old Church Road
June 10	St. Catharines Canadian Auto Workers Banquet Hall 124 Bunting Road
June 16	Burlington Burlington Convention Centre The Emerald and Queen Victoria Halls 1120 Burloak Drive

All public meetings will begin at 7 p.m. More information on locations and times will be posted on the Municipal Affairs and Housing website.

Freedom of Information

The Government of Ontario is collecting this information for the purpose of developing a greenbelt plan. Any personal information you provide is collected in compliance with Section 38(2) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The government may use this information to contact you regarding your comments. Please direct any questions about the collection of the information to the Provincial Planning and Environmental Services Branch at (416) 585-6014 or by mail to the following address:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
14th floor, 777 Bay Street,
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 2E5

Glossary

Features: naturally occurring land, water and biotic features that are important for their environmental and social values.

For natural heritage features, these could include wetlands, fish habitat, woodlands, valleylands, habitat of endangered and threatened species, wildlife habitat and areas of natural and scientific interest.

For hydrological features, these could include wetlands, kettle lakes, permanent and intermittent streams, seepage areas and springs.

Functions: the natural processes, products or services that living and non-living environments provide or perform within or between species, ecosystems and landscapes. These include hydrological, biological, physical and socio-economic interactions.

Hydrological Integrity: the conditions of ecosystems in which hydrological features and hydrological functions are unimpaired by stresses from human activity.

Infill: development on vacant lots or under-developed lots within a built-up area.

Open space: a more or less continuous open tract of land largely free of buildings and structures. These lands can be privately or publicly owned.

Settlement area: an existing built-up area and surrounding land which has been designated for development in a municipal official plan.

Published by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2004

ISBN: 0-7794-6311-0

Disponible en français: Vers l'établissement d'une ceinture de verdure dans la région du Golden Horseshoe
Groupe d'étude sur la ceinture de verdure Document de consultation