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Municipal progress in conformity to Greenbelt legislation : challenges in implementation and to Greenbelt integrity

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MUNICIPAL PROGRESS IN CONFORMITY TO
GREENBELT LEGISLATION:
CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION
AND TO GREENBELT INTEGRITY

By
Dorothy Moszynski, B.U.R.Pl

A Research Project presented to Ryerson University
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Environmental Management
In the program of Environmental Applied Science and Management
Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2007
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Municipal Progress in Conformity to Greenbelt Legislation: Challenges in Implementation and to Greenbelt Integrity. Dorothy Moszynski, 2007, Environmental Applied Science and Management, Ryerson University.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To examine the progress of municipal conformity to Ontario Greenbelt legislation. One planner from each region and municipality within Greenbelt boundaries were interviewed, GIS displays were created, and Official Plans analyzed to examine the extent of conformity to the Greenbelt Plan, strength of policies, and plans for expansion. *Results:* Municipalities are generally supportive of Greenbelt goals; and are willing to conform at least at an official level. Future threats will therefore come from decisions on individual development applications and proposed expansions. Official Plans varied widely in level of conformity: some had general enthusiasm while others appear unwilling to preserve greenbelt boundaries. Issues identified include process, implementation and integrity issues such as agricultural viability; environmental protection; urban boundary expansions; infrastructure and highway expansions and extensions; protection of lands outside the Greenbelt; mineral aggregate policies; housing affordability; political backing and public perception; and regional coordination issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the guidance and patience of my project supervisors Professor Nina-Marie Lister and Professor Ron Pushchak, and of Dr. Rick Smith and Professor Doug Banting. I dedicate this thesis to the above and my family C., T., and J. Moszynski and R. Gonsalves.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

PART 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Greenbelt History.....	5
2.1 Greenbelts in Britain	
2.2 Urban Containment Policies in the United States	
2.3 Greenbelts and Green Wedges in Australia	
2.4 Greenbelts in Asia	
2.5 The Ottawa Greenbelt	
2.6 Greenbelt Success and Challenges	
3.0 Issues Prompting Greenbelt Legislation.....	17
3.1 Growth Pressures in the Greater Golden Horseshoe	
3.2 “Sprawl” and Smart Growth	
3.3 Traffic Congestion and Pollution	
3.4 Economic Viability of the Region	
3.5 Water Quality and Management	
3.6 Environmental Degradation	
3.7 Loss of Agricultural Lands and Agricultural Viability	
3.8 Property Rights	
3.9 Consumer Preference	
4.0 Jurisdictional Capacity and Issues.....	34
4.1 Provincial Policy	
4.2 Regional Bodies	
4.3 Conservation Authorities	
4.4 Municipalities	
5.0 Recent Province-Wide Planning Initiatives.....	38
5.0.1. Provincial Planning Statement, 2005	
5.0.2 Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act, 2004	
5.0.3 Agricultural Policies	
5.0.4 Environmental Assessment Act Reform	
5.0.5 Ontario Heritage Act Reform	

5.1 Area-Specific Provincial Policies	
5.1.1 Parkway Belt West Plan	
5.1.2 Niagara Escarpment Plan	
5.1.3 Oak Ridges Moraine Legislation	
5.1.4 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe	
5.1.5 Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act	
5.2 Other Proposed Legislation	
6.0 Greenbelt Timeline.....	47
6.1 Greenbelt Protection Act	
6.2 Greenbelt Task Force Recommendations	
6.3 Greenbelt Draft Plan	
6.4a Greenbelt Act	
6.4b Greenbelt Plan	
PART II: RESEARCH AND RESULTS	
7.0 Research Methods.....	51
7.1 Objective	
7.2 Method	
7.2.1 Method: Interviews	
7.2.2 Method: Geospatial Displays	
7.2.3 Method: New Official Plans	
8.0 Interview Results.....	58
8.1 Question 1	
8.2 Question 2	
8.3 Question 3	
8.4 Question 4	
8.5 Question 6	
8.6 Question 7	
8.7 Question 8	
8.8 Question 9	
8.9 Question 11	
8.10 Question 12	
8.11 Question 13	
8.12 Land Values	
9.0 Cross Tabulation.....	85
10.0 New Official Plans.....	86
10.1 Township of Brock	

10.2 City of Brampton	
10.3 Town of Mono	
10.4 City of Burlington	
10.5 Town of Halton Hills	
10.6 City of Hamilton	
10.7 Town of Innisfil	
10.8 Durham Region	
10.9 Niagara Region	
11.0 Analysis: Issues with Greenbelt Legislation.....	97
11.1 Process Issues	
11.2 Implementation Issues	
11.3 Issues that Compromise Greenbelt Integrity	
12.0 Conclusions.....	116
12.1 Recommendations	
12.2 Ontario Greenbelt Successes	
13.0 Bibliography.....	121
14.0 Appendix A	
Maps	

LIST OF TABLES

- 1) Regions and municipalities within the study area
- 2) Cross-tabulation of results to certain interview questions, highlighting municipalities of concern.

LIST OF FIGURES

- 1) Howard's "Garden Cities" drawing. From Bracknell Forest Borough Council, 2007.
- 2) Greenbelts in Britain. From JP Land Sales, 2007.
- 3) Portland's urban growth boundary, success and failure. From CNN (2007) "City Limits."
- 4) Residential building permits outside Seattle-area UGB. From Sightline Institute, 2007.
- 5) Land use designations for the Ottawa Greenbelt. From National Capital Commission, *Greenbelt Master Plan Summary*, 1996, p. 18.
- 6) City of Ottawa Greenbelt. City of Ottawa, 2005.
- 7) Canadian subdivision "sprawl." From the David Suzuki Foundation, 2007.
- 8) Smart growth in Canada: Seaton community. From the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2007
- 9) Highway 400 and the 404. From the King's Highway online, 2007
- 10) GTA-West preliminary study area. From the GTA West Environmental Assessment online, 2007
- 11) Future Detroit River crossings capacity needs. From Transport Canada, 2007.
- 12) Cores and corridors design diagram. From American Wildlands, 2005.
- 13) Oak Ridges Moraine plan area. From the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2007.
- 14) Greenbelt Plan area and natural heritage system. Personal collection.
- 15) Attribute table of municipal boundary file, displaying selections and added fields. Personal collection.
- 16) Regional attribute table with new conformity fields. Personal collection.
- 17) Map of municipal conformity to Greenbelt legislation. Personal collection.
- 18) Map of Regional conformity to Greenbelt legislation. Personal collection.

ACRONYMS

AAC Agricultural Advisory Committee

CUI Canadian Urban Institute

EA Environmental Assessment

EBR Environmental Bill of Rights

EDC Environmental Defence Canada

FCM Federation of Canadian Municipalities

GGH Greater Golden Horseshoe region

GIS Geographic Information Systems

GTA Greater Toronto Area

IGAP Intergovernmental Action Plan

MAH Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

MDS Minimum Distance Separation Formulae

MNR Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

MOE Ontario Ministry of Environment

NCC National Capital Commission

NEC Niagara Escarpment Commission

NEP Niagara Escarpment Plan

NIMBY Not-In-My-Back-Yard

OFA Ontario Farmers Association

OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Farming, and Rural Affairs

OMB Ontario Municipal Board

ON Province of Ontario

ORM Oak Ridges Moraine

PBWP Parkway Belt West Plan

PIR Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

PPS Provincial Policy Statement

UGB Urban Growth Boundary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Since the beginning of the 1900s, Greenbelts have been viewed as a method to contain urban growth and preserve natural features and farmland. The first plans for Greenbelts arose in Britain, and many similar designs are present in large metropolitan areas historically colonized by the British. The success and integrity of these Greenbelts varies. Greenbelts and urban growth boundaries in London, UK; Adelaide, Australia; and Portland, Oregon; have been largely viewed as successful in restricting growth; others in Boulder, Colorado; Melbourne, Australia; and Ottawa, Canada; have been prone to reductions in area and leapfrogging, and regarded as failing to met their objectives. Other jurisdictions, such as Hong Kong, have decided Greenbelts no longer serve their original goals, and are abandoning them in favour of other growth management methods. The measures of success and “lessons learned” from other Greenbelts can be applied to the Ontario Greenbelt.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region in Southern Ontario has been experiencing high levels of economic and population growth for several decades. Cities in the region have grown outwardly into productive farmland, and remaining woodlots and natural features have been compromised or destroyed to accommodate more development and infrastructure corridors. The region is, therefore, facing increasing losses of agricultural land and viability; transportation constraints and decreasing economic competitiveness; a loss of natural heritage features and water quality; and a number of other issues which threaten the overall sustainability of the region.

Several provincial attempts at planning at a regional scale for the GGH since the 1970s have resulted in policies such as the Parkway Belt West Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine legislation, and Growth Plan for the GGH.

Legislation has also been applied at a province-wide level in order to address these issues: the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS); recent reforms to the Planning Act, Ontario Heritage Act, Environmental Assessment Act and agricultural policies. The Ontario Greenbelt Protection Act was introduced in 2004, retroactive to 2003; it received royal Assent in 2005. The Greenbelt plan, after several discussion papers and a draft plan, was released February 2005.

The main designations of the Greenbelt plan are the agricultural system, natural system, and settlement areas. Key policies are *i*) to establish a network of countryside and open space areas which supports the ORM and Niagara Escarpment, *ii*) to sustain rural communities and their economic viability; *iii*) to preserve agricultural land, and recognize the importance of agriculture to the economy; *iv*) to provide ecosystem protection, habitat connectivity, and river connections throughout the Greenbelt area; *v*) to provide recreational and tourism opportunities *vi*) to control urbanization and ensure infrastructure development proceeds in an environmentally sustainable manner; and *vii*) to promote sustainable resource usage (MAH, 2005).

Research

Section 9 of the plan states every municipality in the Greenbelt is required to bring its official plan and zoning orders in conformity with the provincial legislation by the time the official plan is up for review- at most every five years. The willingness of the municipalities within the Greenbelt to conform to legislation, and the degree to which their official plans and zoning protect environmental features and agricultural lands, will determine in part the success and longevity of the Greenbelt. The objective of this report is to examine the progress of municipal conformity to Greenbelt legislation, in order to 1) determine what, if any, challenges to implementation and Greenbelt 'success' exist for municipal planners; and 2) determine what impact municipal response to conform to Greenbelt legislation will have on environmental and agricultural

protection, and the overall success of the Greenbelt. It is suspected that the municipal response to the Greenbelt plan will vary: the character of the municipalities, size of greenbelt within their boundaries, and types of designations within their boundaries may result in very different responses to the plan. It is also suspected that some municipalities will resist implementing the plan, which may work to compromise overall success of the plan.

One planner from each region and municipality within Greenbelt boundaries was interviewed, and their responses used to identify issues and create GIS displays of conformity dates. The purpose of the GIS displays was to examine the extent of conformity, from the year 2006 to the deadline for conformity (2009). Official Plans from each municipality either conforming by or in provincial review by 2006 were reviewed and analysed to determine their level of conformity to the Greenbelt plan, the strength of environmental and agricultural policies within the municipality, and whether any plans for urban expansion into the greenbelt was contemplated.

Results

Results from the interviews were as follows:

- On an official level, municipalities and regions are conforming to Greenbelt legislation in a timely manner. Future threats will therefore come from decisions on individual development applications and proposed expansions
- A mixed initial response to Greenbelt legislation was received from municipalities, but many generally supported the principles of the policy
- The majority of municipalities did not experience a boundary change in their municipalities from Greenbelt legislation; but the majority did have some degree of change in their policies.
- Almost equal numbers of municipalities were either in agreement or in conflict with Greenbelt boundaries. an equal number had specific sites that may cause

problems during conformity; while a two-thirds majority had specific concerns with the legislation

- 8 out of 19 municipalities felt particular constraints on infrastructure and development from Greenbelt policy
- A greater than two-thirds majority of the municipalities felt the Greenbelt was supportive of municipal goals
- In the view of planners, municipal citizens generally had mixed views, did not know, or were not affected by, Greenbelt policy
- Very little pressure is applied by regions to their lower tier municipalities to bring their OPs into conformity with Greenbelt legislation
- The majority of municipal planners believe their existing policies were sufficient for environmental protection. Five municipalities had stricter environmental regulations than the Greenbelt act and plan
- 8 municipalities experienced a definite change, and 7 recorded little change in land values since Greenbelt legislation was enacted; and 9 municipalities have anecdotal evidence of increasing land values
- From a cross-tabulation of selected responses, five 'municipalities of concern' have been identified, which may need provincial monitoring to ensure they are making development decisions compatible with Greenbelt goals

Of the municipal plans reviewed, the Town of Mono, City of Burlington, and City of Hamilton have conformed to Greenbelt policies; and there is evidence of enthusiasm for Greenbelt policy as well as extra provisions for environmental and/or agricultural protection in lands outside or within Greenbelt boundaries. The town of Innisfil and City of Brampton have very little land within Greenbelt boundaries; the natural features protected have very little development pressure but their ecological integrity in the long run may be eroded due to urban development at their borders. The Town of Halton Hills has implemented Greenbelt policies to an extent while it awaits the regional OP update. The Town of Brock appears unwilling to preserve Greenbelt boundaries as it has identified future urban expansion areas within the Greenbelt- the

town is one of the few municipalities completely covered by Greenbelt legislation. Durham region seems also unwilling to accept Greenbelt boundaries, while Niagara region has strong environmental protection policies in its new ROPA 187.

Discussion

Several issues pertaining to the Greenbelt have been identified by the interviewed municipal planners. Process issues include *i)* timing issues: the Greenbelt was created hastily, the workload from recent provincial policy initiatives is too high, and the Greenbelt should have been created years ago when there was more land to save; *ii)* Intergovernmental discussion/decision-making issues: some municipalities felt local issues and opinions had not been taken into consideration; *iii)* inclusion issues: where some municipalities felt certain lands should or should not have been included; and *iv)* mapping errors.

Implementation issues include: *i)* lack of transparency in provincial decisions - the science and rationale to support Greenbelt boundaries; *ii)* provincial backing at the OMB; *iii)* difficulties in locating recreational uses, within or outside the Greenbelt; *iv)* issues in property trespass and bad marketing by the Ministry such as advertisements portraying the Greenbelt as a large public park; and *v)* issues with provincial monitoring and responsibility with implementation of the plan.

Issues that compromise overall Greenbelt integrity were also identified by planners and supported by the literature. The major issues concerned: *i)* agricultural viability; *ii)* environmental protection; *iii)* urban boundary expansions; *iv)* infrastructure and highway expansions and extensions; *v)* protection of lands outside the Greenbelt; *vi)* mineral aggregate policies; *vii)* housing affordability; *viii)* political backing and public perception; and *ix)* regional coordination issues.

Conclusions

It is politically difficult to introduce Greenbelt policy due to its perceived taking of property rights; and the tradeoff between environmental protection and economic development that it affords. This report shows that municipalities are generally supportive of Greenbelt goals; and are willing to conform at least at an official level. There are some recommendations that stem from the research:

- Allow municipal representatives to attend or make submissions to Greenbelt council meetings; the Greenbelt council should attempt to solve these issues or bring them to the attention of the minister
- The technical criteria municipalities were to receive several months ago from the Ministry should be sent immediately to increase transparency in provincial decision-making
- Provincial interest must be declared in all cases pertaining to the Greenbelt, as this ensures fairness and that Greenbelt integrity is upheld
- Agricultural viability of farmers on Greenbelt lands must be ensured through supporting agricultural infrastructure, such as rural businesses, farm markets, and social services; and priority for agricultural vehicles on rural roads
- There is reasonable evidence in this report to suggest that some municipalities and regions will need surveillance from the province in carrying out Greenbelt conformity, and making individual development decisions within or near Greenbelt boundaries. The Greenbelt council should play an active monitoring role in addition to being a forum for stakeholders
- There are already areas within the Greenbelt designated by municipalities for urban expansions. The province must not grant these expansions at the ten year review
- Policies such as the growth plan should be reviewed to ensure they are not in conflict with Greenbelt policy. The 40% intensification target of the growth plan is insufficient to promote long-term, sustainable development, and must be increased

- Proposed highway and road extensions or expansions through sensitive ecological features such as the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment. Highways should take the ecological component of Greenbelt features into greater consideration.
- At the 10-year Greenbelt review, the inclusion of additional lands in Simcoe County, and areas of environmental and hydrologic significance in Waterloo region, such as the Galt and Paris Moraine, should be taken into consideration
- Mineral aggregate operation expansions should be prevented in the natural heritage system and key natural heritage and hydrologic features

For all its complexities and all the critique reviewed in this report, there has been some success demonstrated in the Greenbelt thus far, and ongoing political popularity may ensure its role in permanently protecting environmental features and agricultural land in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region of Ontario.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 1900s, Greenbelts have been viewed as a method to contain urban growth and preserve natural features and farmland. Gosselin defines a Greenbelt as “an un-urbanized tract of land bordering the whole, or a substantial part of, an urban settlement” (1978, p. 2). Synonymous with Country Belts or urban growth boundaries, it describes an area of countryside around or between towns, consisting of permanently protected agricultural land and parkland. It can be defined more simply as “a zone of land around the city where building development is severely restricted” (Tang et al, 2005).

The idea of the creation of a Greenbelt in the Greater Toronto region had been fermenting on the political agenda for a number of decades, arising as part of the Ontario Liberal government’s election platform in 2003. The City of Toronto and several neighbouring cities on Lake Ontario had been experiencing rapid growth since the 1950s, most of which was accommodated in large single-family housing subdivisions, as common in other North American cities. In the 1970s, the first attempts at slowing or containing this growth occurred with the Parkway Belt West Plan. Toronto quickly grew over this first attempt at an urban separator, and neighbouring municipalities continued to expand their urban areas throughout the 1980s.

The 1990s saw renewed activity in attempts at region planning for what was now referred to as the Greater Golden Horseshoe region. Several key reports such as the Greater Toronto Area Task Force (Golden) Report discussed regional issues; attempts were made at transportation coordination through provincially owned GO transit; and the Greater Toronto Greenway concept was proposed by the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront in 1992 (Fitzgibbon et al., 1995, p. 56). A recession and change of government resulted on land use planning once again disappearing from the political agenda.

In the current decade, the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region is experiencing strong economic and population growth, and unrelenting demand on the housing market. Decades of uncontrolled growth have created problems concerning environmental degradation; loss of agricultural land and agricultural reforms; traffic congestion; and municipal service delivery and infrastructure provision have been compounded by the deregulatory political climate of the previous provincial government. The tipping point for public outrage occurred in 2000, when municipal drinking water contaminated with e-coli in Walkerton, Ontario, led to widespread illness and seven deaths. A government inquiry was called and blame was put on the provincial privatization of municipal services, and agricultural waste management; along with operator incompetence. Oak Ridges Moraine conservation legislation was passed in 2001 as a response to issues of source water protection for the Greater Toronto region, and signalled the resurgence of provincial special-area land use policy creation.

Resentment towards provincial Conservative government policies led to a large victory for the McGuinty Liberals in 2003. Greenbelt legislation is part of a series of land use policy initiatives and reforms proposed by the current provincial government that attempts to address the issues concerning urban growth in the GGH region. It is a controversial legislation, due not only to the property rights -real or perceived- that it degrades, or the municipal authority it threatens to undermine; but also because of the changes in public attitudes and behaviour that is necessary for its success.

After a development freeze and a series of discussion papers, meetings, recommendations, and draft plans; the Ontario Greenbelt Plan and Act was passed in 2005. These provincial laws establish a protected countryside of environmental and hydrologic features, agricultural and rural areas within whose borders urban growth is not to occur. The legislation is to work in tandem with the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Management Plan, which directs urban growth to urban centres.

One of the three major components of the Greenbelt plan is environmental protection: designations within the protected countryside are established to give permanent protection to natural heritage and water resource systems (s.1.2.1). Moreover, a provincially-mandated policy is to be implemented by the regional and local municipalities within the boundary area of the plan. This paper will examine municipal progress in conformity to Greenbelt legislation, and the effects of municipal response to the legislation on the environmental protection afforded by, and overall integrity of, the Ontario Greenbelt.

It is suspected that the municipal response to the Greenbelt plan will vary: the character of the municipalities, size of greenbelt within their boundaries, and types of designations within their boundaries may result in very different responses to the plan. It is also suspected that some municipalities will resist implementing the plan, which may work to compromise overall success of the plan.

The paper has been divided into two sections: 1) a background report concerning the Ontario Greenbelt; and 2) an explanation of the research undertaken, discussion of results and analysis. The background report will first provide a brief history of Greenbelts, beginning in England and including international examples. Points of success and failure of various Greenbelt initiatives are summarized, to contribute to the analysis. Secondly, a background of the issues leading to Greenbelt legislation including urban "sprawl" growth; threats to water quality and supply, environmental degradation; traffic congestion and its health and economic effects; loss of agricultural lands and other issues will be given. Consumer preference and property rights, and how they relate to the legislation, are also discussed. Thirdly, related policies such as the Provincial Policy Statement, Planning Act reform, Niagara Escarpment Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine, and Growth Plan legislation shall be summarized, and their relation to the Greenbelt plan discussed.

The second part of the report will begin with an explanation of the research objective and the research methods. Interviews have been conducted with senior planning staff from

all regional and local municipalities within Greenbelt boundaries, to establish progress in conformity and identify issues. Results from the interviews will be presented, and used for geospatial displays of conformity dates for regions and local municipalities. Official Plans of municipalities conforming, or in provincial review, in 2006 are analyzed to identify level of conformity and threats to Greenbelt integrity. Information from the interviews, official plans, and literature will be used to identify main issues concerning Greenbelt policy process; implementation; and Greenbelt integrity. The report will conclude with a list of recommendations to the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs on how to better ensure the integrity of the Greenbelt Plan.

PART 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 GREENBELT HISTORY

Although present in historical planning efforts, the introduction of Greenbelts in modern times has been accredited to Ebenezer Howard, British notary-turned author and planner. In his book "Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform," Howard envisioned the creation of new towns free from the pollution and inequities of London. One feature of his designs was a belt of land where agricultural and rural uses separated one urban centre from another (Tang et al, 2005; Evans, 1972, p.11).

2.1 GREENBELTS IN BRITAIN

Howard's concepts and the idea of "garden cities" were widely adopted in post-war UK planning, with the implementation of a Greenbelt to separate urban and rural areas as one of its central components (Tang et al, 2005, p. 231). The first Greenbelt act was passed in London in 1938. By 1947, the *British Town and Country Planning Act* introduced development control; and compensation for Greenbelt land expropriation by the central government. In 1955, a government circular on Greenbelts outlined the intent of creating Greenbelts mainly to provide recreational land and control urban expansion. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government openly encouraged local planning authorities to designate green belts throughout the country (Gosselin, 1978; Adams, 1994).

There were a number of related policies surrounding Greenbelt legislation in London. The New Town Act of 1946 proposed the creation of new towns as an alternative to London's outward sprawl; this continued in the Town Development Act of 1952. The 1947 Town and Country Planning Act also contained "key enabling provisions for green belt development" (Buxton and Goodman, 2003, p. 207). The Countryside Act of 1967-68 protected areas of natural significance, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981

provided additional countryside protection. In 1988, the UK government developed the Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG2), which aimed to protect Greenbelts from inappropriate development, although it is allowed in some special circumstances (Buxton and Goodman, 2003).

Fig 1: Howard's Garden City Diagram

Source: Bracknell Forest Borough Council, 2007, online.

Over 2 million hectares of lands are under Greenbelt legislation in England and Scotland; and the London Greenbelt is 1.2 million acres. Additional green wedges and township separation areas exist but are classified separately. Land purchase by the government is still employed to protect Greenbelt lands (Buxton and Goodman, 2003).

Overall, Greenbelts in Britain have achieved a considerable degree of success in preventing development within their confines; "though not without significant exceptions" (Cherrett, 1982, p. 1). In some cases, development that would have occurred within the Greenbelt area was simply diverted beyond its boundaries. This has led to the more recent definition of a Greenbelt as:

"...An element within a planning process providing a physical framework in which decisions concerning urban growth can be made", not a 'static land use designation...'"
(Gosselin, 1978, p. 5)

London's Greenbelt has come under development pressure through various strategic plans in the 1960-70s; and during the 1990s, when the demand for space far exceeded the contained supply (Edwards, 2000). By 1991, there were over 200 developments proposed within British Greenbelt boundaries (Buxton and Goodman, 2003). In Liverpool, the government required local governments to ensure a five-year supply of developable land for housing through the 1980s. This resulted in constant urban expansion into rural land, especially non-Greenbelt land, and put no pressure on developers to consider redevelopment on urban sites (Couch and Karecha, 2006, p.354).

Fig 2: Greenbelts in Britain

Source: JP Land Sales, 2007, online.

Regardless of their shortcomings, Greenbelts are now considered an integral part of the English landscape, and urban containment policies are considered an indispensable county planning component (Edwards, 2000, p.107). The London Greenbelt still largely follows the boundary established in 1939, and is still used mainly for agriculture. According to Edwards, the success of this Greenbelt lies in its continuing political popularity:

"...This system is hotly defended in a consensus which has, until recently, been almost unanimous: the towns and counties unite to resist population growth, new building, 'urban sprawl', the coalescence of distinct settlements and any other change which threatens the precious setting. The case for containment could also be buttressed by reference to the need for food production and thus for the protection of agricultural land, though now that subsidies are being paid to farmers for 'set-aside' this argument has lost its currency— if not its underlying force..." (2000, p.108)

A report by Gregory (1970) that looks at records of development control between 1957 and 1966 in the West Midlands, concludes Greenbelt policy has been extremely effective in restricting the physical expansion of the conurbation, but acknowledges that threats are present from encroaching development. The major problem arose from existing settlement areas in the Greenbelt. Most of the non-conforming permits were for ordinary residential development, and it was found that existing clusters of houses were catalysts for additional residential development proposals. Another problem occurred during implementation: when proposals for development were submitted on Greenbelt lands bordering the urban area, officials sometimes found themselves "defending the indefensible", and had to make minor adjustments to the boundaries of the proposed Greenbelt.

2.2 URBAN CONTAINMENT POLICIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Adoption of urban containment policies in the United States grew steadily from the 1960s to 1990s. Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) can be defined at the regional level, but the majority are drawn at city or county level. Metropolitan area-wide UGBs are drawn in only a few jurisdictions, such as Oregon (Burchell et al., 2005).

The most famous UGB is certainly the one surrounding the Greater Portland area. In 1973 Oregon Senate passed Bill 100, a state-wide planning system including growth boundaries around towns and metropolitan areas (Abbot, 2002, p.207). In 1979, the UGB was adopted for Portland. Sufficient land was provided within the urban area to accommodate projected growth needs for the next 20 years. Both city and county governments agreed not to extend sewer and water lines beyond the growth boundary (Abbott, 2002; Daniels, 2002, p. 3).

The Portland UGB relies on state regulation, strong local planning and public support. Outside the boundary, the burden rests on developers to show that their land is

easily supplied with necessary services; that it has little worth as open space or farmland; and that adequate developable land does not exist in UGB. Research has indicated that over time, land within the urban boundary has retained or gained speculative value, while land outside UGB fell to levels congruent with agricultural uses. There has been no evidence that the UGB has had a negative impact on economic opportunity in the Portland area (Abbot, 2002, p. 225).

The urban growth boundary has not been entirely successful as a permanent boundary between urban and rural uses, as expansions to the boundary have occurred. The State of Oregon, due to population pressure in the area, ordered another 3,500 acres to be added to the urban area of Portland in 1998 (Abbot, 2002).

Other approaches to urban containment can exist in addition to, or separate from, urban growth boundaries. One method involves the outright government purchase of land development rights from rural landowners on the fringes of cities. This method was adopted in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in addition to the imposition of a growth boundary, to provide a permanent solution to urban sprawl (Daniels 2002, p.18). Another method to control growth is establishment of 'urban service areas', which contain urban expansion by linking it to service provision. This encourages developers to locate their future projects within such service districts. This method was first attempted in Minneapolis-St Paul, and is also used in Maryland (Burchell et al, 2005, p.149).

Fig 3: Portland's urban growth boundary, success and failure.

Source: CNN, 2007, online.

Fig 4: Map of Residential Building Permits Outside the Seattle-area UGB. Red dots indicate developments outside the urban growth boundary for the Seattle-Tacoma-Everett region since 1991.

Source: Sightline Institute, 2007, online.

US UGBs have received mixed views on their success; although many of them continue in existence and political popularity. Researchers have found regional UGBs have only been effective if the state regulates private growth for a considerable distance beyond the boundary. Otherwise, growth can occur just beyond the UGB, as was experienced in Boulder, Colorado. Other factors for success include raising allowable densities, and maintaining political will (Burchell et al, 2005, p. 148-149).

2.3 GREENBELTS AND GREEN WEDGES IN AUSTRALIA

Greenbelts in Australia have varied in success: the Greenbelt in Adelaide is considered to have met its objectives while the Melbourne Greenbelt is largely considered a failure. Adelaide has maintained a clearly identified Greenbelt because of a confluence of planning dating from the 1960s, geographical limitations, the need to protect valuable productive agricultural land, and public support (Buxton and Goodman, 2003). Melbourne, in contrast, has seen a number of incursions to its green wedges due to several factors identified by Buxton and Goodman:

"...A failure of political will in the face of relentless pressure and speculation, the snowballing effect of precedents, a lessening in importance of state-wide strategic planning, a new ideology of development facilitation, a reduced regulatory role of government, inconsistency in decision making, a weakened land use planning system, and changes to the state and local government structure of planning..." (Buxton and Goodman, 2003, p.206)

Another major problem was that Melbourne's planners and politicians viewed Greenbelts and wedges as "holding zones" for future development, instead of permanently protected land. In 1990, a large reduction in prohibited uses allowed more industrial, retail, commercial, and major tourism uses in designated green wedge and Greenbelt areas. According to Buxton and Goodman (2003, p. 207): "A planning policy of preventing residential development can quickly be undermined by a planning system which allows the consideration of almost any other urban related use." This was seen between 1992 and 2002,

as governments from both political parties rezoned substantial areas of the non-urban zones for residential development.

2.4 GREENBELTS IN ASIA

Greenbelts can be found in Asian cities such as Tokyo, Seoul, Hong Kong, and Bangkok, although these are not generally considered successful (Tang et al, 2005). In Korea, Greenbelt policies largely existed for military reasons, and small villages suffered as no land uses other than agriculture were allowed. Massive growth pressures led to a complete removal of Greenbelts in urban areas of low growth, and boundary adjustment in urban areas of high growth. Tang et al. state: "Hence, the GB application appeared to have been circumscribed under the forces of urbanization and local politics" (2005, p.232).

In Hong Kong, accommodation of high levels of population and economic growth by harbour reclamation is no longer a popular option. While new growth is generally occurring through urban redevelopment, rezoning rural lands inside the Greenbelt to urban is another option considered by planners. In anticipation of this, a new land-use zoning designation of "Conservation Area" has recently been added to the Greenbelt. This zone has the objective of protecting natural heritage and topographical features in rural areas (Tang et al, 2005, p. 243).

2.5 THE OTTAWA GREENBELT

Canada's first Greenbelt was attempted by the National Capital Commission (NCC) in the comprehensive plan for Ottawa in the late 1940s. It was first proposed in 1950 by French planner Jacques Gréber as part of an overall plan for the National Capital region to protect surrounding rural lands from sprawling urbanization. The federal government began acquiring Greenbelt land in 1956. Today, most of the total area, or 14,950 hectares, is owned and managed by the NCC, a federal crown corporation that regulates development

on all federal lands in the region (NCC, 2003, p.5). The rest of the 20,000 hectares is held by other federal departments and private interests.

The composition of the Greenbelt was originally to include infrastructure, airports, hospitals, and research centres, with only 25% allocated for farmland. The specific purposes of the Ottawa Greenbelt, as described by Fitzgibbon, Paine, and Taylor, (1995) were: 1) to prevent further urban sprawl, and protect adjacent agricultural lands; 2) to create a reserve of building sites for the government; and 3) as a practical and economic limit on growth of the capital (1995, p. 48). The NCC envisaged that once the area inside the Greenbelt was developed to capacity, additional growth would be directed to existing communities located about 50 kilometres outside the belt.

A comprehensive approach to planning was used for the Ottawa Greenbelt, based on "population projections, analysis of existing urban development and infrastructure, and assessment of the biophysical landscape" (Fitzgibbon et al., 1995, p. 48). The NCC was provided with the power of expropriation through the federal government, and allocated "considerable public expenditure" to the Greenbelt; purchasing 15,000 hectares of private land for 40 million dollars between 1958 and 1966 (Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, 1992, p. 180; Fitzgibbon et al, 1995, p. 49).

Today, one third of NCC-owned lands in the Greenbelt are leased to tenants for a variety of uses, ranging from farms to municipally run recreational facilities; about 8,000 people work and 1,000 people live in the Greenbelt (NCC, 2006).

Fig 5: Land use designations for the Ottawa Greenbelt.

GREENBELT ROLE	LAND DESIGNATION
Continuous Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Natural Area • Natural Buffer • Natural Area Link
Vibrant Rural Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivated Landscape • Rural Landscape
Compatible Built Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildable Site Area • Infrastructure Corridor
<i>See Land Designations plan, opposite.</i>	

Source: National Capital Commission, *Greenbelt Master Plan Summary*, 1996, p. 18.

Fig 6: City of Ottawa Greenbelt.

Source: City of Ottawa, 2005, online.

The Ottawa Greenbelt has been criticized on several fronts by politicians and citizens. Specifically, non-ownership and short term leases on farmland have resulted in lack of investment in farm buildings and lack of incentive to employ innovative farm

management practices (Fitzgibbon et al., 1995, p. 49). As well, the top-down planning approach used for the Greenbelt has been blamed for fostering mistrust and suspicion of the NCC by Ottawa citizens, which lingers today (NCC, personal communication). The Greenbelt has been criticized as ineffective in managing growth within the region, as rapid population and employment growth leapfrogged into surrounding areas such as Kanata (NCC, 1996, p.6). Finally, the NNC plans for the Greenbelt have been criticized as employing minimal environmental considerations (FitzGibbon et al., 1995).

2.6 GREENBELT SUCCESS AND CHALLENGES

The implementation of Greenbelts is a continuous area of contention between developers and conservation interests, and in many instances it has fallen short of public and planner expectations (Tang et al, 2005, p.230). From the cases above it is evident the success of Greenbelts as a planning tool rest on a variety of factors. Several measures of success and "lessons learned" derived from the literature are outlined below.

- Where Greenbelts have been applied in the UK, they have been quite effective in limiting urban sprawl. Three measures have been used to determine the level of success: 1) how much land within the belt is retained; 2) what is the proportion of development directed to urban areas; and 3) what is the density and type of new dwellings (Couch and Karecha, 2006, p. 355).
- Planning for Greenbelts and growth areas must occur together, with sufficient land set aside for urban expansion or land density established (Buxton and Goodman, 2003)
- The Greenbelt policy must be firmly maintained to ensure continued public support: a continual loss of land equates to a loss of their value, less public acceptance, and less willingness to protect them. "Ultimately, public opinion is likely to decide the fate of green belts." (Buxton and Goodman, 2003)

- Environmental crises are often required in order to rally political support for preservation policies (Burchell et al, 2005, p. 151).
- One study has concluded that increasing the width of the Greenbelt increases its effectiveness at slowing sprawl (Brown et al, 2004)
- Requiring developable greenfield housing land supply can go against Greenbelt goals.
- Political timelines are usually shorter-sighted than Greenbelt policies- changes in government are an ongoing challenge
- Greenbelts cannot be uniformly applied in all jurisdictions- policies need to be individually tailored to suit each situation.

3.0 ISSUES PROMPTING GREENBELT LEGISLATION

In order to understand the rationale for creating a Greenbelt in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) region in Ontario, a background of issues faced by the region is given. The main issues to be discussed are: urban expansion and 'sprawl'; transportation policies and auto dependency; economic viability of the region; issues surrounding water management; environmental degradation; loss of agricultural land and agricultural viability; and municipal affairs and finance. Public preferences, and perception of property rights in Canada, and their relation to Greenbelt legislation, will also be discussed.

3.1 GROWTH PRESSURES IN THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is the fastest growing urban area in Canada and the third fastest growing in North America. By 2031, close to four million more people and almost 2 million more jobs are forecast for this region (PIR, 2007). Cities in the region have grown outwardly into productive farmland, and remaining woodlots and natural features have been compromised or destroyed to accommodate more development and infrastructure corridors. The region is, therefore, facing increasing losses of agricultural land

and viability; transportation constraints and decreasing economic competitiveness; a loss of natural heritage features and water quality; and a number of other issues which threaten the overall sustainability of the region.

3.2 "SPRAWL" AND SMART GROWTH

Most of the growth in the GGH region is accommodated through "urban sprawl": low density development in greenfield sites, such as previous agricultural land surrounding existing urban centres. A better definition for sprawl is "land-consumptive, dispersed, and auto-dependent land development patterns made up of homogenous, segregated uses highly dependent on collector roads" (Randolph, 2004, pp. 106-107). A defining factor of sprawl is that land is consumed much faster in percentage terms than population growth, households, or building units (Burchell et al, 2005, p.150). The occurrence of sprawl development is not isolated to the region: it has been the dominant form of city growth in the United States over the past 50 years (Downs, 2005). According to Downs (2005 p.146), sprawl has been so prevalent that "many Americans believe- erroneously- that sprawl is synonymous with metropolitan growth."

There are many environmental and social problems resulting from this form of urban development. A variety of negative ecosystem impacts, such as habitat destruction and fragmentation, loss of biodiversity, watershed degradation, and increased air pollution occur as land is paved over for development. While all urban development unquestionably negatively impacts natural systems, the severity of impacts is determined by how much development occurs, where it occurs, and how it occurs (Brown et al, 2004).

Fig 7: Canadian Subdivision "sprawl."

Source: David Suzuki Foundation, 2007, online.

Social problems attributed to unlimited outward expansion of low density development include fragmentation of land use planning among multiple municipalities; auto-dependency, congestion and increased air pollution; loss of prime agricultural land; race and class-based exclusionary housing, a declining sense of community among residents; a homogenous, poorly designed landscape; and increased infrastructure and energy costs (Reid et al, 2006). Increased air pollution from auto dependent, sprawling communities has been linked to health effects such as lung cancer, asthma, and heart problems (Squires, 2002). Other health problems associated with sprawl are depression, obesity, and antisocial behaviour (Wu, 2006, p. 528).

Smart Growth

The generic response to sprawl in the last decade or so has been labelled "Smart Growth." Smart growth includes both reinvestment in cities and the creation of more sustainable new housing in greenfield areas.

Common Principles of Smart Growth

1. Limiting outward extension of new development in order to make settlements more compact and preserve open spaces. This can be done via urban growth boundaries or utility districts.
2. Raising residential densities (intensification) in both new-growth areas and existing neighbourhoods.
3. Providing for more mixed land uses and pedestrian friendly layouts to minimize the use of cars on short trips.
4. Loading the public costs of new development onto its consumers via impact fees rather than having those costs paid by the community in general.
5. Emphasizing public transit to reduce the use of private vehicles.
6. Revitalizing older existing neighbourhoods (Downs, 2005, p. 368)

According to Downs (2005, p.368), the main problem with this movement is that "Smart Growth is much more talked about than actually carried out in practice." While governments and citizens support smart growth principles, they may lack knowledge of what must be done, or may have difficulty linking their daily behaviour as contributing to the problem. The term 'smart growth' is vague, trendy, and possibly contradictory; it can be appropriated by interest groups or political parties that wish to appeal to the public (CUI, 2001, p. 4). The questionable use of this term is perhaps encapsulated by infrastructure projects which allocate funding to highway building, and the extension of infrastructure in a way conducive to sprawl, included in provincial growth management plans (Clark and Yacoudimis, 2000).

At present, there is little incentive in the region to use land more efficiently or intensify existing areas. Land in Ontario appears plentiful, and no significant borders to growth other than Lake Ontario exist. As stated by the Neptis Foundation:

"...When it is no longer possible to keep moving outwards, development opportunities within the existing urban fabric become more attractive and more valuable" (2004b, p. 10).

The greatest challenge in adopting smart growth policies is the existing consumer preference for large homes on large lots. According to Squires (2002, p.36), citizens oppose two things: sprawl and greater density. These 'private' choices are in fact constrained by private sector decisions and government policy (Couch and Karecha, 2003). According to Tucker (2006, p.7): "Suburban developers are playing with the rules stacked in their favour, so there's no real competition in the marketplace." Zoning policies must be reviewed by municipalities to ensure they are not in effect subsidizing sprawl development, making it more attractive to consumers.

High levels of political will and policy coordination are needed to ensure housing affordability, access to employment opportunities, and access to green space in an intensified community (Alexander and Tomalty, 2002, p.408). Good urban design and transit provision is also essential for successful smart growth communities.

Fig 8: Smart growth in Canada: Seaton community

Source: Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2007, online.

3.2 TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND POLLUTION

Fig 9: Hwy 400 and 401 intersection.

Source: King's Highway online, 2007.

As discussed in the previous section, public preference for the private automobile use poses a threat to health through increased air pollution, physical inactivity, and collisions. Gridlock will continue to worsen over the next 30 years; already costing \$2 billion a year in lost productivity on the 400 series highways alone. Commute times in the GTA are expected to increase by 45%; and a 40% concomitant increase in vehicle emissions can be expected (PIR, 2004, p. 3). Current popular thinking that more road capacity is the solution to congestion has been refuted over and over again, yet the bulk of government resources are allocated to providing road upgrades, expansions, and additions. With increasing gridlock comes increased air pollution: the City of Toronto saw an increase in smog advisories from one in 1993 to twenty in 2001 (City of Toronto, 2001).

Public preference for the automobile is more a matter of economics than ignorance. Inadequate funding and availability of public transit and commercial rail lines, along with comparably low gas prices (outside of North America) and comparable travel times, makes

driving the better option in many minds. According to the Canadian Urban Transit Association, transit systems in Canada need \$20.7 billion invested in infrastructure between 2006 and 2010 to rehabilitate, replace and expand existing systems to accommodate the growing numbers of public transit users (FCM, 2006b, p.3)

According to the CUI, people will use transit if they have some incentive to do so: if the alternatives are fast, located near home and work, and conveniently scheduled. But in order for transit to be economically feasible, employment areas must be sufficiently concentrated, and residential neighbourhoods must be designed to support it - leading to a chicken or egg argument (CUI, 2001, p. 4). Some examples of status quo transportation spending, which contradict smart growth and Greenbelt policies will be discussed further in this report.

Fig 10: GTA–West preliminary study area.

GTA West Environmental Assessment, 2007, online.

One of the loudest voices advocating for increased road capacity (and cheap energy sources) are business associations such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC, 2004). Modern business practices such as “Just-In-Time Delivery”, a manufacturing strategy wherein parts are produced or delivered only as needed, and increasing international trade

have emphasized freight truck transport as the main delivery method for goods. Road congestion costs industry a significant portion of revenue annually, as trucks compete with commuters. The next section demonstrates the link between sprawl development, transportation, and economic viability of the region.

3.3 ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF THE REGION

The booming economy of the greater golden horseshoe region, similar to many cities/regions in North America, is said to be under threat from cheap labour overseas, rising fuel and energy prices, and increased production costs from tightened environmental regulations. A more immediate and local danger is posed by poorly planned urban growth. Local boards of trade in Toronto have been among the first to recognize the negative implications of uncontrolled growth (CUI, 2001), as businesses leave downtown locations for the cheaper land prices, highway access, and the lower taxes of greenfield sites in surrounding municipalities (Neptis, 2003, p.19). The Canada/US border crossings are bemoaned as woefully inadequate and hampering international trade.

Fig 11: Future Detroit River Crossings Capacity Needs

Source: Transport Canada, 2007, online.

Smart growth policies such as Greenbelts are difficult to introduce and implement in a province where the construction and development industry; and the mineral and aggregate industry, are cornerstones of the economy. Housing starts in the GTA alone last year generated 168,113 jobs and \$7.14 billion in wages, contributing \$11.78 billion to Canada's gross domestic product, and allowing government coffers to pay for the country's high quality of life (GTHBA, 2007). Mineral and aggregate sites, a contentious issue for environmental stakeholders, nevertheless make large contributions to rural economies and provide materials for the new employment areas, roads, and residential subdivisions populated by new Ontarians.

Sprawl and its associated ills are diminishing the quality of life for the workers of the GGH region. Increased housing prices are threatening lower income and manufacturing sector workers' ability of homeownership or living where they are employed, causing them to travel far distances to work, adding to traffic. This makes the region less competitive and less able to attract highly skilled professionals, which are required for the large financial sector and emerging sectors such as R&D, chemical and pharmaceutical, and other business that have chosen to locate in the GGH. According to Neptis:

"...The evidence indicates that the connection between physical and social quality of place and economic dynamism are strong and getting stronger. Good planning and growth management policies amount to good economic policies, and the (admittedly expensive) investments required to restore, maintain, and improve key physical and social infrastructure in the Central Zone's urban regions represent money well spent. Indeed, one can say that failure to upgrade our existing infrastructure will seriously imperil our future growth prospects..." (2003, 23)

3.4 WATER QUALITY AND MANAGEMENT

The proximity of the region to the Great Lakes gives the appearance of water as a plentiful resource, yet groundwater and surface water contamination through urban development and agricultural pollutant run-off; salinization; erosion; and human sewage are threatening the water supply in the GGH. Events such as the *E.coli* outbreak in

Walkerton, and uncontrolled water taking and development on top of headwater areas such as the Oak Ridges Moraine, has made water “the focus of rigorous provincial study and concern in recent years because of its significance as a critical provincial resource” (NEC, 2003, p. 3). In a global context, it is widely believed that water management will be one of the world’s most contentious policy areas in the future.

The Greenbelt plan aims to protect the main watersheds of the region, already protected to some extent in past legislation such as the Oak Ridges Moraine Act and Niagara Escarpment Plan. These special areas serve major hydrologic functions including biological, chemical, and physical transformations, flood attenuation, groundwater recharge, and sediment entrapment (ON, 2002). They compose two of the most significant landforms in Southern Ontario. The Oak Ridges Moraine is particularly important for hydrological functions as it acts as the headwaters for 65 streams and rivers in Southern Ontario and contains a high percentage of woodland cover (City of Toronto, 2001). The greatest threat to the Moraine’s hydrological function is incompatible land uses above and below its surface, particularly in headwater areas. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan provides protection for its ground and surface water resources, but has been criticized for not providing enough direction or resources for implementation and enforcement. The recently introduced provincial Clean Water Act, 2006 and related legislation also manage water quality in the region.

3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Southern Ontario was once an extensive deciduous forest, but due to the rich soil and comparatively long growing periods, most of it has been cleared for agriculture (Ontario Forest Policy Panel, 1993, p. 31). Over 80% of the woodlands in Ontario south and east of the Canadian Shield have been lost since the 19th century. This deciduous forest region now contains only one percent of Ontario's forests (MNR, 2002).

Forest fragmentation, or the carving up of woodlands into smaller and more isolated patches, is considered the greatest threat to forest ecosystems and biodiversity (Royal Commission, 1992, p. 181). In the area between Woodstock, Brantford, and Lake Erie, more than 80% of forest patches are now less than 3 hectares in size (ON, 2004). According to Ontario Nature, the populations isolated in these fragments are:

"...more prone to decline due to inbreeding, swings in numbers due to overexploitation of habitat, and sudden removal from the patch due to fire, wind damage, or insect or disease infestations..." (2004)

Retaining forest habitat and therefore biodiversity is a concern on a worldwide scale, as the number of species is being dramatically reduced, their genetic makeup is being simplified, and their community structure is being degraded (OFPP, 1993, p. 31). The present estimated global extinction rate is 100-1000 species lost per year (Parson, 2001, p. 17). The difficulty of including the environmental benefits of forests in accounting procedures, and the appearance of relative abundance in Ontario, has led to their neglect in large part by government legislation. Only 8.5% of the land in South-Central Ontario is fully protected from development, with this protection fragmented between upper- and lower-tier municipalities, conservation authorities, and the provincial government (Neptis, 2004a, p.4).

In the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), habitat retention is important as many of the vegetation species occurring in the region are at their northern limits, and natural features such as the Oak Ridges Moraine are home to locally and provincially rare species-128 and 4 respectively (OFPP, 1993, p. 25; MNR, 2003, p 2). Forested or natural cover is also an "indispensable component of the hydrological cycle", as it facilitates the storage and recycling of large quantities of water (ON, 2002). The many benefits of forested cover include decreasing the urban heat island effect*, reducing run-off, and reducing soil erosion (Royal Commission, 1992, p. 182).

* A metropolitan area which is significantly warmer than its surroundings. As a) vegetation is replaced by asphalt and buildings-surfaces that absorb the sun's heat, b) the cooling effect of evaporation is reduced, and c) energy use gives off additional heat, a city in the summertime can be 2-10% hotter than its countryside.

Fig 12: Cores and corridors design diagram.

Source: American Wildlands, 2005, online.

Tischendorf and Fahrig (2000; p. 7) state that in order to conserve biodiversity, a system of natural or green corridors should exist across a landscape and connect isolated patches of habitat. They define connectivity as the degree to which a landscape facilitates or impedes movement of organisms among resource patches. Connectivity is difficult to achieve as it is both species and landscape-specific; but the general rule is that networks must be large enough to ensure no single disturbance or event can eliminate most of a habitat type, prevent recolonization of sites after an event, or affect species interaction beyond threshold levels (Tischendorf and Fahrig, 2000; Soule and Terborg 1999). The creation of natural heritage areas and buffer zones in the Greenbelt draft plan was in part created to address the issue of species movement and movement of genetic materials.

Environmental degradation is a multi-faceted problem, involving not only habitat and biodiversity loss, but also depletion of non-renewable resources, health risks due to pollution, and a whole host of other problems. In 1997, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions were 682 million tonnes, a 13% increase from 1990 and second only to the US for emissions per person (Parson, 2001). While increasing carbon dioxide levels are often discussed in the

media, according to Parson, humankind's most significant impact is to the nitrogen cycle. The amount of nitrogen in the environment has been increased by two times since the industrial revolution (2001, p. 15). The Federation of Canadian Municipalities adds that Canada has the third-largest "ecological footprint"[†] in the world, and if everyone were to consume resources at the Canadian rate, it would take four more Earths to support us (2004).

Urban areas have a particularly damaging effect on the environment, through polluting activities within the city and the "near-urban forces of aggregate extraction, estate housing, roadways, and utility corridors" (Royal Commission, 1992, p. 182). The effect of an urban area on the natural environment can vary by the area's size, wealth, nature of its production base, and by the quality of environmental management both within the urban centre and in the region surrounding it (Hardoy, Mitlin, and Satterwaithe, 2001, p. 191).

3.6 LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS AND AGRICULTURAL VIABILITY

One of the main issues leading to creation of the Ontario Greenbelt, which has been receiving increasing media attention, is agricultural protection in Southern Ontario. Agricultural operations are under threat from a host of problems including *i*) encroaching urban activities, which raise land prices, increase percentage of rented land, and make certain livestock operations impossible due to minimum distance separation requirements; *ii*) international trade rules and perceived lack of assistance from the federal and provincial government; and *iii*) large chain grocery stores which prefer to buy from non-local sources due to greater produce availability times or cheaper prices (Agricultural Advisory Team, 2004; Bunce and Maurer, 2005). Farmers are also concerned by the increasing government regulation of their operations, from such policies as the Nutrient Management Act (Bunce

[†] Model that approximates the amount of agriculturally and ecologically productive land required to sustain a human or group of humans. Concept developed by Wackernagel and Rees, 1996.

and Maurer, 2005, pg 21) and Clean Water Act, 2006; the added cost of compliance is an extra burden on their struggling enterprises.

The loss of agricultural land to urban development, like environmental degradation, is a problem not isolated to Southern Ontario. In the past, no major city could develop too far from the land that produced its inhabitant's daily food and fuel requirements (Hardoy et al., 2001, p. 176). This has changed with the expansion of rail, automobile/freight transport, and aviation. With food production being able to occur far from local areas, often at a lower cost, farmland surrounding cities has been swallowed up by urban expansion. As stated by the Greenbelt Task Force: "Globalization has diminished how we view our own food supply" (2004, p. 2).

This problem is exacerbated in the GGH region as its surrounding agricultural lands are classified as the best in the province and among the best in the country (PIR, 2004, p. 43). Less than 12% of the province is suitable for agricultural production, and only 5% of Canada's total land base is considered prime agricultural land (PIR, 2004, p. 43). Due to the high quality of land, agriculture is an important economic sector in Ontario, generating approximately \$3.5 billion in total gross farm receipts. In 2001, Ontario exported more than \$7 billion of agricultural and food products and the agri-food industry employed more than 600,000 people (Neptis Foundation, 2004b, p. 10). But the industry is threatened by growth pressures in the region. Lack of effective public control of changes in land use, or profit from increasing land values, is the major factor behind the loss of land (Hardoy et al., 2001, p. 174).

Other problems affecting the sector, identified by the provincial Agricultural Advisory Team (2004), include the aging of the farmer population, the decline of agricultural infrastructure, financial barriers to new operations, a burdensome tax and assessment system, and lengthy legal requirements. For example, the AAT states the need to refine the

Minimum Distance Separation (MDS)[‡] formulae and the need for greater use of conflict-resolution mechanisms to resolve differences, usually between farmers and non-farmer rural residents, before they escalate to the courts (AAC, 2004, p. 4). New MDS I and II formulae took effect as of January 1, 2007 (OMAFRA, 2006).

While one of the main objectives of Greenbelt legislation has been to protect agricultural land and the business of agriculture in the region, many farmers' primary concern with the Greenbelt is perceived the loss of value of their property- partly been due to artificial inflation from land speculation- after the plan is put in place. Many farmers operating in the "urban shadow" have long planned to sell their land as a retirement investment, and insist that their rights are being taken away. Accordingly, many demand compensation for what they view as government expropriation (Greenbelt meeting, 2004; Agricultural Advisory Team, 2004). Farmers and rural residents have long been considered as 'stewards of the environment' expected to maintain and protect woodlots, waterways and significant natural features occurring on their property (Bunce and Maurer, 2005, p.21). With increasing environmental protection, farmers are asking for compensation in return for the public benefits they provide. Property trespass is also a common concern among rural land owners (Greenbelt meetings, 2005; AAT, 2004).

3.7 PROPERTY RIGHTS

A popular misconception which has caused much outrage when regulatory land use policy is introduced is the subject of property rights. As stated by Parson (2001, p.34): "Most environmental policy initiatives directly or indirectly imply some erosion of property rights, at least in situations where those rights are exercised for income generating purposes." Property use rights are not constitutionally guaranteed in Canada as they are in the US, yet there is a popular belief that compensation should exist when the opportunity for increased land value is removed. According to Donnelly and Tryansky (2007):

[‡] Planning tool used to determine a recommended distance between a livestock facility and other land uses.

"...Neither the Constitution, contract law nor the Expropriation Act support any right to be compensated for "lost opportunity" as a result of having land protected by statute or regulation. No lesser authorities than the Supreme Courts of Canada and the United States have confirmed that government has the right to limit development on a given site, or to permit other uses, even against the wishes of the owner, with limited or no compensation."

In general, government regulations that reduce the value of private property do not require compensation to affected property owners when such regulations promote a valid public purpose, and leave the property owner with a reasonable economic use of the property (Localgovernment.ca, 2002, p. 49). Victor Doyle, Manager of the Provincial Planning and Environmental Services Branch, quoted in Mills (2004) states that there has never been a guarantee that Ontario landowners can develop their own land, so the government won't be compensating any farmer whose land is in the Greenbelt. In his words: "We have a policy-led system and can regulate what people do on their property."

The Greenbelt Act protects for misconceptions about compensation for land takings in Section 12 (6), which states that:

"Nothing done or not done in accordance with this Act or the regulations made under it constitutes an expropriation or injurious affection for the purposes of the Expropriations Act or otherwise at law."

An interesting point by Professor Enid Slack of the University of Toronto (Localgovernment.ca, 2002) is that much of the value of an individual piece of land derives not from the property owner's investments or labour but from public investments, such as roads, sewer lines, schools, libraries, and police protection. In the case of the Greenbelt, landowners that claim a "taking" has occurred on their property may also benefit from the restrictions placed on themselves and others in the area, such as cleaner air and water, viable local agriculture and lessened road congestion.

3.8 CONSUMER PREFERENCE

For any government policy to succeed, it must be backed by political will on the part of the policymaker, and acceptance by the public. Current land use legislation in Ontario has occurred due to citizen recognition of the increasing costs stemming from rapid, unsustainable and under-regulated growth. Unfortunately, it is often difficult for citizens to make the link between their own lifestyle choices and broader social and environmental objectives. As stated by Wu (2006):

"Policy measures that aim at curbing sprawl will ultimately affect a key element of the American way of life: the ability to consume a large amount of living space at affordable prices."

Public distaste for both sprawl and intensification; their preference for both affordable, convenient transit and plentiful, uncongested roads; and their desire for large single-family homes, fresh cheap produce and pristine parkland are at odds and pose numerous challenges for government decision-makers. Developments outside of urban areas appear to be a better value for money, as buyers often do not take into consideration hidden costs of extending municipal infrastructure, increased health costs from an auto-dependent lifestyle, and loss of agricultural land and environmental heritage. Businesses seeking lower taxes and larger properties in suburban or ex-urban locations find some of their cost savings offset by increased transportation costs and a further distance from market and a skilled labour force.

Municipal government must also be aware of the choices it makes when formulating zoning policies such as minimum lots sizes, setbacks, and segregated uses. A more compact development could save municipalities about 20 per cent in infrastructure costs compared to costs of perpetuating the existing growth pattern (PIR, 2004, p. 5; City of Toronto, 2001). A change in the demographic makeup of a community such as an aging of residents or influx

of young immigrants could mean decreased popularity of a municipality who is unable to provide a wide range of housing.

There is evidence of an increasing understanding of the link between consumer preference and planning issues in the GGH. Developers, often loathe to introduce innovative product, have worked with municipalities and citizens to create a more diverse range of housing and commercial developments. Municipalities have set about adjusting strategic and official plans and zoning orders to revitalize downtowns and accommodate a changing demographic. Provincial policy leadership is a critical component in providing price signals to consumers to influence their choice of location and residence, and recently introduced policies and policy reforms have been developed to enable this process. The role of government actors in problem solving and influencing consumers will be discussed in the following section.

4.0 JURISDICTIONAL CAPACITY AND ISSUES

Environmental protection in Canada has always been hindered by a public perception of unlimited natural resources, “job blackmail” from polluting industries and jurisdictional bickering leading to government inaction. While federal environmental legislation, such as the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) exists, land use and resource planning are in provincial jurisdiction, so local problems with national and global consequences are often not dealt with at the appropriate level. This section examines the powers and roles of the provincial, regional, and local municipal governments in addressing environmental sustainability, in context of the Greenbelt plan and act.

4.1 PROVINCIAL POLICY

In 1982 a constitutional amendment in section 92A gave provinces “exclusive” jurisdiction over the development, conservation, and management of non-renewable resources in the province (Vanderzwaag et al., 1992, p. 5). According to Shrecker (1992, p. 84): “the common law provided a powerful legal basis for resisting the environmental encroachments of the day.” In Ontario, nominal court orders and bargaining between government and industry has been described as “the essence of the environmental regulatory process”; with few concrete environmental protections or land use policies (Shrecker, 1992, pp. 90-91). There have been some recent developments toward greater regulation such as maximum fine increases for environmental offences in 1985; the amendment to the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act in 1990 and the subsequently created Environmental Assessment Board; the creation of the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR), Environmental Review Tribunal, and Environmental Commissioners Office in 1994; the “consistent with” as opposed to “regard to” wording of the 2005 PPS; and newer policies such as the Nutrient Management Act, Clean Water Act, and proposed EA reform.

Area-specific land use planning policies as a method of addressing environmental issues gained favour in the 1970s, as discussed in previous sections. A changing political climate favouring less government involvement and privatization in the 1980-1990s resulted in the province being largely absent from active planning and policy making. Provincial planning practices came under increased scrutiny after the election of Premier Mike Harris in 1995: the Progressive Conservative government was harshly criticized for its downloading of services and forcing amalgamations of many cities, along with a host of environmental and social policy issues (CUI, 2001, p. 4). By the end of two terms, they had lost popularity in their traditional voter base in the 905 area; due in part to issues that provided the basis for future Greenbelt legislation. The current liberal government under Dalton McGuinty had made land use planning part of its election platform, with a promise in the campaign document *Growing Strong Communities* of the creation of a 600,000 acre

permanent greenbelt and giving long term protection to the Oak Ridges Moraine. The Liberals promised to stop the construction of the 6,600 new homes on the Oak Ridges Moraine approved by the Conservative government. The liberal government did not stop the ORM development and was accused of breaking a promise, which was politically injurious to the newly elected government (Donnelly and Tryansky, 2007). Greenbelt legislation was introduced in the following month, and a development freeze enacted under Section 47 of the Planning Act to protect the proposed greenbelt study area.

4.2 REGIONAL BODIES

The recognition that rapid, low-density growth had led to region-specific problems in Southern Ontario that were above the capacity of municipal governments to solve had led the creation of metropolitan and regional governments by the province in the 1950s. Currently, municipalities in the GGH region are double-tiered, with a region or county above a local municipality. Regional government responsibilities, while varying, include arterial roads, transit, policing, water and sewer, waste management, regional land use planning and some health and social service provision. Counties provide the majority of municipal services to their local municipalities, but these services are more limited than in regions (ON, 2007).

Soon after their creation, it was realized that regional governments lacked the political will and/or resources to address problems in Southern Ontario's urban region. Greater Toronto region-wide policies with newly created regional government agencies were proposed to remedy issues from urban growth. Various attempts through the 1970s to 1990s such as the Parkway Belt West Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and GO transit provided region-specific planning, were unable to solve regional problems. One deficiency thought to contribute to their demise was the unwillingness of other levels of government to relinquish any real power or enough funding to the agencies. The newly

formed Greater Toronto Transportation Authority illustrates the resurgence of regional planning initiatives by the province.

4.3 CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Conservation authorities manage water and other natural resources over a local watershed area. They are responsible for providing flood and erosion control programs, building approvals in floodplains, placement of fill in hazard areas, and for proposed alterations to stream and river channels. Ontario has 36 conservation authorities, governed by Conservation Ontario, which work with municipalities and the province on matters of watershed protection. Conservation Ontario is currently reporting a budget shortfall, stating that this compromises the role of the authorities and environmental protection (Conservation Ontario, 2007).

4.4 MUNICIPALITIES

Over the past few decades in Ontario, the role and importance of municipalities has changed in terms of service provision between levels of government. Municipalities, especially large cities, have felt a financial squeeze as more services such as immigrant settlement programs, affordable housing, emergency preparedness, and daycare; are added to traditional services such as local roads, fire, garbage collection, recreational services, and land use planning. Municipalities in Canada remain “creatures of the province” under the constitution: they are limited in decision-making power. Unlike cities in the US, Canadian municipalities are not entitled to the sales tax. With only 8 cents of every tax dollar, 53.3% of municipal revenue came from property taxes in 2004; user fees rose to 23.4 %, while inter-government transfers have decreased (FCM, 2006b, p. 22). While provinces in Ontario are the policy makers, often municipalities are policy implementers and enforcers.

Slack (2006) lists a number of factors that should be present to provide fiscal sustainability to a municipality: first of all, while the property tax is stable and predictable, it has been described as regressive and unresponsive revenue source (FCM, 2006b). It is not an appropriate way to pay for social services; it does not tax commuters or visitors to the city using services such as roads and policing; and business are usually overtaxed compared to the benefits they receive. It is not an elastic tax base- it does not automatically increase as the economy grows. An economic downturn can mean raising local taxes or cutting back services. Municipalities should be able to raise their own money instead of getting transfers, to raise accountability. Finally, Slack believes that many of the problems municipalities are currently facing are best resolved on a region-wide level (Slack, 2006, p. 2).

Some progress has been made. City campaigning for increased finance and powers has led to a dedication of a portion of the federal gas tax, planning act reform, and the City of Toronto Act. A report recently released by the conference board of Canada entitled *Mission Possible: Successful Canadian Cities* issues 32 recommendations to government, including giving cities wider taxing powers and the ability to share in other tax revenue. The report also calls on better municipal management of finances and greater cooperation between neighbouring municipalities (Waldie, 2006).

5.0 RECENT PROVINCE-WIDE PLANNING INITIATIVES

After being largely absent for two decades, the provincial government has recently undertaken a number of land use policy initiatives in attempts to resolve the issues discussed in the previous section. The overarching document of government policy direction is the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), amended 2005. Several notable changes to the Planning Act have also been undertaken, to strengthen council decisions and promote intensification. Other policies discussed concern human and environmental health, and agricultural management.

Along with these province-wide policies, there are some area-specific policies that collaborate with Greenbelt legislation. The first province-wide land use policy which attempted to address urban, rural and environmental issues was the Parkway Belt West Plan, followed by the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP). The NEP planning area is now part of the Greenbelt, as is Oak Ridges Moraine.

The most important area-specific policy, to complement with the Greenbelt plan, is the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan directs development to urban areas, and sets intensification targets for this urban growth. Another related area-specific policy is the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act.

5.0.1 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT, 2005

The Provincial Policy Statement provides direction on matters of provincial interest concerning land use planning and development. It promotes a “policy-led” planning system, and is issued under the authority of section 3 of the Planning Act. The latest PPS came into effect in March 2005, and is to be applied in conjunction with Greenbelt legislation. The 2005 PPS, along with Planning Act amendments, attempts to address current planning issues articulated by municipalities. It aims to better protect employment lands from residential conversion; promotes intensification through brownfield redevelopment; and only allows development in areas with adequate infrastructure (MAH, 2006c).

Section two of the plan discusses the management of resources, including natural heritage features, water, agriculture, mineral aggregates, and cultural heritage- in a more general context than area-specific plans. For this reason, in stakeholder responses to the Greenbelt, prominent environmental organizations such as Ontario Nature proposed that in lieu of or as an addition to Greenbelt policy, the PPS should be strengthened to protect natural features and farmland.

5.0.2 THE STRONG COMMUNITIES (PLANNING AMENDMENT) ACT, 2004

Bill 26 makes several important amendments to the Planning Act; with the objective of providing municipalities with the tools to control development, promote sustainability, and increase local accountability within their boundaries. These changes include: *i*) removal of the right to appeal amendments to zoning by-laws and official plans that propose to alter an area of settlement boundary or establish a new settlement; *ii*) requirements for public notice and consultation are enlarged; and *iii*) timelines for planning decisions are extended (Legislative Assembly, 2006).

Issues concerning the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) have in particular been targeted by planning reform. The OMB has been criticized by the media and citizens due to the length, cost, and complexity of hearings (OPPI, 2002). The appointment of board members, as opposed to election, and some of their past involvement in the development industry has been viewed negatively. The board has also been accused of favouring development interests over community concerns. In light of these concerns, reforms include: *i*) the OMB and other approval authorities must have regard to council decisions when deciding planning matters; *ii*) municipal and provincial decisions “shall be consistent with”, instead of having regard to, provincial planning policies; and *iii*) some municipalities will be able to establish local appeal bodies, which would address some matters previously referred to the OMB.

Other changes made to address environmental sustainability includes amendments to the Conservation Land Act, to allow conservation easements and covenants, to be established under expanded criteria such as water quality protection and watershed management. The Municipal Act has also been amended to be consistent with planning amendments (MAH, 2004).

While many view the amendments positively and believe they are necessary for provincial smart growth and sustainability initiatives, others believe that the changes add a burden to municipalities due to previous downloading and financial constraints. According to Hume (2007) these are important changes that have “the power to alter the course of development in Ontario.”

5.0.3 AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

Agricultural practices in Ontario are regulated by a number of provincial policies, including the Nutrient Management Act, Minimum Distance Separation Formulae, and Clean Water Act. When combined with area-specific land use policies, this has led to the common sentiment by many in the farming community that the provincial government is over-regulating the business of agriculture in Ontario.

Much like the Greenbelt act, which it predates, the Nutrient Management Act spawned in part from the *E.coli* water contamination in Walkerton, Ontario, in 2000. The Bill targets the agricultural community; addressing the management of materials, including manure, that are applied to land for the purpose of improving growing conditions for crops or other specified uses. Agricultural operations are also often affected by the Minimum Distance Separation Formulae (MDS), which specifies the distance from these operations from incompatible land uses due to odour, noise, and other factors.

The Clean Water Act is a new provincial policy which received royal assent on October 19, 2006: it requires that communities identify potential risks to their water sources, and take steps to minimize or eliminate these risks. Conservation Authorities are to act as regulators in areas of jurisdiction established by the act. Municipalities are to prepare a drinking water source protection plan, identifying significant threats and moving to minimize or eliminate them (L.A, 2006).

5.1 AREA-SPECIFIC POLICIES RELATED TO THE GREENBELT

Area- specific policies have been enacted in many nations and jurisdictions to protect significant environmental and cultural features. Southern Ontario has a number of previously created area-specific policies, with mixed success in reaching policy goals. The need for additional area-specific policy such as the Greenbelt and growth plan is contended by some stakeholders.

5.1.1 PARKWAY BELT WEST PLAN

The Parkway Belt West Plan (PBWP), according to the MAH (2006b), “was a culmination of regional planning, Greenbelt and greenway planning”. With implementing legislation released in 1973, the PBWP was established in 1978 to create a multi-purpose utility corridor, urban separator and open space system. The plan had two land use designations: 1) the public use area, to be used as buffer area, utility, transit, and road land; and 2) the complementary use area, which encouraged private uses such as agriculture, recreation, and institutional which are not intensively urban. Today, parkway belt lands have been converted to the most part to Highway 407; a toll highway built as a public private partnership and opened 1997. The highway was a controversial undertaking during its construction, and more so when in 1999, it was sold to a private company and tolls sharply increased. Some lands were bypassed by the highway due to citizen opposition, and now fall under the Greenbelt (Burlington planning dept, personal communication, 2006).

5.1.2 NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN

At the same time the Parkway Belt West Plan was developed, the provincial government addressed mounting concerns about development that was occurring on the most prominent topographical feature in Southern Ontario- the Niagara Escarpment. The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act, 1973, was the first recognition of a

significant environmental feature in Ontario. The first escarpment plan was not created until 1985; five years later the feature was designated a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO (Clark and Yacoudimis, p. 72). The NEP has seven land use designations from natural area to urban area (NEP, 2006). The outer boundary of the plan area is fixed and inflexible, and can be changed only by plan amendment.

The agency currently responsible for administering the NEP is the Niagara Escarpment Commission. In the Greenbelt Plan, the NEP takes precedence over the Greenbelt legislation (MMAH, 2005, pg 6). The NEP plan and act requires a periodic review, the most current beginning 1999 and passed on to the Ministry of Natural Resources in 2001. The latest office consolidation of the plan dates from 2006. The NEP is generally viewed as a success, and has set precedent for area-specific land use and conservation planning in the GGH.

5.1.3 OAK RIDGES MORaine LEGISLATION

Fig 13: Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area.

Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2007, online.

The Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Conservation Plan and Act was arguably the stepping stone to the modern phase of provincial land use policy initiatives in the GGH. The ORM is a glacial deposit of sand, silt, and gravel that acts as an aquifer and water recharge area for many municipalities in the GGH. An expression of provincial interest in the moraine area was established in the Planning act in 1991. A technical working committee, and citizen advisory group, were created as first step toward policy formation (Tomalty et al, p.42).

Due to a recession and a change in provincial government, studies which supported a conservation strategy for the feature were placed on the shelf. Citizen unrest over what was perceived as secretive and ecologically harmful development deals on the Moraine culminated over a proposal for the construction of 100,000 new homes in Richmond Hill in 1999 (Bocking, 2002, p.11). The Walkerton water crises raised concerns not only over water quality and monitoring, but also of wider-scale provincial policies and privatization. Meetings attended by thousands of citizens and stakeholder groups, and court cases filed under the Environmental Bill of Rights, led to the adoption of the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act on May 17, 2001. The Act established a six month moratorium on development on the Moraine.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act 2001 received royal assent on December 14, 2001. The ORM Conservation Plan went into effect April 22, 2002; requiring upper tier municipalities conform their official plans within a year of its introduction, and requiring lower-tier municipalities to conform their zoning bylaws within 18 months (Fung & Conway, 2007, pg106).

To pacify landowners with properties on sensitive lands on the moraine, a land exchange was arranged for the north Pickering airport lands. This exchange remains controversial as environmental interests continue to question the need for the land swap,

and the developer involved charges that the Pickering lands actually contain more sensitive features than the ORM lands (Gombu, 2007).

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and Plan is a critical predecessor to Greenbelt legislation in the province, and builds on the momentum of public involvement introduced at this time. Like the NEP, the ORM legislation overrides Greenbelt legislation where there are conflicts. Today, almost 92% of the moraine is off-limits to development (Crandall, 2003). Many municipalities are still formalizing their compliance to ORM legislation at the time of writing, and many experience the double burden of conforming to ORM and Greenbelt legislation.

5.1.4 GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE

The Greenbelt Plan and Act directs where urban growth cannot go; its complement is the Places to Grow Act, which directs development into urban centres and to lesser extent towns/hamlets throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe. A discussion paper released July 2004 led to a draft plan for comment in 2005. The final plan was released June 2006, one year after the Greenbelt.

The growth plan contains technical criteria based on population and housing projections. These have been generally accepted by municipalities, but some feel the intensification target of 40% new development in existing urban areas will be impossible to reach. Dunning (2006, p. 1) stresses that the accuracy of the forecasts is crucial, for infrastructure shortages or over-allocation of greenfield for development may occur.

Many shortcomings of the growth plan have been pointed to in stakeholder responses, and this will be discussed in the context of Greenbelt legislation in the discussion section. Regardless of local criticism, international acclaim has been secured for the plan, when the American Planning Association awarded the Ontario government the Daniel Burnham Award in December 2006 (PIR, 2006).

5.1.5 DUFFINS ROUGE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE ACT

As mentioned previously, the Canadian government amassed a large preserve of land by expropriation in the North of Pickering, with plans to build the Pickering airport. While development plans stalled, the land was largely leased for agriculture and remains so today. The lands, known as the Duffins Rouge agricultural preserve and Seaton lands; contain valuable natural heritage features and fall within the Rouge valley watershed.

The lands are also in close proximity to major infrastructure, and constitute an easy-to-service, profitable development area for the City of Pickering and Durham region. Pickering city council attempted to take lands out of the preserve for development, to complaints from citizens and environmental interests. The province quickly moved to rescind the decision of the city by passing the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act (2005). The Bill overrides any agreement or court order that invalidates an easement or covenant entered into under the *Conservation Land Act* on or before February 28, 2005 with respect to land in the North Pickering area. The Bill amends the *Conservation Land Act* to allow an easement or covenant under the Act to be for the conservation, preservation or protection of land for agricultural purposes (Legislative Assembly, 2005).

5.1.6 PROPOSED LAKE SIMCOE ACT (Bill 106, 2006)

The political unpopularity of excluding most of Simcoe County from the Greenbelt Plan has led to the proposed Lake Simcoe Act, which would establish a comprehensive protection program for the natural heritage system and watershed for Lake Simcoe and the Nottawasaga River. The proposed Plan may set out land use designations, prohibit or restrict certain land uses or structures, and may set out land, water, resource protection and planning policies.

6.0 GREENBELT TIMELINE

A policy as detailed and controversial as Greenbelt legislation requires much stakeholder input, and is often released in several stages before the final draft. The following section will give an overview of the formulation of Greenbelt legislation.

6.1 GREENBELT PROTECTION ACT, 2004

As mentioned in section 4.1 of this report, the McGuinty Liberals promised the creation of an Ontario Greenbelt in their campaign document. Greenbelt legislation was initiated on December 16, 2003, and a development freeze enacted under Section 47 of the Planning Act to protect the proposed greenbelt study area.

The Act created a Greenbelt study area within the GGH by imposing a one year moratorium on new urban development or rural and agricultural lands within Durham, Halton, Peel, York, and Niagara regions, as well as the City of Hamilton and the City of Toronto. It stated that every use of any land, building, or structure on the land within the study area that is not located within an urban settlement area is prohibited, except those lawfully in existence and those permitted prior to the order (2003). The Act also clarified the transition provisions on development applications relating to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 (MMAH, 2004).

6.2 GREENBELT TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Greenbelt Taskforce was appointed in February 2004 to oversee stakeholder and public consultations, then make recommendations on the “scope, content, and implementation of the Greenbelt” (Greenbelt Taskforce, 2004, p.11). The task force consisted of a variety of stakeholders that were meant to be representative of the interests in the Greenbelt. After reviewing policy documents, and meeting with representatives and experts,

they released the discussion paper *Toward a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt* on May 13, 2004. Public and stakeholder consultation meetings began May 20, with the last session in Burlington on June 16. The taskforce claims that 1,200 people were heard from and over 1,000 submissions were received for the formulation of the comments.

Towards a Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt-Recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was released in August 2004. The task force's main recommendation was that: "The Greenbelt should create a magnificent legacy for Ontarians by preserving and enhancing our natural heritage, agriculture, natural resources, and our rich cultural heritage" (2004, p. 2). Other recommendations included municipal administration of the plan, the provision of an appellate tribunal by the province, the inclusion of fiscal measures to fulfill objectives of the plan, and the establishment of a Greenbelt advisory committee.

6.3 GREENBELT DRAFT PLAN

The Ontario Greenbelt Draft Plan was released on October 28, 2004. All public input was originally to be submitted by December 12, 2004, and the legislation was to be passed on December 15, 2004. However, this would have left only 3 days for responses to be read and analyzed (OSGN, 2004). Under political pressure, the deadline for responses was extended and a new round of stakeholder responses was scheduled for January 2005.

6.4 a GREENBELT ACT, 2005

The Greenbelt Act, 2005 authorizes government to designate a greenbelt area and create a Greenbelt Plan. The act is a general outline for the plan, stating objectives and main elements, and legally establishes municipal conformity to the plan.

6.4 b GREENBELT PLAN

The final Greenbelt Plan was released by the province on February 28, 2005, and the Act received Royal Assent February 24, 2005. The main designations of the plan are the agricultural system, natural system, and settlement areas. Key policies are *i)* to establish a network of countryside and open space areas which support the ORM and Niagara Escarpment, *ii)* to sustain rural communities and their economic viability; *iii)* to preserve agricultural land, and recognize the importance of agriculture to the economy; *iv)* to provide ecosystem protection, habitat connectivity, and river connections throughout the Greenbelt area; *v)* to provide recreational and tourism opportunities *vi)* to control urbanization and ensure infrastructure development proceeds in an environmentally sustainable manner; and *vii)* to promote sustainable resource usage (MAH, 2005).

Section 9 of the plan states every municipality in the Greenbelt is required to bring its official plan and zoning orders in conformity with the provincial legislation by the time the official plan is up for review- at most every five years. Mapping of Greenbelt areas, key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, minimum vegetation protection zones, and other vulnerable areas must also be completed by this period. Any plan amendments or developments approved prior to Dec 16, 2004 are allowed to proceed. Municipal environmental policies can be stricter except when mineral and aggregates, or prime agricultural policies are concerned. Natural heritage boundaries can be refined at the time of conformity.

The Greenbelt legislation also establishes a Council, Hearing Officer and Tribunal. The Greenbelt Council was appointed in June 2005 to provide advice to the Minister of Municipal Affairs on performance measurements, ongoing implementation, proposed amendments to the plan, and at the ten year review period of the plan. The plan also enables a Hearing Officer to be established, whose mandate would apply if the Minister considers

approving an amendment to the Greenbelt Plan. A Greenbelt tribunal has also not yet been formed (Fredrickson, 2007, personal communication).

Fig 14: Greenbelt plan area and natural heritage system.

Source: Personal Collection.

PART II: RESEARCH AND RESULTS

7.0 RESEARCH METHODS

The Greenbelt is an area-specific, provincial land use policy, which is implemented at the municipal and regional level. The willingness of the municipalities within the Greenbelt to conform to legislation, and the degree to which their official plans and zoning protect environmental features and agricultural lands, will determine in part the success and longevity of the Greenbelt.

One of the three visions of the Greenbelt plan is to give permanent protection to the natural heritage and water resource systems that form the environmental framework around which urbanization in the region will be organized (s.1.2.1). The second goal of the Greenbelt plan is environmental protection. So as environmental protection is one of the key policies in the Greenbelt plan the analysis of results will focus on the progress in environmental sustainability and its effects on the Greenbelt, in context of municipal conformity.

7.1 OBJECTIVE

It is suspected that the municipal response to the Greenbelt plan will vary: the character of the municipalities, size of greenbelt within their boundaries, and types of designations within their boundaries may result in very different responses to the plan. It is also suspected that some municipalities will resist implementing the plan, which may work to compromise overall success of the plan.

The objective of this report is to examine the progress in municipal conformity to Greenbelt legislation, in order to 1) determine what, if any, challenges to implementation and Greenbelt 'success' exist for municipal planners; and 2) determine what impact

municipal response to conform to Greenbelt legislation will have on environmental and agricultural protection, and the overall success of the Greenbelt. While stakeholder responses to the legislation and other literature are available, an in-depth and somewhat more balanced look at local issues can be obtained by speaking directly to local planning staff.

7.2 METHOD

In order to determine how municipal views differed, and gain a more balanced insight, municipal planners were chosen as the interview subjects over regional and municipal politicians. Proposed research methods and a draft question template were submitted and approved by the Ryerson Ethics Review Board on August 17, 2006. The most senior staff member responsible for Greenbelt legislation, in each municipality and region that fell within Greenbelt protected countryside boundaries were interviewed in person. These interviews and the land use information gained were then used for written and geospatial analysis. Geospatial displays of municipal and regional conformity dates were created from information given by municipal planners. The official plans of municipalities and regions that had conformed by 2006, or that were beginning their conformity review in 2006, were then examined to establish the extent of conformity and whether any additional environmental or agricultural protection was provided beyond that mandated by the Greenbelt legislation. Finally, information from interviews was used to identify main issues grouped into three categories: 1) process issues for municipalities, 2) implementation issues for municipalities, and 3) issues affecting the integrity of the Greenbelt.

7.2.1 METHOD: INTERVIEWS

In total, interviews were conducted with 37 municipalities and 8 regional municipalities. The municipality of Puslinch was excluded from the interview process as it fell under the Wellington regional plan. Orangeville, while included in the provincial listing

of affected municipalities, only fell under the settlement area designation and was therefore excluded. Dufferin County was also excluded from interviewing as Greenbelt implementation is done by the lower-tier municipalities and reviewed by the province. The City of Toronto was also excluded from the interview process because only one river corridor fell within Greenbelt boundaries.

Table 1: Regions and Municipalities in the Study Area

Region	Municipality	Municipality	Municipality
Dufferin	Hamilton	Burlington	North Dumfries
Durham	Toronto	Halton Hills	Erin
Halton	Amaranth	Milton	Puslinch
Niagara	East Garafraxa	Oakville	East Gwillimbury
Peel	Mono	Grimsby	Georgina
Simcoe	Ajax	Lincoln	King
Waterloo	Brock	Niagara-On-the-Lake	Markham
Wellington	Clarington	Pelham	Richmond Hill
York	Oshawa	St Catharines	Vaughan
	Pickering	Thorold	Whitchurch-Stouffville
	Scugog	West Lincoln	Innisfil
	Uxbridge	Brampton	Bradford-West Gwillimbury
	Whitby	Caledon	

In the selected municipalities, attempts were made to find the senior planner that was *i)* most familiar with Greenbelt legislation; *ii)* most responsible for provincial policy implementation; and/or *iii)* responsible for the municipality's official plan reviews. The planner was asked a series of questions deemed important in evaluating municipal conformity progress. The Ryerson Ethics Board-approved general question template was generally adhered to, although additional questions were asked when believed it would contribute positively to the research. Some questions from the template did not apply to certain municipalities and were not asked. In some cases, planners declined to answer certain questions. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face, and some were conducted over the telephone in the case where: 1) the municipal planner was unable to meet face-to-face due to time constraints, 2) the planner preferred to discuss matters over the phone due to time constraints, or 2) increment weather and distance prevented the researcher from

travelling to the municipality. All interviews were recorded by the researcher onto paper, then word-processed into electronic copies.

QUESTION TEMPLATE

- 1) What official plan are you operating under right now (date)?
 - 2) What has been the response to Greenbelt legislation/ move to compliance?
 - 3) What official plan policies/boundaries were changed by introduction of Greenbelt legislation? (residential, industrial, naturally significant?)
 - 4) Is your municipality in agreement with/in conflict with Greenbelt boundaries? In which areas do conflicts arise?
 - 5) Has planning staff drafted/sent any responses/reports to council/region/province concerning the Greenbelt? Has council expressed its views to the region/province? Can I access these documents?
 - 6) Are there any specific sites in the municipality that will pose difficulties during conformity?
 - 7) Are there any particular constraints on infrastructure, residential, industrial or agricultural development posed by the Greenbelt maps/policy?
 - 8) What, in the view of council, is the 'role' of the municipality (rural character, industrial centre, growing residential community etc). Does Greenbelt legislation reflect their views? What Greenbelt goals/visions are the council most concerned about/most supportive of?
 - 9) Based on public consultations/submissions, Greenbelt goals/visions is the local citizenry most concerned about/most supportive of?
 - 10) Have your municipality mapped key natural heritage systems, wellhead protection areas, and other features as outlined in the Greenbelt legislation? Are these maps available?
 - 11) What pressure has the regional municipality been exerting to comply with the Greenbelt plan?
 - 12) What existing policies surrounding environmental (land, water, biodiversity) and agricultural protection existed in the municipality? Were these, in your opinion, sufficient to achieve satisfactory protection? Are there any cases where municipal policies were stricter/more detailed than provincial policies?
 - 13) Are there any more effective ways to achieve Greenbelt goals (environmental protection, agricultural protection, cultural, tourism, infrastructure and natural resources etc) than actually implementing a Greenbelt? What other policies must be enacted for the Greenbelt to be successful in achieving its goals?
- Have any land price increases occurred/ have you seen any change in land value or activity?

When selecting examples of municipal responses to interview questions, example either reflected a) a response representative of most or many municipal planners; b) an atypical

response which illustrated the opposite side of most/many municipal responses; or c) a response which illustrated a specific example of a occurrence, issue or policy within the municipality/region which best exemplified the issue.

7.2.2 METHOD: GEOSPATIAL DISPLAYS

Primary data obtained through interviews, as well as secondary data, were used for geospatial analysis of municipal conformity using GIS. Ministry of Municipal Affairs' Greenbelt boundary, natural heritage system, and municipal boundary files were obtained from the Ryerson University library Geospatial Resource Centre. Several fields were added to the municipal boundary files' attribute table to display differing conformity times. The "2006" field displayed municipalities which had achieved Greenbelt conformity in 2006; the "REV2006" field displayed council-approved municipal plans which attempt to conform to the Greenbelt but await provincial approval; the "2007" field refers to municipalities that aim to conform in 2007; the "2008" field lists municipalities that aim to conform by 2008; and the "2009" field lists all municipalities which will conform by the deadline for conformity. The attribute table of municipal boundary files was opened as a .dbf file in Microsoft excel, and value of "1" was input into the field in which each municipality conformed. The modified file was reopened in Arcmap, and each field was selected in turn and made into a separate layer.

Fig 15: Attribute table of municipal boundary file, displaying selections and added fields.

Source: Personal Collection.

Each layer was selected to display the conformity dates of the municipalities within Greenbelt boundaries. The same process was used to create a display of regional conformity to Greenbelt legislation. In this instance, provincial data on regional boundaries was used. Both regional and local municipal conformity dates are now displayed in the GIS file.

Fig 16: Regional attribute table with new conformity fields.

FID	Shape	NAME	TYPE	POP2001	DWELL2001	AREA_SQ	POP	PROV	2006	REV2006	2007	2008	2009	INDEXER
7	Polygon	Hastings County	CTY	125815	58257	5978.339	21.06	ON						
8	Polygon	Prince Edward Division	DIV	24901	11399	1049.989	23.71	ON						
9	Polygon	Northumberland County	CTY	77497	31769	1903.234	40.71	ON						
10	Polygon	Peterborough County	CTY	125856	62304	3806.025	33.06	ON						
11	Polygon	Kawartha Lakes Division	DIV	69179	34637	3059.219	22.61	ON						
12	Polygon	Durham Regional Municipality	RM	506901	175738	2523.481	200.8	ON	1					
13	Polygon	York Regional Municipality	RM	728254	229239	1761.638	413.9	ON				1		
14	Polygon	Toronto Division	DIV	2481494	965554	629.9132	3939	ON						
15	Polygon	Peel Regional Municipality	RM	988948	313650	1241.991	796.2	ON			1			
16	Polygon	Dufferin County	CTY	51013	18160	1465.676	34.33	ON						
17	Polygon	Wellington County	CTY	187313	72055	2696.851	70.50	ON	1					
18	Polygon	Halton Regional Municipality	RM	375229	136668	967.0375	388.0	ON						1
19	Polygon	Hamilton Division	DIV	490268	194154	1117.106	438.8	ON						
20	Polygon	Niagara Regional Municipality	RM	410574	170876	1663.076	220.3	ON	1					
21	Polygon	Haldimand-Norfolk Regional Municipality	RM	104670	42907	2694.197	36.16	ON						
22	Polygon	Brant County	CTY	118485	46367	1092.936	108.4	ON						
23	Polygon	Waterloo Regional Municipality	RM	436515	166813	1368.554	320.4	ON				1		
24	Polygon	Perth County	CTY	73675	28379	2218.408	33.21	ON						
25	Polygon	Oxford County	CTY	99270	38555	2039.442	48.67	ON						
26	Polygon	Elgin County	CTY	81553	31800	1880.829	43.36	ON						
27	Polygon	Chatham-Kent Division	DIV	107709	45407	2470.761	43.59	ON						
28	Polygon	Essex County	CTY	374975	149744	1651.590	202.5	ON						
29	Polygon	Lambton County	CTY	126971	54840	3001.723	42.29	ON						
30	Polygon	Middlesex County	CTY	403185	170915	3317.071	121.5	ON						
31	Polygon	Huron County	CTY	59701	26330	3407.623	17.51	ON						
32	Polygon	Bruce County	CTY	63892	36864	4155.525	15.37	ON						
33	Polygon	Grey County	CTY	89073	42386	4508.198	19.75	ON						
34	Polygon	Simcoe County	CTY	377050	162520	4840.539	77.89	ON						1
35	Polygon	Muskoka District Municipality	DM	53106	42643	3690.418	13.85	ON						
36	Polygon	Haliburton County	CTY	15085	19932	4025.334	3.747	ON						
37	Polygon	Renfrew County	CTY	95138	44528	7403.596	12.85	ON						
38	Polygon	Nipissing District	DIS	82910	38145	17064.64	4.858	ON						
39	Polygon	Parry Sound District	DIS	39665	34931	9222.254	4.301	ON						
40	Polygon	Manitoulin District	DIS	12679	9213	4759.630	2.663	ON						
41	Polygon	Sudbury District	DIS	22894	13322	36350.52	0.597	ON						
42	Polygon	Greater Sudbury Division	DIV	155268	68710	3364.965	46.14	ON						
43	Polygon	Timiskaming District	DIS	34442	16852	13260.06	2.593	ON						
44	Polygon	Cochrane District	DIS	85247	37733	141243.9	0.603	ON						
45	Polygon	Albion District	DIS	118567	50400	48737.72	2.432	ON						

Source: Personal Collection

7.2.3 METHOD: NEW OFFICIAL PLANS

At the time of writing, several municipalities had either *i*) new official plans that conform to Greenbelt legislation, or *ii*) new council-approved plans that are awaiting provincial review. These municipalities include Brock, Hamilton, Innisfil, Mono, Burlington, Halton Hills, and Brampton. Municipal official plans shall be examined to determine the level of effort put in to reach the Greenbelt goals of environmental protection, and where applicable, agricultural protection. The Durham Regional Official Plan, council adopted and currently under provincial review, will also be examined.

8.0 INTERVIEW RESULTS

The results for most questions are stated in this section, and used for issue identification in section 11. Questions 5 and 10 were used for fact finding therefore responses were not included in analysis. For each remaining question, municipal responses have been organized and quantified to the furthest extent possible, with regional responses following. Selected comments from municipalities have been included following most quantified responses. Some questions pertained to similar matters; the responses to these questions were cross-tabulated to determine whether any trends could be identified.

8.1 Question 1: *What official plan are you operating under right now (date)?*

This question was asked to determine when conformity with Greenbelt legislation was to occur. This information was used to generate a graphic representation of the municipal and regional Greenbelt conformity timeline using geographic information systems (GIS).

The conformity date of municipalities varies, for two reasons. According to Section 9 (1) of the Greenbelt Act, municipalities must bring their official plan to conformity by the date the plan is up for review under S. 26(1) of the Planning Act, or when specified by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. But municipalities may also have chosen to bring their plan into conformity before the date of Official Plan review, exhibiting that they have embraced the legislation and its goals. However, it was difficult to determine which reason was chosen, as several municipal plans were quite outdated.

Municipalities

Conform 2006	In review 2006	2007	2008	2009- or deadline
6	7	5	3	16

Conformity dates varied for municipalities. While a large number would conform closer to the deadline, an almost equal number had conformed by 2006 or were awaiting provincial approval by 2006.

Regions

Conform 2006	In review 2006	2007	2008	2009
1	2	1	2	2

Only one regional municipality had conformed by 2006; two others were under review in 2006.

From the responses to this question it is evident that every municipality is in some stage of recognizing Greenbelt legislation, at least at the official level. The threats to Greenbelt integrity therefore will not come from municipalities who refuse to conform, but from municipal decisions to individual applications within the Greenbelt boundary and at the borders of lands outside the designated area. The maps created below illustrate conformity dates and progress.

Fig 17: Map of municipal conformity to Greenbelt legislation.

Source: Personal Collection.

Fig 18: Map of regional conformity to Greenbelt legislation.

Source: Personal Collection.

8.2 Question 2: *What has the initial response to legislation been?*

This question was asked to gain an understanding of the initial response of municipal planning staff and council to Greenbelt legislation. While the answers varied and covered a variety of topics, the responses generally fell into seven categories:

- 1) Involved since the beginning- encouraged plan
- 2) Generally support principle
- 3) Not really affected, policies very similar
- 4) Mixed reviews: by council/public/planners, or happy with some policies/unhappy with others.
- 5) Caught off guard- lands included in final draft
- 6) Unhappy with plan area/concerned with policies
- 7) Not applicable/no response

Municipal responses

Responses	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)
# of respondents	1	9	5	3	2	8	3

Selected Comments- Municipalities

- No position- policies not too different
- Greenbelt legislation is the province playing catch-up. "Benefit is... provincial legislation. That's where the value lies"
- "Surprise land"- land included in final draft
- Lots of pressure on lands outside Greenbelt
- Why was Simcoe not included?
- Lots of contradictions between policies between Greenbelt and growth plan
- Citizens and council happy
- "Thou shall not do anything"- says province
- Staff felt- one more piece of legislation

Regional responses

Responses	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)
# of respondents	0	2	1	3	1	0	0

Selected Comments- Regions

- Mixed response. Some municipalities happier than others. Those not included all for the Greenbelt. "Great day" for planners, but overwhelmed by provincial initiatives, workload
- No incentive for region to conform- so little land included
- Fairly negative response, "not due to purpose, but to process." No time to comment on legislation as included in the last minute
- "Municipality split- rules different on one side to another
- Policy is inconsistent- drives growth northward

8.3 Question 3: *What official plan policies/boundaries were changed by introduction of Greenbelt legislation (residential, industrial, and naturally significant?)?*

Two categories were created for responses: 1) boundary change- whether the Greenbelt legislation introduced boundary changes in the municipality between urban and rural lands (or rural lands which were planned to be developed as urban lands in the future); 2) policy changes- whether the municipality experienced changes in their planning policies due to Greenbelt legislation. Each category was further subdivided concerning whether change occurred, did not occur, or whether the answer provided did not fit into any of the general categories.

Did the Greenbelt create boundary changes in the municipality?

Lots of change	Little to no change	N/A
5	18	4

Did the Greenbelt create policy changes in the municipality?

Lots of change	Little change	No change	N/A
6	13	4	4

From the results, it was discovered that two municipalities already had urban boundaries in place (Ajax and Burlington). One municipality, Hamilton, has strongly defined urban and rural planning areas, each with its own official plan (Greenbelt lands fall under the rural plan). Many municipalities have experienced little-to-no boundary changes; most of their lands in the Greenbelt were already rural, agricultural or environmentally significant and protected. Finally, some municipalities experienced large policy changes as *i)* all or almost all of their area was designated protected countryside; or *ii)* their official plan policies were outdated; or both.

Selected Comments - Municipalities

- The Greenbelt identifies the same natural features as municipality, but provides more buffer area
- Town's Official Plan was well out of date- were looking to the regional plan for guidance
- Provincial plans solidified existing plans
- Rural agricultural economic zone "red zone"- policies changed by Greenbelt
- Designations almost the same, but economic engines for small communities stopped.
- Lands ripe for development designated by province as specialty crop
- Natural areas mapping- province and municipality working from the same maps
- Recently went through urban expansion
- Municipal agricultural policies were out of date
- Greenbelt legislation- allows town to hold firm on urban boundary at OMB.

Otherwise, the regional plan since 1970s already said there will be no substantial growth in municipality

Did the municipality want any extra land added to Greenbelt boundaries?

From the literature it was assumed that many municipalities, farmers and landowners believed too much land was included in Greenbelt boundaries, or they wished it was included somewhere else. In order to substantiate this, it was asked whether any municipalities wanted not less, but more, of their land included in the Greenbelt.

Two municipalities and one region wanted more land included in within their boundaries in the Greenbelt. One municipality requested more land, but council eventually reneged on this as it made many landowners unhappy. One regional municipality, after being included in the final draft of the plan, questioned why the Paris and Galt moraines were not included. Several municipalities, in response to the draft plan, questioned why Simcoe County was largely excluded from Greenbelt mapping.

Regional responses

All regions experienced policy and boundary changes, in varying degrees. Some regional comments:

- 5,000 or so acres added in final draft: “surprise land”
- Original plan area- mapping errors
- No notice region was to be included
- Environmental boundaries had changes
- MMAH- did not know why Simcoe not included

8.4 Question 4: *Is your municipality in agreement with/in conflict with Greenbelt boundaries? In which areas do conflicts arise?*

The municipal responses to question 4 were divided into the four general categories below:

No conflict	conflict	Conflict resolved in final draft	N/A
12	9	4	1

The majority of municipalities are not in conflict with the boundaries of the Greenbelt plan. Some are supportive of the general principle of the Greenbelt, but question the rationale and science that supports the provincially-drawn boundaries. The lament was repeated that the province has not provided any technical documents pertaining to how boundaries were chosen: some believe this does not respect municipal decisions concerning growth. Some municipalities have also raised the issue that unclear technical guidelines will cause problems if residents and/or landowners unhappy with Greenbelt designations on their property appeal the new, conforming municipal O.P to the OMB- how will the municipality defend the designation?

Another key criticism was the rationale for agricultural lands. Some municipalities asserted that specialty crop lands were misplaced; although the climate may have been conducive to growing certain crops, the land was of little agricultural value. Others argued that some prime agricultural areas were excluded, while other, near-urban agricultural lots which fell under considerable development pressure, or were difficult to farm, were designated agricultural.

Selected Comments- Municipalities

- Secondary agricultural severances is an area where conflicts arise
- The natural heritage buffer area is a 'no mans' land'; a moving target: when successional bush grows to woodlot, will it then require an additional buffer?
"Ridiculous"
- Municipality wanted less lands, province wanted more; "split the difference" in final draft, acceptable to both parties
- Lands "cookie-cuttered out" around urban area- protected in neighbouring municipality but not in the other. Thought some lands should have been included that were not included by the province
- Additional of lands were added in the final draft without consultation
- Greenbelt boundaries are same as the town urban boundary planned by region

Regional responses

Regional responses varied, though this was a difficult question to measure due to the diversity of local municipalities within each region, facing different issues. Due to this, some regional comments were selected, but generally responses were not categorized.

Selected Comments- Regions

- What is science behind the lines?
- Sustainable water supplies and servicing- key planning challenge
- More land then what we'll need (left outside of Greenbelt boundary)
- Why were moraines (other than oak ridges moraine) not included?

Recommendation to province- include moraines

8.5 Question 6: *Are there any specific sites in the municipality that will pose difficulties during conformity? Are there any specific concerns?*

This question was intended to ask whether there had been any specific sites in the municipality that will pose difficulties in conformity, although it quickly became evident through the types of responses given by municipalities that it would be useful to categorise whether any specific concerns also affected the town/city. This question sheds valuable insight on the biggest difficulties municipalities face when implementing legislation, as well as small, site-specific issues that need to be resolved as the legislation is implemented.

Are there any specific sites that may cause difficulties during conformity?

Municipalities		Regions	
Yes	13	Yes	2
No	13	No	2
Total respondents	26	Total respondents	4

Just over half of municipalities have site specific concerns: while some of these areas are small or even individual properties or applications, others are quite large and may illustrate the discontent municipalities have with the provincial process when determining lands to be included under Greenbelt legislation. This question, building on question 3 and 4, raises the issue of whether greater municipal and provincial cooperation could have occurred when creating Greenbelt maps and legislation. On the other hand, if more time was allocated to seek municipal input on creating boundaries, would this result in less land under greenbelt protection?

Another observation from the responses is that some sites should not even be considered part of the protected countryside, due to their current designations. Existing, non-conforming uses are in many cases incompatible with Greenbelt designations, yet they are included under the green swath of protected countryside; in speciality crop areas, or in significant natural heritage features- this gives a false impression of increased environmental or agricultural protection than actually exists. Mapping issues such as this can challenge the integrity of environmental and agricultural protection if future expansions are sought at the time of review.

Several specific sites were identified by municipalities and regions:

- The Font Hill Kame
- Tender fruit farm and cooking school, wants a small hotel as accessory land use.
Why is it not allowed? Will this set a precedent for larger scale developments?
- Duffins Rouge Area- not desired as Greenbelt by municipality; instead, should have included Greenwood
- Keswick Business Park planned by municipality- fell under natural heritage designation in original draft of Greenbelt plan.
- One community within Greenbelt- not designated as settlement area, has no room to grow

Specific Concerns?

While some municipalities were asked outright about their concerns, the categorization of others was implied through their responses to the interview.

Municipality		Region	
Specific concerns	19	Specific concerns	6
No specific concerns	8	No specific concerns	1
Total respondents	27	Total respondents	7

The responses offered in this section are built upon in the analysis of main issues pertaining to Greenbelt implementation and legislative integrity.

Selected Comments

- While the municipality is happy with the Greenbelt boundary, there is pressure from surrounding municipalities to develop the existing urban separator
- Many lands within Greenbelt designation are already developed; residential and/or commercial areas put under natural heritage designation
- Hamlet mapping was not done by the municipality, as feared these boundaries would then be set in perpetuity: the municipality wants to do further study
- Regional pressure to include more land in one municipality while removing it from another: does this indicate a moveable Greenbelt boundary?
- Recreational developments- can't occur in Greenbelt, so where are they to go?
- Mobile home parks not currently designated or zoned before the courts- cause issue
- Some rural uses not allowed- where is economic opportunity for rural municipalities?
- Conflict- two ministries totally dysfunctional. Growth plan and Greenbelt plan; and ministry objectives, are at odds
- Some agricultural markets similar to estate winery- but not allowed under Greenbelt. How is this different?

- Greenbelt legislation has lots of loopholes. "Lot of record"- can build a house on it. Interpreted as an existing use- house allowed to be built, even if previously undeveloped land
- Wanted to see additional flexibility in farm-related uses
- Sewage capacity limits growth. But could be a health risk
- In specialty crop area, there is a parcel developed highway/commercial. Beside it is a parcel zoned agricultural. Owner of both lots can't expand business: Greenbelt "sterilizes development"
- Issue- appeals to the OMB. Should have same protection as under ORM. Will province defend Greenbelt if O.P. appealed in part or whole? Appeals take up municipal time and money
- Retroactivity- "shouldn't move the goalposts"- make sure people are aware what they are working with. More stringent policies- not fair to developer
- Conformity amendment- can get expensive. Get money from tax base: paid for by more growth. Rarely get provincial funding, except for source protection
- Issue- where Greenbelt faces existing urban land. Some areas will not have as large Greenbelt because existing designations are allowed to occur
- Province won't give direct subsidies. But if you can give them concrete proposal- more willing to fund projects
- "Transitional applications"- ones who started development before the required date for Greenbelt conformity
- Township thought they might need some more industrial land in future, but had only started preliminary talks with province, so not allowed to happen. Maybe discussed at 10 year review

8.6 Question 7: *Are there any particular constraints on infrastructure, residential, industrial or agricultural development posed by the Greenbelt maps/policy?*

Municipalities		Regions	
Yes	8	Yes	4
No	8	No	1
N/A	3	N/A	0
Total respondents	19	Total respondents	5

Not as many municipalities as expected saw infrastructure constraints due to legislation. While there was a general sentiment that infrastructure was needed, municipalities have different views as to how much or what kind of infrastructure is needed. Lack of funding for infrastructure, especially public transit, was a main issue. Another main issue is the presence of existing or planned transportation routes, mainly highways, cutting through the Greenbelt. This issue is contentious as while many municipalities embrace Greenbelt goals and objectives, they also welcome infrastructure expansions that compromise smart growth initiatives. This issue will be discussed further in the final analysis. Other issues of note included a land conversion from industrial to residential, currently at the OMB; and the presence of radio towers in specialty crop lands.

Selected Comments

- Lack of industrial land- as land conversion to residential requested by developers and held up in OMB. Town has spent significant time and money on appeal
- Urban areas need to consider water and sewer upgrades
- Big wetland in town's employment district- lots of it has been built over in the past
- Need better connections to the GTA, need major improvements, and high-level funding
- Need properly planned infrastructure- and flexibility
- Inaccuracies about the availability of industrial land- investors mislead, don't come to region
- Estate residential: in areas where you cannot access water, development will not occur

8.7 Question 8: *What, in the view of council, is the 'role' of the municipality (rural character, industrial centre, growing residential community etc). Does Greenbelt legislation reflect their views? What Greenbelt goals/visions are the council most concerned about/most supportive of?*

For this question, responses concerning the role of the municipality were categorized into the following five areas:

Agriculturally-based, rural	Rural with growing residential	Balanced	Bedroom/ urban community	Growing urban centre
3	4	3	1	3

Is the Greenbelt supportive of goals?

Yes	Somewhat	No	N/a
10	4	2	1

These questions were asked to determine the level of agreement municipalities had with Greenbelt designations within their boundaries, and overall satisfaction with the legislation. To see the resounding yes to whether the Greenbelt is supportive of the town's goals leads to the conclusion that smart growth policies are desired by municipalities and citizens in the GGH- a fact supported by recent polls (Toronto Star, 2006). In the cases where the Greenbelt did not support the municipalities' goals, these are particular risk areas where the plan may be challenged in subsequent reviews, or the municipality may lack initiative in implementing Greenbelt policies. In the case of environmental protection, some municipalities felt that the provincial government could have done much more; they believed Greenbelt legislation catered to the lowest common denominator and allowed unsustainable development to continue.

Selected Comments

- Nothing in the Greenbelt puts town's objectives at risk. All ORM and Greenbelt policies have done is added an additional layer of policy

- Historically an agricultural community- now very few farmers. Greenbelt does not reflect goals
- Greenbelt goals- major transportation provisions. Concerned about mid-peninsula corridor. Public-disappointed

Which Greenbelt goals is the public most supportive of?

Agricultural protection	Environmental protection	Most/all policies	Recreation
3	4	8	1

Regional responses

From the five regions that responded to this question, the roles of each region varied. One region believed it was still very much a bedroom community; another put environment first; one region spoke of the dichotomy that existed between its local municipalities (“one municipality green, other mother of sprawl”); one balanced agriculture, small manufacturing, and urban areas and considered natural features an asset. The final municipality believed that agriculture was not important within its boundaries. As to whether the legislation reflected the role of the region: one region believed the Greenbelt reflected the role of the region; two believed the role was somewhat reflected, and two responses did not apply to the categories.

8.8 Question 9: Based on public consultations/submissions, Greenbelt goals/visions is the local citizenry most concerned about/most supportive of?

Municipalities had no obligation to consult under Greenbelt policies. But public participation and consultation was attempted at various stages of policy formation, and citizens and citizens groups were active in formulating Greenbelt policy. Therefore there was an interest in finding out what responses, if any, the municipality/region has received from their citizens concerning the legislation. The responses to question 9 are therefore based on anecdotal, ad hoc responses, and are difficult to categorize by issue, as the question

in many cases was interpreted differently than the researcher intended. For this reason, responses were generally categorized as the following:

Municipalities		Regions	
Public concerned	2	Public concerned	0
Public supportive	5	Public supportive	1
No to little public response	7	No to little public response	2
Mixed views	11	Mixed views	3
Total respondents	25	Total respondents	6

Overall, not many responses were given that applied to the question. This occurred in part because many planners felt they did not know what the public was thinking, as they hadn't heard much from citizens concerning the legislation. Other planners insisted the general public was not concerned, as they did not vocalize any concerns. Others attributed the lack of concern to a lack of public knowledge of Greenbelt legislations' existence: only those that are affected know of it, and even some that are affected are unaware until they submit an application that conflicts with legislation.

As for respondents who gauged public opinion, the following responses were given. In agricultural communities, closer to the outer boundaries of Greenbelt (further from urban areas), agricultural policies were of most concern. In urban areas, where not a lot of lands were designated protected countryside, those designated lands often identified environmentally significant features or urban river connections- this can conclude that the municipality was concerned with environmental protection, or that there was no agricultural land left to protect. From public responses it is evident that Greenbelt legislation affects some sectors of society more than others. Agricultural landowners and developers are most affected; rural residents are also affected, but not necessarily in any negative way. Between farmers, differing views of Greenbelt legislation also exist: farmers who continue to farm generally support the Greenbelt, but demand further policy/incentives; farmers who want to sell their land and retire generally do not support the legislation.

Selected Comments

- The sheer number of people have complaints; but supportive group vocalise
- Only developers came forward
- Hard to know what the public is thinking. The environment was not an issue in the past- now people are more concerned
- Farmers are not supportive
- Active farmers like it- farmers who want to retire do not support. Council supports- land speculators are upset
- Haven't heard much from the public- farmers unhappy
- General populace supports Greenbelt objectives
- Public felt: why was whole town designated?
- Some smaller landowners liked being included- no worry of development in their backyards
- Public is not happy, but accept it, as it has to get done
- Lack of understanding from public
- Development community was largest voice
- Rural landowners, seniors, and vested interest at meetings- don't get general public. Intimidating process
- Silent majority does not want growth. Larger landowners very upset
- Public does not realize how it all unfolds, does not affect daily lives, cannot see how policy links with broad public objectives
- Town did not want endless subdivisions -can't continue the way we are going
- Public generally supportive of all Greenbelt goals and objectives

8.9 Question 11: *What pressure has the regional municipality been exerting to comply with the Greenbelt plan?*

This question was posed to lower-tier municipalities in order to gauge whether the regional municipalities were taking an active role in encouraging municipalities within their

boundaries to conform to Greenbelt legislation. By not taking an active role, this implies a lack of enthusiasm from the region concerning Greenbelt legislation. If the region theoretically was applying pressure not to conform, or seemed unwilling to conform themselves, how does this act upon the municipalities' initiative? If the region is proactively undergoing a conformity review, and encouraging the municipality to do the same, this demonstrates an enthusiasm for the legislation and contributes to overall Greenbelt success.

No pressure	Pressure	Work together	N/A
9	4	4	2

From the responses, it is evident that there is not a lot of regional pressure for municipalities to conform; and many regions and municipalities have good working relationship. Only one region is strongly encouraging conformity, and is taking a strict interpretation of the legislation; another is evidently unwilling to conform to the plan due to arguments about boundaries and designations- how will this affect the local municipalities within the region?

An influential factor on the willingness of a local municipality to initiate Greenbelt conformity is whether the region has reviewed and approved a new regional plan that conforms to the Greenbelt. Many municipalities are hesitant to embark upon conformity, as their plans must conform to the regional plan; they prefer to wait until the regional plan is complete to save time and money.

Selected Comments

- Region is the "poor cousin" of the GGH- they want to catch up in investment and infrastructure, and the Greenbelt limits this
- Good relationship exists between region and municipality: a little push and pull
- Region is strongly encouraging
- Region is giving polite encouragement

8.10 Question 12: *What existing policies surrounding environmental (land, water, biodiversity) and agricultural protection existed in the municipality? B) Were these, in your opinion, sufficient to achieve satisfactory protection? C) Are there any cases where municipal policies were stricter/more detailed than provincial policies?*

This question focuses on the environmental and agricultural policies of the municipalities. First, the municipal planner was asked what their existing policies surrounding environment and agriculture were. A number of different responses were garnered. Two municipalities already had urban growth boundaries, as mentioned previously. Some municipalities had existing policies that were similar to Greenbelt policies. One municipality had created a fund for environmental initiatives. Another mentioned that their Conservation Authority provided protection for environmental features. Another quoted their strict mineral and aggregate policies, which were made more lenient by the Greenbelt. Other municipalities had admitted that their environmental policies were not as strong as the Greenbelt policies.

For agricultural policies, municipalities stated that in some cases the Greenbelt took away some rights. In other cases, the Greenbelt allowed more lenient agricultural policies than previously existed. One planner mentioned that other policies such as the Provincial Policy Statement already restricted some activity, such as agricultural severances therefore farmer aversion of the Greenbelt is misdirected.

Most municipalities felt their existing policies concerning agriculture, environmental protection and urban growth were sufficient. Therefore, most municipalities were satisfied with the direction of growth in their borders. It may be interpreted that municipalities do not see a problem with the way growth is occurring within their boundaries. Alternately, it may mean municipalities do not believe Greenbelt policies are much different or stricter than their existing policies. If indeed municipalities are satisfied with past growth, this has

major implications for smart growth initiatives in the province, as these municipalities do not see themselves as contributing to sprawl and related problems.

Selected Comments-Municipalities

- Policies and zoning was sufficient, but vulnerable to applications to change it. Now, have greater assurance due to provincial policy
- Tried to make sure GB did not undo policies- Greenbelt is lowest common denominator
- Regional plan was more restrictive than municipal plan
- Citizen-led environmental improvements. Conservation authority protects features. Very onerous process for mineral and aggregate. Advanced storm-water management

Were existing policies sufficient?

Yes	Some were, others not	No	Moving in that direction already
15	5	2	2

The majority of municipal planners thought their municipality had sufficient existing policies concerning agriculture, urban growth, and environmental protection. This was surprising, and alarming, indicating that these municipalities do not see their policies as contributing to the sprawl growth and uncontrolled expansion of the GGH region.

Selected Comments- Municipalities

- Municipality can only accommodate modest growth as it is
- As long as areas remain rural, no development will occur

Any municipal policies more strict?

Some more strict	Some less strict	About the same
5	4	7

Selected Comments

- If tried to have stricter aggregate policies, province would not support, so plans are not more restrictive
- Local policies may be more restrictive- as they are allowed to be
- Agricultural policies stricter with the exception of surplus dwellings- they “prohibit everything”
- Weakened aggregate policies
- Half of municipality has advanced plan; southern half has weak regulations
- Municipal policies are more restrictive- because they cover more areas
- “Caledon Clause”- Caledon just went through multi-year new mineral and aggregate policies- all parties agreed. S 4.3.2, point 9 put in, so didn’t have to review aggregate policies
- Golf courses- have citizen golf course committee. Mineral and aggregate resources - all within Oak Ridges Moraine.

In general, agricultural severance policies were made stricter through the PPS, and rural area economic policies were made more restrictive by the Greenbelt. Mineral and aggregate policies were made less strict for a few municipalities. Only 5 respondents to date are aware of having stricter policies in their municipal plans.

Regional responses

Regions are well on their way to conforming, and have demonstrated progress in new policies for environmental and agricultural protection. Some of these policies will be discussed in the Official Plan section. Regional planners are less convinced that past planning practices are sufficient for protection- only one region states policies were sufficient; two believed some policies were adequate and others needed work, and two believed past regional policies were not sufficient for environmental/agricultural protection.

Selected Comments

- Pretty much on same page
- 80% conformity
- IGAP report- undertaken. Had to catch up with some policies
- New environment plan is very strict in Niagara
- Some agricultural policies in municipality were stricter
- Mineral and aggregate- more strict
- Natural heritage – provincial minimum
- Region fell behind
- to identify environmental features- need money

8.11 Question 13: *Are there any more effective ways to achieve Greenbelt goals (environmental protection, agricultural protection, cultural, tourism, infrastructure and natural resources etc) than actually implementing a Greenbelt? What other policies must be enacted for the Greenbelt to be successful in achieving its goals?*

Greenbelt legislation is an area-specific policy. Is this type of legislation necessary? The environmentally-minded argument is generally yes, as the Greenbelt protects special features such as the Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, and special crop lands such as the Holland Marsh. There have been other arguments put forward by stakeholders that the Greenbelt is not necessary, or not the preferable method of protecting agricultural and environmental lands. Some believe province-wide policies are fairer and accord more area protection. This question was asked to see whether municipalities favoured the Greenbelt area-specific policy, or thought something else should have been done.

Are there more effective ways to achieve Greenbelt goals, other than creating a Greenbelt?

Municipalities

Yes	No, but issues	No	Other
4	11	4	10

Regions

Yes	No, but issues	No	Other
	3	2	2

Municipalities gave insightful responses concerning Greenbelt creation and land protection.

Selected comments on more effective methods:

- Strengthening Ontario Heritage Act- gives municipality more power to protect heritage
- Having a strict conservation authority
- Having local OPs directly approved by province, instead of county government
- Purchasing lands for designation
- Changes to PPS, to strengthen PPS- or can have geographic-specific PPS
- Agricultural advisory committee- where did it go?
- Should there be another layer of government, such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission, to deal with GGH planning issues?
- If goal is to confine urban area- than have to have a Greenbelt

What other policies must be enacted for the Greenbelt to be successful in achieving its goals?

Selected Comments: Municipalities

- More funding, in general
- More financial support for agriculture
- Should protect all agricultural lands
- Outdoor recreational uses
- Protection from/ support at OMB hearings
- Mineral and aggregate policies, need to be strengthened
- Technical rationale, science needs to be provided
- Not just financial help, but greater municipal authority

Selected Comments- Regions

- Need something groundbreaking

- Support, financial and other
- Greenbelt needs to work with other documents
- Private money, from people, needed for conservation
- Enforcement and monitoring
- Policies for preserving greenlands in settlement areas

8.12 Land Values

One of the arguments against the Greenbelt, coming from stakeholder responses, was that the Greenbelt would, by restricting the supply of land, also increase the price of the land and subsequently creating housing price increases and shortages. Many municipalities were asked if they had seen any change in land activity since the Greenbelt was enacted, especially if any increase in land values was occurring in the municipality or region.

Municipalities	# Respondents	Regions	# Respondents
Definite change	7	Definite change	1
A little change	5	A little	2
No change	3	No change	0
N/A	4		3
Total respondents for question	19	Mixed value change	1

Municipalities	# Respondents	Regions	# Respondents
Land value increase	7	Increased value	2
Land value decrease	1	Decrease in value	0

While many municipalities had not done studies and assured the researcher that the information was purely anecdotal, others had reported a measured difference. Out of the respondents, 7 out of 19 reported seeing or predicted a definite change in land values and activity since the Greenbelt was enacted. Five respondents saw a little change; three reported no change, and four of the answers did not fit into the framework of the question but contributed valuable insight which will be discussed further.

Some municipalities were able to respond directly to whether land values had increased or decreased since Greenbelt legislation was enacted. 7 out of 19 municipalities reported or predicted a land value increase; one reported or predicted a land value decrease.

Several responses have raised interesting points concerning land values, where conclusions can be drawn:

- The Greenbelt is successfully directing growth outside its boundaries, or within settlement areas. Municipalities have seen a difference in development activity since the policy's inception, such as lands outside the Greenbelt coming out of ownership, or speculators buying up undesignated land for large sums of money. Areas that have been designated to grow are already encountering strong growth pressure, which may have been compounded by legislation.
- Urban areas in the Greenbelt may be subject to significant growth pressure and price increases. One city has seen a twenty percent increase in the price of vacant land. The value of land has increased so significantly that two greenhouse operations- usually very capital-intensive industries- were sold to develop residential subdivisions. This has implications for housing affordability if not addressed in other policies.
- Agricultural lands may also be increasing in value: it has been predicted in some stakeholder responses that Greenbelt legislation, while inflating housing prices, would cause agricultural lands values to plummet. One municipality in Niagara region has seen the price of agricultural land, especially good grape land, slowly increase. Some of this good land which has not previously been used for agriculture is being bought and put into grape production.
- The Greenbelt is making underutilized land within urban areas more desirable.
- Land values are "a systematic problem in planning". This combined with a public preference for single detached housing will cause problems with implementation of the Greenbelt plan and growth plan in the GGH.

Regional responses

Out of the regions responses, three out of the six regions had responses appropriate to the question. Out of the three respondents, two regions had seen definite change, while one saw a little change. Two regions had seen increases in the value of land, while one had seen increases in one area and no change in the other. Results are discussed below.

- While property prices have gone up, this is due to the highly desirable nature of the GGH region and not due to land supply restrictions. Regions within the GGH have sustained a high level of growth before policies were put in place, and this level would have remained high if the policy was not put into place. In some regions where high growth is paired with environmental constraints, such as Waterloo, prices have been steadily increasing for a number of years.
- Land prices will, as always, depend on location. It is not like all land in Ontario outside of the Greenbelt has seen high speculation and investment activity- in the region of Simcoe, the southern part has experienced intense activity while the north, already having so much on the market, has seen little activity and price change. This illustrates that where the boundary is placed matters; that land closer to the urban conurbation may need more protection than that away from it.

9.0 CROSS TABULATION

A cross tabulation of related questions was attempted to determine whether similar responses would be given by municipalities. Questions 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,12 were cross-tabulated. For question 1, all municipalities that would conform by 2009 or when up for review were given a mark of 1. For question 2, municipalities with a negative initial response, or who indicated displeasure with Greenbelt policy/boundaries, were given a mark. For question 3, two categories were created; and those municipalities with changed policies, and changed boundaries, were marked. For question 4, municipalities with conflicts were marked. For question 6, again two categories were created: specific sites and specific concerns, and those

municipalities who were concerned or had specific sites of concern were marked. For question 7, if any particular constraints with infrastructure or development were stated, the municipality was marked. For question 8, if the Greenbelt plan did not reflect the role of the municipality, it was marked. For question 12, if municipalities thought their policies were sufficient, it was marked. An average of 3.26 points was achieved, so any municipality with over three marks was examined.

Table 1): Cross-tabulation of results highlighting municipalities of concern

Municipalities	1	2	3 a	3 b	4	6 a	6 b	7	8	12	TOTAL
Ajax			1				1	1			2
Amaranth/EastGarry	1	1	1		1					1	5
Bradford/WG			1								1
Brampton			1	1		1	1			1	5
Brock		1	1	1	1	1	1	1			7
Burlington			1								1
Caledon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	8
Clarington			1	1	1					1	4
East Gwillimbury		1	1	1						1	4
Erin	1	1	1	1		1	1			1	7
Georgina			1	1		1				1	4
Grimsby	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	8
Halton Hills											
Hamilton					1		1				2
Innisfil											
King					1	1	1			1	4
Lincoln	1		1			1					3
Markham	1						1			1	3
Milton											
Mono							1			1	2
Niagara on the Lake	1						1				2
Niagara on the Lake	1						1				2
Oshawa	1									1	2
Pelham						1	1			1	3
Pickering	1	1			1	1	1	1	1		7
Richmond Hill	1										1
Scugog		1	1	1			1	1			5
St Catharines						1					1
Thorold			1	1	1	1	1				5
Uxbridge	1		1			1		1		1	5
Vaughan							0				1
West Lincoln											
Whitby	1		1	1		1	1				5
Whit-Stouffville						1		1			2

The municipalities with the highest level of dissatisfaction, according to the results, were Caledon and Grimsby: each had 8 marks. Second, Erin, Brock, and Pickering had 7 marks each. Out of these 5, three of the municipalities thought their existing policies were sufficient to achieve environmental protection.

10.0 NEW OFFICIAL PLANS

Another comparison is made by looking at the new official plans of municipalities who have conformed to Greenbelt legislation in 2006. These are the municipalities of Brock, Hamilton, Innisfil, and Mono. Municipalities that have Official Plans adopted by council, but await provincial approval, are Burlington, Halton Hills, and Brampton. The Durham regional plan will also be examined.

The new official plans are assumed to conform to Greenbelt legislation, as they are legally obligated to do so. What is looked for, firstly, is whether there are any municipal policies concerning Greenbelt protected countryside which are more strict or detailed than provincial policy, where allowed. Secondly, according to section 5.2.1 of the Greenbelt plan, "municipalities should consider the policies of the Greenbelt plan, as appropriate, when processing applications that are not required to conform to this plan." Due to this, policies in other parts of the plan, and overall plan statements, are also examined to see whether Greenbelt principles are upheld by the municipality, or whether any conflicts may exist that may be a threat to Greenbelt integrity.

10.1 TOWNSHIP OF BROCK

The town of Brock's new Official Plan came into effect June 26, 2006. It replaces the old official plan approved on December 19, 1985. It was prepared to conform to the Durham Regional Official plan, Greenbelt, and Growth Plan legislation. The entire town is under Greenbelt-protected countryside designation, with three recognized settlement areas. Agriculture and environmental features are also to be protected by the new plan.

The new OP recognizes smart growth legislation in that the basis of the plan includes the priorities of focussing residential development in the existing urban settlement areas of Beaverton, Cannington, and Sunderland; and ensuring development is environmentally and economically sustainable (pg 7 of plan). The settlement areas are to absorb a predicted 30% population increase in the town over the course of the plan. While the town acknowledges smart growth principles, the plan also states recognition by planners that single detached dwellings will remain as the main form of housing in the town. While higher density residential will be encouraged, infrastructure constraints are also recognized. As it is under Greenbelt designation, the town has limited opportunities for water and sewer service expansion in its urban areas.

The problem with the Brock OP is its identification of future development areas. According to the plan S.5.1.1, this "is intended to provide the preferred direction for future development beyond the present designated urban area." It assumes that while the Greenbelt act does not allow any expansions, this may be changed at the ten year review. What further illustrates the willingness of the town to expand its urban areas is the statement:

"...The future financial viability of the municipality depends on increasing the employment opportunities in the urban areas. The future development area-employment lands identified in Beaverton ...is viewed as a second phase to the development of the Beaver Avenue employment area..."

This illustrates that the town does not think it is possible to locate all its employment needs into the current existing area. So both new residential and employment areas have been identified outside the urban settlement boundaries, in the Greenbelt protected countryside.

Therefore, the goals of environmental and agricultural protection in Brock are not seriously stated, as future urban intrusions into protected countryside are planned. There

are natural heritage features identified in the urban expansions, and apparently protected by buffers. The town's wellhead areas in Cannington are already compromised by past developments, and a wetland was already located in one employment area. Hamlet boundaries have also not yet been mapped by the town, as these would create permanent boundaries protected by Greenbelt legislation.

Although Brock may be unwilling to allow the present Greenbelt boundary to remain permanent, questions of fairness of including an entire rural municipality with limited growth, while large "white belt" areas are allocated to near-urban municipalities with past records of sprawl growth. Brock, which has traditionally experienced very little growth and economic investment, would like to see more growth in order to partake of the financial benefits.

10.2 CITY OF BRAMPTON

The new Brampton OP, dated Oct 11, 2006, is currently before the province for comment. The purpose of the amendment included updates to environmental policies and mapping, to reflect provincial, regional, and conservation authority policies. Cultural heritage policies are also updated due to the recent amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act (pg 1-2). Much of the projected growth for the GGH is expected to be accommodated in the City of Brampton. A forecasted population of 725,000 by 2031 is stated in the plan.

Greenbelt legislation protects about 202 hectares of land in Northwest Brampton, following the Credit river valley. The river valley was already protected by municipal, regional, and conservation authority policies; the Greenbelt acted to expand some of the buffer areas and add an extra layer of protection (2-13).

The new Brampton OP addresses smart growth policies in several sections; and makes several provisions for environmental protection. The major riverways through the

municipality are identified as a series of natural heritage corridors. Section 4.5 states one of the objectives of the municipality is to be a leader in environmental planning. This is to be done by maintaining and restring surface and groundwater resources; making watershed and stormwater plans and studies; achieving no net loss, but possibly a net gain, of natural heritage features and areas, among other initiatives.

Brampton is recognized as an urban municipality in the plan. Agriculture is provided very little protection, as the last large agricultural area is slated for development as the North West Brampton Urban Development Area. The remaining specialty crop lands in the city are designated for future urban uses; and “are expected to be developed for such purposes during the timeframe of this Plan” (S. 4.15-1).

The plan makes bold statements about transportation. It maintains that private auto transport is unsustainable, and the city is running out of the space to create additional roads (this from a city whose advertising slogan read “all roads lead to Brampton”). The city intends to facilitate a shift to transit by assigning greater priority to accommodating efficient movement of transit vehicles, and ensuring transit is convenient as possible. It also states that city initiatives must be bolstered by senior government funding and reduction in hidden road subsidies (4.4-1).

Some transportation assumptions are stated in the official plan. S 2.1 states:

“Within the life of this Plan, it is anticipated that Hwy 410 and Hwy 427 will both be extended further north beyond Brampton’s municipal border. An additional major north-south transportation corridor through the west side of Brampton is also anticipated to be substantially developed within the timeframe of this Plan.” (2-2)

While promoting transit and decrying private automobile use, the anticipated extensions appear to be welcomed in Brampton. The major north-south transportation corridor is seen as necessary for the full development of the northwest Brampton urban area.

This shows the inconsistencies in plan objectives for transportation, and for sustainability on a larger scale.

The conversion of agricultural lands to the Northwest Brampton future development area was an area of contention between the town and stakeholders. The town's decision to convert prime agricultural lands to urban uses, and the Sierra Club's eventual endorsement of the plan, was criticized (OSGN, 2006). This suggests a resistance to the greenbelt goals of agricultural preservation and promotion of rural economies. Yet there is evidence that provisions have been made in the plan to build the development within a smart growth framework:

"The City's greenfield land reserve is limited and must be planned based on the principles of sustainability. The City will also benefit from ample opportunities for infill/intensification, notably those in the Central Area. (s. 3.2.5)

The northwest area is to be compact, mixed use, and centred on the Mount Pleasant Go station. Densities will average 18 units per acre for housing, and 25 employees per acre. A comprehensive planning process and adequate phasing will be used. Future arterial, collector roads, and the major transportation corridor will be done through an EA or other similar method.

This plan shows not only Brampton's inconsistencies in objectives and goals versus policies that are actually put in place; it also shows the inconsistencies between provincial planning ministries, and goals and policies. While the Greenbelt has been put in place to protect agricultural land and environmental features, large areas were left out close to urban areas where sprawl had traditionally occurred. In the case of Brampton, class 1 farmland was converted to urban uses, as the city was expected to absorb a large proportion of regional growth. While intensification is a target, the intensification levels are still quite low; and claims of encouraging transit are made null by welcoming of new road and highway infrastructure. The presence of new urban development located beside Greenbelt natural

heritage-designated lands, and several non-conforming uses within it may threaten the ecological integrity of the area, although there is little risk of these lands getting developed.

10.3 TOWN OF MONO Sept 27, 2006

Although not initially included in Greenbelt draft plans, the Town of Mono was included in the final plan. Mono amended its OP Sept 27, 2006 to incorporate Greenbelt and PPS policies, and delineate the Greenbelt hamlet boundary. The town shows a strong willingness to follow Greenbelt policies and upkeep Greenbelt boundaries. The plan acknowledges future growth is to be directed to existing or planned settlement areas, subject to servicing availability, and this will take form primarily through infill as the settlement areas have been built out. The basis of the plan also states: The extent of settlement area in the Greenbelt shall represent the final extent of urban development in this area.

The OP states that any new developments within the Greenbelt plan area should demonstrate efforts were taken to minimize natural feature removal, and/or incorporate natural features. S.22(5) states that within the Hamlet area, several conditions exist for building: a detailed water budget, environmental management plan, servicing study, traffic management plan, and a comprehensive review of compatibility and other issues must be undertaken. This section once again states that hamlet boundaries cannot change.

More strong language promotes environmental protection in the town. Mono is the home of several Major GGH river headwaters, therefore environmental and source water protection is important. The plan states:

"...The town shall promote 'environment first' principles when considering development within the municipality. Such considerations will include the preservation of significant natural features, such as significant wetlands, ground and surface water features, hydrological functions, endangered/threatened species habitat..." "

Groundwater protection is identified in the OP, although the plan states that as further information becomes available further groundwater protection may occur. Greenbelt legislation actually weakened Mono's aggregate policies; a drawback of the provincial legislation. Overall, Mono is showing a keen interest to conforming to legislation.

10.4 CITY OF BURLINGTON

Burlington underwent an official plan review October 10, 2006. It is awaiting provincial approval. Burlington has already installed an urban growth boundary, designating lands urban or rural. The entire rural area is within NEP and Greenbelt policies. Burlington was announced a "sustainable community in 1989"; as Burlington matures, the plan believes residents are more aware of environmental concerns and limited finances. The plan, in its goals, states:

"As Burlington approaches a mature state, a significant amount of its future growth will be in the form of intensification and re-development within the existing urban boundary. With fixed urban boundaries as confirmed by the Provincial Greenbelt Plan, the challenge will be to accommodate the various demands for land while maintaining stability and compatibility."

A discussion of sustainability in the plan mentions the importance of the Niagara Escarpment, environmentally sensitive areas, and Burlington Bay. Where specific connections of natural heritage do not currently exist, Burlington plans to define areas for future improvement to the system. The City will also consider all options for securement of natural areas, such as land dedication, trusts, and exchanges; and ensures it is not financially overburdened by adding a clause excluding the city's designation means willingness to buy protected land.

Environmental features are not protected at the expense of agriculture in Burlington. Existing agriculture can continue in natural areas, and if requested by the owner, the City and other agencies will review natural system boundaries on the property. Trespassing, a

major concern of the agricultural community concerning the Greenbelt plan; is dealt with in section C-33 (d) which states: "The identification of land as part of the Natural Heritage system will not imply that the lands are available or open to public use."

Burlington intends to keep its agricultural land in agricultural production in the future. They intend to encourage agriculture as a sustainable and secure economic activity in rural areas, and pledge to lobby to the conservation authority and provincial government to lease their lands to farmers on a long term basis. They also pledge to lobby the province and federal government to provide incentives to farm through lower property tax which reflects the value of agricultural land, and through a national agricultural policy which makes Ontario farmers more globally competitive.

The OP targets land use, energy conservation, and transportation policies to achieve sustainability. Policies to back up sustainability goals include: a) limiting development to lands which are environmentally suitable, and generally prohibited in natural heritage features unless deemed suitable; and b) maintaining a citizen advisory committee to advise council in implementation of sustainable development. Residential intensification, while encouraged to provincial specifications, "must be balanced with other planning considerations, such as infrastructure capacity, compatibility and integration with existing residential neighbourhoods." This may hint at an unwillingness to build at too high a density. Overall, the Plan asserts Burlington's involvement in and enthusiasm for Greenbelt legislation.

10.5 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

The town of Halton Hills completed their new OP September 2006. Greenbelt legislation has been included, but not fully, as the Halton Regional OP is not yet completed:

“...The policies of this official plan are intended to implement the Greenbelt plan to the extent possible. A further amendment to this plan is anticipated following the completion of a more detailed Greenbelt plan implementation exercise by the region of Halton...”

Halton Hills also recognizes the permanence of Greenbelt policies and boundaries, by recognizing that certain landforms need to be permanently protected, and that the supply of urban land in its two hamlets is finite.

10.6 CITY OF HAMILTON

The new city of Hamilton is an amalgamation of six municipalities. The city is now divided between two planning areas- the rural area and urban area. All of the Greenbelt lands fall within the rural area, under the new rural Official Plan from September 2006. The third direction of this plan sounds similar to Greenbelt objectives, in that it aims to “Protect rural areas for a viable rural economy, agricultural resources, environmentally sensitive recreation and enjoyment of the rural landscape.” This section also acknowledges the balance needed between rural economic engines and the natural heritage and agricultural lands. Direction #8 of the plan aims to protect ecosystems and improve environmental quality, from urban encroachment and contamination.

Section 1.2 of the plan addresses the Greenbelt Plan. Hamilton falls within the agricultural system, natural system and rural settlement area designations. Five OP policies are more restrictive than Greenbelt policies:

- a) Residential lot creation for lands in Rural Hamilton in accordance with Section F.1.13.2, Lot Creation, of this Plan;*
- b) On-farm secondary uses in accordance with Sections C.3.1.2; and D.2.1.3 of this Plan;*
- c) Surplus farm dwellings in accordance with Section F.1.13.2 of this Plan;*
- d) Amendments required for resource-based commercial, resource-based industrial, institutional and recreational uses in accordance with Sections D.4.1.1 and D.4.1.2 of this Plan; and*
- e) Section C.5, Infrastructure of this Plan.*

The plan leaves room for urban system policies that are to be added in a future amendment.

Section 2.2 Natural Heritage System Policies, like Burlington, state that lands are often in private ownership and are not available for recreational use for the public; nor does the city intend to purchase these lands. The rural plan allows minor modifications to core area boundaries outside the Greenbelt without a plan amendment- in the Greenbelt, boundary revisions are not permitted. Core areas are nevertheless considered the most important ecological component of the natural heritage system, and development within them must prove not to cause a negative impact. For new development within the natural heritage system, Hamilton used the same distance policies as the Greenbelt plan, no more or less.

In section 3.1 Rural Area General Provisions, all lake-based, municipal water and wastewater services are prohibited to expand beyond the urban area boundary. This conforms to Greenbelt infrastructure policy.

The rural OP also contains Right to Farm policies: the City attempts to secure agricultural uses as the primary land use in the rural area: "The main purpose of the designations applying to Rural Hamilton is to provide a secure land base for agricultural activities." This demonstrates the ongoing agricultural protection accorded by the town.

10.7 TOWN OF INNISFIL

The town of Innisfil's new OP was created July 26, 2006. There is only a small area in the southeast corner of the municipality designated as specialty crop lands under the Greenbelt protected countryside; it is part of the Holland Marsh. The lands fall within the natural heritage system of the town, and are defined as a key natural heritage and hydrologic feature in the Greenbelt plan. The same distance criteria are used as the Greenbelt plan. Groundwater recharge and discharge areas are identified; while not under the environmental protection area designation, they are still identified as important to public health and safety. Wellhead protection areas within the town were mapped in the South Simcoe Groundwater Study of 2003. Much like Brampton, while Innisfil is slated for major urban growth that may compromise the ecological function of areas such as the Holland

Marsh under Greenbelt protection, the Greenbelt area is nevertheless protected by several layers of policy and not under any immediate development pressures.

10.8 DURHAM REGION

The Durham Regional Official Plan amendment 114 was approved by council and is currently undergoing appeals and provincial review. The plan had been subject to controversy over the inclusion of five parcels of Greenbelt lands to considered future urban development areas as an attachment to the plan. Council eventually decided to drop the identification of the parcels (Wilkes; 2007; EDC, 2007).

The Plan amendment 114 was undertaken to conform the ROPs transportation, commercial, rural and environmental policies to the PPS and Greenbelt legislation. The new plan is more strict than Greenbelt policy in terms of key natural heritage features protection (policy 2.3.14); wellhead protection (2.3.25); and land securement (2.3.48). The ROP is more detailed in Prime Agricultural Areas (9A); Hamlet policies (9B); and Aggregate Extraction (9D).

While Durham region had strong environmental policies in its regional plan written the 1970s, the desire to exclude permanently protected land in Pickering, and replace them with smaller parcels in Clarington, show an unwillingness to support Greenbelt boundaries.

10.9 NIAGARA REGION

Niagara region amends its policies in stages, updating policy areas from time to time. Regional Policy Plan Amendment 187, which sets out new environmental policies, was adopted in December 2005. The amendment significantly amends existing policies, which were 25 years old, and includes Greenbelt conformity. The amendment addresses:

"...Natural vegetation and wildlife; water resources; air quality and climate change; landforms, geology and soils; shorelines; natural hazards; core natural heritage such as woodlands, wetlands and fish habitat; and implementation. It also includes a Core Natural Heritage Map identifying significant natural heritage features and potential corridors connecting them..."

No regional policies pertaining to Greenbelt lands are stricter than Greenbelt policy; but in the rest of the region, many environmental policies are stricter than the PPS. The Niagara Environmental Plan is still being appealed and will probably not be approved until September 2007.

11.0 ANALYSIS- ISSUES WITH GREENBELT LEGISLATION

Several issues pertaining to Greenbelt legislation have been identified by municipalities, and are supported by the literature. These issues have been grouped into three categories: 1) issues of process, concerning the way the plan was introduced and mapping was done; 2) implementation issues faced by planners in the formative stages of the legislation; and 3) issues compromising the overall integrity of the Greenbelt, arising, among other reasons, in part from the legislation itself, and in part from other provincial policies.

11.1 PROCESS ISSUES

1) *Timing issues*

Many municipal planners feel that the Greenbelt plan was created hastily, and that not enough time was available for comment and consultation; they felt the quality of the legislation was compromised by this. Planners also felt the need for the Greenbelt plan existed many years earlier: that such a plan "should have been done 20 years ago", and "when there was more land to save." Another issue is the increased workload for many of the municipalities who are simultaneously affected by the new Provincial Policy Statement

(PPS), the Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan, Strong Communities Act, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation and/or other legislation. Many rural municipalities on the fringe of the Greenbelt feel unequipped, staff and budget-wise, to conform to provincial legislation – they feel overburdened. Some municipalities felt that other legislation, such as the Growth Plan or Oak Ridges Moraine plan, is a more pressing issue than Greenbelt conformity.

2) Intergovernmental discussion/decision-making

Some municipalities, who were strongly against certain designations of land within their boundaries, felt the province was unwilling to cooperate or respect local planning decisions. They felt “shut out” of planning decisions; and that local issues hadn’t been properly taken into consideration. This was not the case among all municipalities- others were involved from the creation of the plan and were satisfied with its progress. Nevertheless, a perception of lack of participation in decision-making may make some municipalities unwilling to uphold Greenbelt goals and boundaries in future development decisions.

3) Inclusion issues

The first issue involved some municipalities who feel they were included into a solution for a problem not their own. One municipality found it hard to come to terms they belonged under their regional government, let alone under the GGH region- they did feel they differed in cultural, economic, and other factors. A regional government was also surprised at inclusion- they felt fitting GTA policies to their situation was like trying to “fit a square peg into a round hole.” The second issue was municipal/regional inclusion in the final draft of the plan, where the municipality/region was excluded in draft plans. This made affected municipal planners feel that they did not have adequate opportunity to comment on the plan, and feel ill-prepared to implement the plan.

Contrasting the inclusion of lands thought unsuitable for agriculture/environmental protection by some municipalities; was the exclusion of other lands from the Greenbelt that the municipality saw fit to include. A particular issue is where one municipality bordering a settlement area, or a natural feature, was included, and the municipality on the other side was excluded from the plan. This raises issues of fairness, and issues of what rationale was used to determine the inclusion or exclusion of lands. Some municipalities feel they were not given enough information as to why boundaries occurred where they did; this will be discussed further in the implementation issues.

4) Mapping errors

A few municipalities reported mapping errors: some natural features existed on greenfield maps where none existed in the municipality; some lands were designated specialty crop when municipalities insisted the land was unsuitable for agriculture. According to municipal planners, much of the specialty crop was designated by the Province due to climate, not soil types; the municipality questioned the rationale behind this. Some municipalities had already undertaken studies to convert some of their rural land to employment or residential; many of these were addressed by the final draft of the Greenbelt plan, although some municipalities' proposals did not qualify as transitional applications.

11.2 IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

Some municipal planners feel that in addition to, or perhaps because of, the speed at which the Greenbelt legislation was passed, that the legislation is difficult to understand and apply. Although provincial training sessions took place, the technical papers which were supposed to accompany Greenbelt maps had not yet been received at time of writing. While municipal planners feel the Greenbelt was necessary, they also feel it could have been organised better. In this section, some municipalities predict problems they will face when

attempting to implement Greenbelt legislation; others have already begun this process, and describe problems that have surfaced.

1) *Science and Rationale*

Some municipalities feel not enough scientific and technical rationale was given by the province for Greenbelt boundaries and designations. This was a matter of much discussion in stakeholder responses to the draft Greenbelt plan. The major implication of this, according to municipal planners, is that without proper technical explanations, it will be hard to defend appeals to OPs in conformity with the Greenbelt by property owners who insist they have been unfairly dealt with. There are also not enough indicators provided by the province for municipal monitoring.

2) *Provincial backing at the OMB*

As a number of private landowners or developers are unhappy with being included within the protected countryside, they may appeal municipal OPs when brought into conformity with Greenbelt legislation. Some municipalities are curious as to why the same level of protection against third party appeals to the OMB, accorded to Oak Ridges Moraine legislation, was not applied to the Greenbelt. This appeal process has been opposed by environmental and citizen groups as leading to "death by a thousand cuts" of the Greenbelt (Urquhart, 2007). Municipalities wonder whether the province will step in to defend Greenbelt policy if appealed. They also raise the issue of finances for appeals- legal battles are expensive and financed by taxpayer dollars, which often come from development fees and property tax- an unsustainable cycle promoting greater urban expansion. The OMB, not very well liked by citizens and local decision-makers, is the forum where provincial decisions are decided- one municipality urges the province to take responsibility and not allow the OMB to "take the hit" for their policies.

A case which illustrates where municipalities request provincial backing involves the Town of Ajax, who is challenging a developer at the OMB who wants to convert the employment land they own to residential lands. The basis of the argument is that Ajax does not have enough supply of low-density residential land, to be consistent with the PPS, which requires a 10 year supply of residential land. While the 2005 PPS states:

“...Effective March 1, 2005, the Ontario Municipal Board or a municipality may permit the conversion of employment land only where it is demonstrated that the land is not required for long-term employment purposes and that there is a need for the conversion...”

This may have occurred after the Ajax conversion, or perhaps resulted from it. Land conversions are a threat to Greenbelt integrity and smart growth principles, as disproportionate residential to employment lands means citizens are commuting farther to work; and municipalities may think it necessary to expand the urban boundary to accommodate future employment lands as existing lands are converted.

According to the Greenbelt Alliance, the province has intervened in several OMB hearings to protect Greenbelt lands in Burlington, Markham and Niagara region (2007). The Alliance stresses the need for declaring provincial interest in the Rouge North Management Plan in York region.

3) Difficulties in locating recreational uses

An interesting issue raised by several municipal planners is the difficulty in locating recreational centres and uses in Greenbelt lands in their municipality. While the plan aims to provide a setting for hiking, angling, and other recreational activities; municipalities have had applications for recreational facilities within the protected countryside turned down. Recreational uses such as all-season facilities or outdoor soccer parks are difficult to locate in urban areas due to higher land values, so municipalities are unsure where to locate them and feel that the Greenbelt goal of promoting culture, recreation and tourism is not being met.

4) *Trespass and bad marketing*

A major concern of the farming community that arose in meetings and comments preceding the final Greenbelt plan was that the Greenbelt would turn rural communities into parkland for urban residents. They were concerned with issues of property trespass—would urban dwellers think privately-owned land was public space? Concern was elevated with the airing of “Come to the Greenbelt” advertisements that portrayed the Greenbelt exactly as they feared. These advertisements have since ended from radio broadcast. Another inappropriate marketing ploy involved placing “welcome to the Greenbelt” signs along the highways in industrial or otherwise unsuitable areas, doing nothing to reflect Greenbelt goals or boost its public image.

5) *Provincial monitoring and responsibility*

Overall, municipalities are generally satisfied with the province’s leadership in creation of recent planning policy initiatives, but many feel the short time period in which many policies were enacted leads to financial and workload issues when implementing the plan. They feel the province should take greater responsibility during the implementation stage of the Greenbelt plan, and provide more resources to municipalities to help implement the legislation. Many planners state that the province also needs a greater role in monitoring and enforcement of the plan. One municipal planner felt “nobody’s watching”—the town discovered an illegal fireworks storage operation within the protected countryside, and asked the province for assistance, but was told it was not a provincial responsibility.

11.3 ISSUES THAT COMPROMISE GREENBELT INTEGRITY

Certain issues identified by municipalities have been, in many cases, voiced by citizens, environmental groups and other stakeholders concerned with the integrity and

permanence of the Greenbelt. Issues identified by municipal planners have been supplemented by background literature, to provide an analysis of the major issues facing the Greenbelt over the long term. By not addressing these issues, the overall success of the Greenbelt is at risk: succumbing to “death by a thousand cuts” from decisions on individual applications; losing favour in the public eye; or collapsing over one major issue, such as highway building. The measures of success and failure discussed in section 2.6 will also be applied to the Ontario Greenbelt in this analysis.

1) *Agricultural viability*

A common sentiment among municipal planners was that agricultural land within the Greenbelt cannot be maintained as such without the protection and support of the agricultural industry. In much quoted terms: “if you want to keep lands in agriculture-protect the farmer.” Ontario farmers are disadvantaged in a global market, even when compared to other Canadian provinces. The host of difficulties faced by farmers in southern Ontario has been discussed in section 3.6. In order to stay viable, farmers have resorted to means such as taking a second job, starting an second on-farm business, changing products to meet demand, or improving technology to stay competitive. Rarely is an agricultural community’s economy “based solely on crop production.” Municipal planners and other sources argue that agriculture viability is not solely a regional or even provincial problem; the Canadian government must also take action to ensure a federal agricultural policy is created which reflects the needs of the province.

While agricultural viability is necessary to protect farming communities, it also has far-reaching implications for urban residents. As mentioned in section 3.6, most of the best agriculture in Canada is found in southern Ontario, and food and water security is a global issue, increasing in importance.

2) Environmental protection

One of the main goals of the Greenbelt is environmental protection. The legislation aims to protect, maintain and enhance natural features, functions, and habitat; to maintain connections between major ecosystems such as the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario, and broader connections such as the Algonquin to Adirondacks corridor; it aims to protect water quality and quantity; and to provide:

"...long-term guidance for the management of natural heritage and water resources when contemplating such matters as development, infrastructure, open space planning and management, aggregate rehabilitation and private or public stewardship programs..."(S1.2.2, p.5)

While some honest attempt is made at environmental protection throughout the legislation, many stakeholders and municipal planners feel that not enough has been done. They believe that other sections of the plan, and/or other provincial policies, act against environmental protection.

One municipal planner stated that while the Greenbelt aims to protect agricultural and environmental features, there are not a lot of policies in the plan that address these matters. Other planners stress that many important features were not protected by the plan, such as the Galt and Paris Moraines, and Lake Simcoe. Still other planners commented that the Greenbelt did not contain anything groundbreaking- it was a lowest common denominator installed to bring some municipalities up to speed, dampening other municipalities' more restrictive policies.

On the other hand, the majority of respondents (15 out of 24) believed existing policies were sufficient to achieve environmental protection. Environmental protection, then, is subjective; and surely, municipal and regional standards on what constitutes ecosystem health and connectivity vary greatly. It is up to the Province, then, in policies like Greenbelt and growth plan legislation, to push municipalities to adopt stronger and more

detailed policies with the objective of environmental protection, as past attempts at protection have not been sufficient. The Province can also be blamed for undermining some municipal efforts at environmental protection by giving preferential treatment to industry, or putting economic concerns over environmental sustainability, without acknowledging they are interconnected.

Fung and Conway (2007, pp 110, 114) found that the use of multiple types of systems of boundary delineation increases the possibility that activities outside the Greenbelt area will have a major impact on systems within the Greenbelt: this could have implications for natural heritage features or systems that have only been partially placed within greenbelt boundaries. They stress that the impacts of activities outside the greenbelt may lead to direct and indirect environmental impacts within the plan boundary.

3) *Urban boundary expansions*

In section 1.2, the *Vision and Goals* of the Greenbelt plan, the Greenbelt is referred to a broad band of permanently protected land. The legislation aims to protect agricultural, rural and environmental lands from urban encroachment- it identifies where urbanization should not occur. Settlement areas are designated in the plan; they are considered part of the long term viability of the Greenbelt, and the plan allows their continued evolution and growth. Towns and villages are allowed modest expansions at the 10 year plan review given they remain on locally based sewage and water services; they do not exceed watershed or subwatershed capacity; they do not extend into the natural heritage system or specialty crop areas; and they fit within the provincial and local policy framework. Settlement areas outside the Greenbelt are not permitted to expand into the Greenbelt; hamlets are allowed a minor rounding out. Settlement area expansions considered prior to Dec 16, 2003, backed by a council resolution and general completion of background studies, are allowed as long as they do not extend into specialty crop or natural heritage system areas.

The “death by a thousand cuts” feared by Greenbelt advocates may precisely occur due to urban boundary expansions of settlement areas within or on the borders of Greenbelt protected countryside. In section 2 of this paper, the shortcomings leading to the ultimate failure of some international Greenbelts were described. Measures describing success were: 1) how much land has been retained; 2) what is the proportion of development directed to urban areas; and 3) what is the density and type of new dwellings. If urban area expansions are permitted at every ten year review, the land base of the Greenbelt will shrink; future lands included to make up this loss may be of lower agricultural or environmental quality, and would invalidate the special area-protection of the plan. If expansions are allowed, there is little political incentive for municipalities to force intensification and infill onto their citizens, a politically unpopular move.

Buxton and Goodman (2003) say that sufficient land must be set aside for urban expansion- this has been done in the final draft of the Greenbelt plan. Large tracts of ‘white belt’ exist between current urban conurbations and the Greenbelt in regions such as Peel, York, and the City of Hamilton. Buxton and Goodman also state: “a continual loss of land equates to a loss of [Greenbelt] value” which leads to an ultimate loss of public support. Continual expansions demonstrate to citizens that the Greenbelt, as stated by the Greenbelt Alliance (2006), is a “moveable feast.”

It appears that Greenbelt lands are indeed considered “holding zones” for future development by some municipalities: one of the main factors compromising Melbourne’s Greenbelt and green wedges. Some planners wish to expand village boundaries at the 10 year review; many would also be willing to expand hamlets if it were permitted. Other municipalities expanded their urban boundaries just prior to Greenbelt legislation, to ensure adequate “room to grow”. Recent development proposals that are not keeping with smart growth principles have escaped provincial scrutiny as many qualify as transitional applications under the legislation; other proposals threatening Greenbelt integrity have been approved by council to the chagrin of citizens. There are examples of developments that

have already occurred within municipalities, bordering Greenbelt lands or within Greenbelt lands that demonstrate that it is “business as usual” with development in the GGH:

- The final large agricultural land holding in Brampton was designated urban, and proposed communities, while faring better than past developments, are still relatively low density and auto-dependent. This land also borders the Greenbelt natural heritage features- is the natural feature adequately buffered from the urban development?
- A subdivision proposed in Sunderland, which will double the size of the village, is opposed by citizens who accuse it of being poorly planned. It consists of 260 low-density single-family homes and a future development block, which while conforming to Greenbelt policy does not uphold its goals (Howard, 2007; OSGN, 2007). The municipality of Brock, where Sunderland is located, has also mapped anticipated areas of urban expansion in the village of Beaverton.
- In Whitchurch-Stouffville, which falls under Greenbelt protected countryside and ORM legislation, 5,333 housing units have been approved, with more planned once capital improvements are made to the water and sewer systems. The town has an annual growth rate of 10%, and would like to see an expansion of the community of Vandorf. Lake-based servicing, a proven element for sprawl growth, is planned for 2008 (Volpe, Feb 1).
- In Richmond Hill, the last available development lands, located on the Oak Ridges Moraine and contained within the Greenbelt, have been approved for development. The North Leslie lands have been subject to an OMB decision Nov 23, 2006 to allow an appeal by developers collectively known as the Bayview East Landowners Group, to have council rezone the lands from “agricultural policy area” to “urban area” and implement a secondary plan for the area. The 620 hectare parcel is to be

zoned residential to permit the construction of low to medium density single-family homes. The application to rezone the lands was submitted 1997, permitting the OMB to consider it a transitional application under the ORM and pre-dating Greenbelt legislation. Environmental and resident interests opposed the rezoning due to the environmental value of the lands, which sit on the upper portion of the Rouge river watershed. Although physically altered in the past, the lands are home to a number of remaining woodlots, wetlands, and high quality cold-water streams, housing protected species such as several Great Blue Heron colonies and part of the Jefferson forest ANSI. The environmental NGO Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. was considered a small group of private interests by the Board; other expert environmental testimonies, which highlighted the ecological sensitivity of the headwater area, were rejected by the Board. The biggest disappointment, which may hearken things to come, is that the province of Ontario, whose plans affect the area in question, did not intervene and did not seek party status at the OMB hearing (OMB, 2006).

4) Infrastructure and highway extension and expansion

In order to accommodate urban growth, rural lands must be serviced with new or improved infrastructure. Statistics Canada verifies that transportation routes are: “the arteries that support the spread of urban populations” (Bonnell, 2007). Municipalities and provincial ministries surely are aware of the positive relationship between infrastructure provision and urban growth, yet upgrades and expansions are planned for communities inside and outside the Greenbelt. While some upgrades are necessary for public health and safety; installing large, lake-based water and sewer pipes, or extending major 400 series highways; will compromise the integrity of the Greenbelt and discourage intensification in the GGH region.

4a) Highway extension and expansion

The Greenbelt's infrastructure policies (S 4.2) clearly state that existing infrastructure within the Greenbelt must be maintained and new infrastructure will be needed. Major infrastructure projects traversing the Greenbelt, including new or expanded facilities, are also acknowledged. Infrastructure upgrades and expansions are permitted so much as the amount of Greenbelt traversed is minimized, especially in natural heritage and hydrological features, is minimized; negative impacts are minimized, and services are coordinated.

A major threat to Greenbelt goals of urban containment, agricultural, and environmental protection; are the numerous highway extensions and expansions planned by the provincial government. These projects, some with the involvement of the federal government include the GTA west highway "routed from Bolton/Woodbridge to Guelph via Acton." Acton falls within Greenbelt boundaries, and is not designated for major urban growth. The highway is currently undergoing an Environmental Assessment. This expansion is not needed, according to proponents of smart growth, as a railway corridor exists through Brampton and Georgetown that could be improved instead of highway expansion (OSGN, 2007). An extension of highway 404 to Ravenshoe Road in East Gwillimbury is also planned (Slykhuis, 2007). The extension is planned to eventually travel eastward to connect to highway 12 (York Region Environmental Alliance, 2006a). Other projects include:

- A highway 407 East proposal
- The mid-peninsula corridor
- The widening of the 401 in Cobourg
- The 427 extension
- The widening of Bayview and Kennedy road to six lanes in Markham
- Widening of the 400 series highway to 12 lanes

Most municipalities welcome infrastructure investment, but many stress that in order to meet goals of sustainability, the province must be more willing to fund sustainable infrastructure. Transit funding takes priority in many municipalities. For example, York Region desires funding for the Viva bus line; the Spadina Subway extension; expansion of GO services; and investment in a carpooling program (Fleischer, 2007). As mentioned previously, regardless of sustainability goals many municipalities and regions welcome highway extensions.

4b) Sewer and water infrastructure expansion and extension

For sewer and water infrastructure (S. 4.2.2) within the Greenbelt, the project should demonstrate that it does not negatively impact ecological functions and quality of water. Settlements which are not currently on Great Lakes-based services are not permitted to link up, unless there is a public health concern. Extensions to municipal or private sewer or water services are not permitted outside of the settlement area boundary- except for health reasons.

Expanding sewer and water infrastructure beyond and within the Greenbelt boundary has serious repercussions for environmental, cultural and agricultural land protection, as it facilitates urban area expansions and new development. Some particular threats are discussed below:

- The York Durham Sewage System (YDSS) was begun in the late 1970s by the province, then handed to York region to build and administer. Fourteen links to the “Big Pipe” have been built in phases as of 2007: the completed pipe is to move approximately 740 million litres of sewage per day, to the Duffins Creek water pollution control plant in Pickering, then discharge into Lake Ontario. The construction of the pipe has been criticized by councils and NGOs due to the dewatering process which involves pumping groundwater out of the construction

area (Swainson, 2007). Another chief concern is the effect the pipe will have on facilitating urban growth.

- East Gwillimbury, which falls within Greenbelt plan boundaries, is considering linking homes to the York Durham Sewage system to accommodate future projected growth levels of 30,000 people in 20 years. Plans for an upper YDSS to service the northern part of York region are being made. In 2005, King City, despite residents opposition, was forced to link to the big pipe by York region, which cited health concerns.

Other infrastructure projects are also considered to be located in the Greenbelt's protected countryside. Also in East Gwillimbury, one of the potential sights for the location of a new waste incinerator falls within Greenbelt boundaries (Fleischer, 2007).

5) Protecting lands outside the Greenbelt

One major criticism of the Greenbelt plan by both developers and environmental interests is that it would promote development leapfrogging over the Greenbelt area and into further municipalities. Municipal planners urged a greater inclusion of Simcoe County, which is currently experiencing extremely high levels of growth, and environmental degradation resulting from this uncontrolled growth, into the Greenbelt Plan. Simcoe County's population grew by 42.9% between 1991-2001 (Neptis, 2004). At the beginning of 2007, there were 250 development projects awaiting approval in Simcoe, many of them outside of settlement areas recommended in the Intergovernmental Action Plan (IGAP) for the county (Gorrie, 2007). Planners in Simcoe insist the IGAP identified enough lots of record to accommodate projected growth exist currently, yet developers continue to subdivide agricultural lands. Lake Simcoe and the surrounding watersheds are being degraded by phosphorus loading and other impacts of unregulated urban expansion. Only

two natural shoreline areas remain on the lake (Greenbelt Alliance, 2006). The Lake Simcoe Act, proposed to address these issues, remains in first reading at the time of writing.

Another area not included in the Greenbelt was Waterloo region, which lobbied to be included in the plan to protect its sensitive hydrologic features and active farming community. In the final draft, only a small bog area in Waterloo was added to the plan. Other planners criticized the exclusion of large swaths of agricultural and rural lands below the Greenbelt; they challenged that sprawl was occurring in the designated growth areas, not in their rural settlement areas. Other planners argued that natural heritage features within urban areas deserved an equal amount of protection- they were questioning why designated growth centres such as Barrie were able to cut down all their woodlots.

6) Mineral aggregate policies

The mineral aggregate industry, while contributing to rural economies and providing materials for road and building construction, has been given preferential treatment in Greenbelt legislation. Geological features of hydrologic and ecologic value such as the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine, which the area-specific Greenbelt policy aims to protect, have been and may continue to be seriously compromised by mineral and aggregate operation expansions and their insufficient rehabilitation. S 4.3.2 point 3.d) states:

"...An application for the expansion of an existing mineral aggregate operation may be permitted in the natural heritage system, including key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, and in any associated vegetation protection zone if the related decision is consistent with the PPS..."

One interviewed planner observed that the Greenbelt legislation has more clarity than the PPS, but in a debate over the legislation, industry interprets flexibility and provincial ambiguity. Another planner discussed the many loopholes in the legislation for the aggregate industry.

There are currently three proposed expansions of large aggregate operations threatening the Greenbelt protected countryside. One is the Dufferin Aggregates Milton Quarry Expansion, occurring on top of the Niagara Escarpment, and under NEP legislation. The 70 hectare expansion will significantly physically alter the water table. In exchange for the expansion, 405 hectares of rehabilitated quarry lands are offered to the public. The other proposal is the LaFarge quarry expansion onto Font Hill Kame, in Niagara Region. The region and quarry are currently at the OMB debating the expansion. Thirdly, Nelson Aggregate proposes to expand its existing 233 hectare site upon Mount Nemo in Burlington. The Provincial government has designated about 18 hectares of wetlands, known as the grindstone Creek Headwaters Wetland Complex, from the 82 hectare quarry expansion proposal as protected from expansion (Smith, 2007).

7) Housing affordability

One of the main arguments against Greenbelt legislation put forth by developer interests was that by constraining the supply of land, housing affordability would decrease. This is often refuted by environmental interests, who state that even if land prices rise significantly, the cost increase is small when divided by units (Swainson, 2006).

Municipal planners point out that while the Greenbelt may indeed limit residential land availability, other factors, such as the great population influx to the region, will drive housing prices upward regardless of provincial urban containment policies. The Environmental Commissioner questions the sustainability of welcoming 4 million new residents in Ontario over a short time period, and believes this will lead to a housing problem (Swainson, 2006). Housing affordability has been a problem in the region for more than a decade; provincial smart growth legislation has been drafted in part to respond to this. Planner reports of increased land values are backed by the literature. The RE/MAX Market report sites the growth in housing starts in 2006 was due to low mortgage rates,

employment and income growth, and a high level of consumer confidence. New home starts in 2006, about 227,400 units, still surpassed 2005 levels regardless of smart growth legislation. Both detached home and condominium prices are rising, particularly in downtown Toronto:

"With the average price of a single-detached home approaching a prohibitive \$830,000 in the core, it's clear that purchasers are expanding their boundaries and seeking more affordable options in other areas of the city." (ReMax, 2006)

This strong economic performance and housing boom is not predicted to last indefinitely, Dunning, for the Neptis Foundation (2006), believes that provincial population projections based on current high levels of growth may fall short of actual levels, and cautions against making high projections.

The decreased affordability of large single-detached homes is not necessarily injurious to smart growth policies. While Canadians rank the state of the environment as their primary concern, the majority also prefer to live in large, suburban, single family homes (Valpy, 2007). Dawkins and Nelson (2002) found urban containment policies such as greenbelts usually increase housing prices or lead to higher density development. According to Dunning, when the cost of single detached housing increases, homebuyers tend to choose lower-cost housing forms such as townhouses and apartments. Dunning also believes interest rate increases; the value of the Canadian dollar; along with land use regulation; will create an inevitable real cost of housing increase, resulting in a shift towards lower cost and higher density housing forms (2006).

8) Political backing and public perception

A Toronto Star/Decimal Research poll concluded that 89.5% of residents surveyed support Greenbelt goals of controlling sprawl and protecting farmland (York Region Environmental Alliance, 2006b). As stated by Buxton and Goodman in Section 2.6 of this report, "Ultimately, public opinion is likely to decide the fate of green belts." Smart growth policies such as Greenbelt legislation attempt to link public concerns with regulation to

influence lifestyle choices. Their success rests on a large extent to public acceptance of the policies. As explained by one regional planner, the province is calling for a fundamental shift in private consumption and public good. This is truly one of the driving factors behind the environmental movement- to make people realize they are part of the problem. In the words of another planner, smart growth legislation such as the Greenbelt fundamentally "forces us to revisit how we do things."

Public opinion can be eroded, nevertheless, by political actions (Buxton and Goodman, 2003). A continual loss of Greenbelt land, shifting boundaries, replacing lands of high ecological and agricultural value with less valuable lands, inadequate protection for sensitive features, and infrastructure projects at odds with Greenbelt goals of curbing sprawl can all lead to public dissatisfaction and less backing of provincial Greenbelt policy. According to one planner, while the Greenbelt is in its incubation stage, the government is changing. Past provincial leadership has demonstrated the very different priorities of political parties- smart growth policy is in part a reaction to past lenient development practices and self-monitoring industries. But political parties are not so far removed from public opinion that they will not cater to the majority to ensure performance at the polls- this is demonstrated by the current 'environmental agenda' of all three major federal political parties. The provincial John Tory conservatives, who were initially opposed to Greenbelt legislation, stated they would not reopen the Greenbelt if elected; but pre-election promises are not always followed (Urquhart, 2007).

9) Regional coordination issues

A need for a regional governance body for the GGH region has been debated, as many of the issues are regional in nature. Past attempts at regional coordination with the creation of regional municipalities, have not been successful in addressing issues such as public transportation coordination and growth management; according to one planner: "if regional planning would have worked, we would not have needed the Greenbelt." A viable

alternative to provincial special-area policies implemented by municipalities; is the creation of a regional governance body responsible for regional issues, as is done in many large urban areas of the world. This would require some relinquishing of power from existing levels of government as well as funding.

12.0 CONCLUSIONS

The Greenbelt Act was strong legislation as it placed limits on private property rights and reduced municipal independence. Following the Ontario liberal government's commitment of 2003, it was created within a short window of opportunity, reflected in its speed of introduction and limited consultation period. While originally controversial due to these factors, the Ontario Greenbelt has now gained wide public acceptance.

The Ontario Greenbelt is still in early stages of implementation, yet municipal progress can already be seen. On an official level, regions and municipalities are amending their official plans to conform to the legislation at the required time of review. Yet the overall integrity of the Greenbelt lies not just in official conformity, but in municipal decisions on individual applications within and bordering Greenbelt protected countryside. Threats to Greenbelt integrity come not only from the implementing bodies but from the provincial government: there are policies within the Greenbelt legislation and contained in other provincial policies which may act against Greenbelt goals of agricultural and environmental protection; tourism and recreation provision; and urban containment.

Municipal planner interviews have identified several major issues that may hinder Greenbelt success; their insight has been used to formulate recommendations for the provincial government on how to minimize these threats to Greenbelt integrity. Overall, Greenbelt policy has shown favour by the public, and if properly maintained, can experience success as seen in international examples such as the London Greenbelt. It is important, however, to address issues proactively in the early days of plan implementation, to ensure

the plan does not succumb to a slow death from decreasing land area and political unpopularity. Several recommendations have been made below to address the identified issues,

12.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the literature and planner interviews, recommendation have been made to address the issues that have arisen during the formulation and implementation of the plan, as well as issues pertaining to Greenbelt integrity.

- It is politically difficult to introduce Greenbelt legislation, due to issues of property rights and economic opportunity in municipalities. Another main reason for controversy, and one that may be easier to resolve, was process and timing issues concerning the development of the legislation. The Greenbelt Council is best suited to rectify feelings of lack of local decision-making. By allowing municipal representatives to report on ongoing process and implementation issues at Greenbelt council meetings; there exists an opportunity to resolve these issues and/or bring them directly to the attention of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
- There is a lack of transparency concerning how Greenbelt boundaries and designations were established. According to Fung and Conway (2007, pg 111), clear goals were not communicated and the public not involved in most stages of boundary delineation. In order to increase this transparency, MAH should provide municipalities with the technical criteria they were to receive several months ago. Future area-specific legislation, such as the proposed Lake Simcoe legislation, should employ greater transparency in technical criteria in order to increase perceptions of fairness, and that decisions were made on scientific and not political bases.

- The province has declared its interest in some but not all OMB cases. Provincial interest must be declared in all cases pertaining to the Greenbelt, as this ensures fairness and that Greenbelt integrity is upheld.
- While farmers may still hold onto their land, the services on which they depend often relocate from near-urban locations, making farming more difficult. Road congestion from increased private passenger automobile traffic is also a problem. Agricultural viability of farmers on Greenbelt lands must be ensured through supporting agricultural infrastructure, such as rural businesses, farm markets, and social services, and priority for agricultural vehicles on rural roads.
- There is reasonable evidence in this report to suggest that some municipalities and regions will need surveillance from the province in carrying out Greenbelt conformity, and making individual development decisions within or near Greenbelt boundaries. The Greenbelt council should play an active monitoring role in addition to being a forum for stakeholders.
- The Greenbelt illustrates the classic battle between environmental protection and economic development. While both can occur together, many municipalities have real or perceived loss of economic opportunity through Greenbelt inclusion; this and other factors may make them less willing to implement the legislation on a case-by-case basis and lead to the “death by a thousand cuts” feared by stakeholders. This paper had demonstrated that many municipalities are making decisions that perpetuate “business as usual” development that defies smart growth principles. There are already areas within the Greenbelt designated by municipalities for urban expansions. The province must not grant these expansions at the ten year review.
- The province must also review its other policies and make sure they promote and are not in conflict with Greenbelt goals. The Greenbelt must work hand in hand with the

growth plan, and other provincial policies such as the PPS, Development Charges Act, and Municipal Act. In the words of one municipal planner, there is a “need to show performance on intensification.” The 40% intensification target of the growth plan is insufficient to promote long-term, sustainable development, and must be increased.

- Infrastructure policies within the Greenbelt and within other provincial policies are at odds with publicly popular Greenbelt goals of limiting urban expansion, environmental feature and agricultural lands protection. Particularly, proposed highway and road extensions or expansions through sensitive ecological features such as the Oak ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment. Highway projects should take the ecological component of Greenbelt features into greater consideration.
- At the 10-year Greenbelt review, the inclusion of additional lands in Simcoe County, and areas of environmental and hydrologic significance in Waterloo region, such as the Galt and Paris Moraine, should be taken into consideration.
- The costs and benefits of mineral aggregate operations atop of environmentally, culturally, and hydrologically significant landforms should be thoroughly assessed; with the long term value weighed against short-term economic gain. Operation expansions should be prevented in the natural heritage system and key natural heritage and hydrologic features. Preventing operation expansions in sensitive areas may constrain supply and encourage conservation and alternatives development.

12.2 ONTARIO GREENBELT SUCCESS

Regardless of the critique doled out by this paper, there are some signs that Greenbelt legislation is working towards its goals of environmental and agricultural protection:

- 600 hectares of provincially-owned lands were donated to Rouge Park by the province in February 2007, increasing the Park's size to 4,850 hectares. (Gombu, 2007)
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing intervened in Pickering council's decision to expand the Hamlet of greenwood, and defended the Seaton lands Environmental Assessment in court
- The Friends of Greenbelt have announced funding for projects including: a \$106,000 pilot project in Peel region to raise student's awareness of how food is grown (Rusk, 2007); a \$1.4 million grant for farmers to improve environmental practices on their land (11); \$1 million over 3 years to Farmers' Markets Ontario; \$1 million over 3 years to the local flavour plus; \$ 600,000 over 2 years to Environmental Defence Canada; and \$200,000 to the Niagara Peninsula conservation foundation, among others (FOG, 2006).
- Agriculture and Agri-food Canada recently released several discussion documents on the future of Canadian agriculture. The goal of the government is to develop a market-based system where citizens pay directly for environmental goods and services provided by the agricultural industry (CFFO Commentary, 2007).
- Several pieces of environmental legislation are proposed or in review; this public environmental priorities afford an opportunity for increased environmental protection in Ontario.
- According to Farm Credit Canada, Agricultural land values are slowly increasing across Ontario; this has also been stated anecdotally by some interviewed municipalities (2007).

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