




TO: Chairman and Members, Development Services Committee

FROM: Jim Baird, Commissioner Development Services 

PREPARED BY: Lilli Duoba, Senior Project Coordinator, Environmental Planning and Rouge Park

DATE: December 11, 2012

Re: **Growing the Greenbelt**

Background

The Provincial Greenbelt Plan, created under the Greenbelt Act, provides permanent protection for natural heritage and agricultural lands in southern Ontario. The Greenbelt Plan was approved by the Province on February 28, 2005. The lands forming the Provincial Greenbelt Plan in Markham are identified on the attached maps which are Maps 4 and 7 of the City's new Draft Official Plan and generally comprise the major tributaries of the Rouge River north of Major Mackenzie Drive, as well as the lands in eastern Markham which would form the future Rouge National Urban Park. The new Draft Official Plan conforms to the policy requirements of the Greenbelt Plan.

In August 2008, the Province released specific criteria for how requests to the Grow the Greenbelt are to be considered and communicated to the Province. These are:

1. **Municipal Request.** Any formal request to 'Grow the Greenbelt' in Markham must be from the Region of York supported by a Markham Council resolution. The City of Markham cannot direct a request to the Province.
2. **Additions to the Greenbelt.** The Region/City must demonstrate a clear functional relationship of the proposed expansion lands to the existing Greenbelt area and how the Greenbelt policies will apply.
3. **Embraces the Greenbelt Purpose.** The Region/City must show how the proposed expansion lands meet the Greenbelt vision and one or more Greenbelt goals.
4. **Connections to Greenbelt Systems.** The Region/City must demonstrate a functional relationship of the Greenbelt expansion lands to the Natural Heritage, Agricultural and/or Water Resource system based on the same Provincial scale that was used for the Protected Countryside approach of the Greenbelt Plan.
5. **Complements the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.** The proposed area for Greenbelt expansion cannot impede the implementation of the Growth Plan.

6. **Timing and Relationship to Other Provincial Initiatives.** The Region/City must demonstrate that the proposed Greenbelt expansion complements and supports all other Provincial initiatives.

On June 15, 2010, Markham Council passed the following resolution:

That staff bring forward an update "Growing the Greenbelt" report upon completion of the new Official Plan, to further review possible options for Greenbelt expansion in the context of the Town's updated agricultural and Greenway System policies in preparation for the mandatory Provincial Greenbelt review scheduled for 2015"

In November 2012, the Province released the Growing the Greenbelt 2012 Consultation Document (attached). The Province is proposing two amendments to the Greenbelt Plan. The first is the addition of 630 acres of land in Oakville as Protected Countryside. The second is a general amendment to add a new 'Urban River Valley' designation to the Greenbelt Plan to facilitate adding publicly owned lands in the urban river valleys currently outside the Greenbelt into the Greenbelt Plan area. This general designation would permit the City to consider a Greenbelt designation along the publicly owned valley corridor in the existing urban area. This new designation would make it easier to include publicly owned valleylands in the Greenbelt which would not have been appropriate under the current Greenbelt policies. At this point in the process, the Province is consulting on this proposal and have not produced specific wording to determine if such a designation would benefit lands in Markham. We note that publicly owned urban valleylands in Markham are already protected through public ownership and through City and TRCA policies and regulations. Any added benefits of the Provincial designation should be clarified.

Staff will continue to monitor this provincial process and provide feedback to the Province. Additional information will be brought forward for consideration of Council with the final staff report and recommendations on the new Official Plan. Given the intensive process required by municipalities to bring new lands into the Greenbelt Plan area, staff would be reviewing this opportunity to ensure that such process would be value added and meaningful in terms of the protection and management of public valleylands surrounded by urban development.

**Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

[ABOUT](#) | [NEWSROOM](#) | [JOB OPPORTUNITIES](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

You are here > [Home](#) > [Your Ministry](#) > [Land Use Planning](#) > [Greenbelt Protection](#) > [Growing the Greenbelt Consultation 2012](#) > Growing the Greenbelt 2012 Consultation Document

Growing the Greenbelt 2012 Consultation Document

[Print-Friendly PDF Version](#)

Growing the Greenbelt - Glenorchy Lands and Urban River Valley Designation

INTRODUCTION

The Province is committed to protecting, supporting and Growing the Greenbelt.

To help meet this commitment, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is proposing an amendment to the Greenbelt Plan under the Greenbelt Act, 2005 that would:

1. Add provincially owned lands of approximately 630 acres (255 hectares), which are part of the Glenorchy Conservation Area in the Town of Oakville, to the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Plan; and,
2. Add a new Urban River Valley designation to the Greenbelt Plan to facilitate adding publicly owned lands in urban river valleys currently outside the Greenbelt into the Greenbelt Plan.

We are asking for your input on the proposed amendment to the Greenbelt Plan.

BACKGROUND

Ontario's Greenbelt is an area of permanently protected green space, farmland, communities, forests, wetlands and watersheds.

It protects environmentally sensitive land and farmland in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area from urban development.

The Greenbelt also supports a wide range of recreational, tourism and cultural opportunities. The Greenbelt includes the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment and land known as "Protected Countryside".

The proposal to add provincially owned Glenorchy lands in Oakville is an important first step in demonstrating the Province's commitment to growing the Greenbelt.

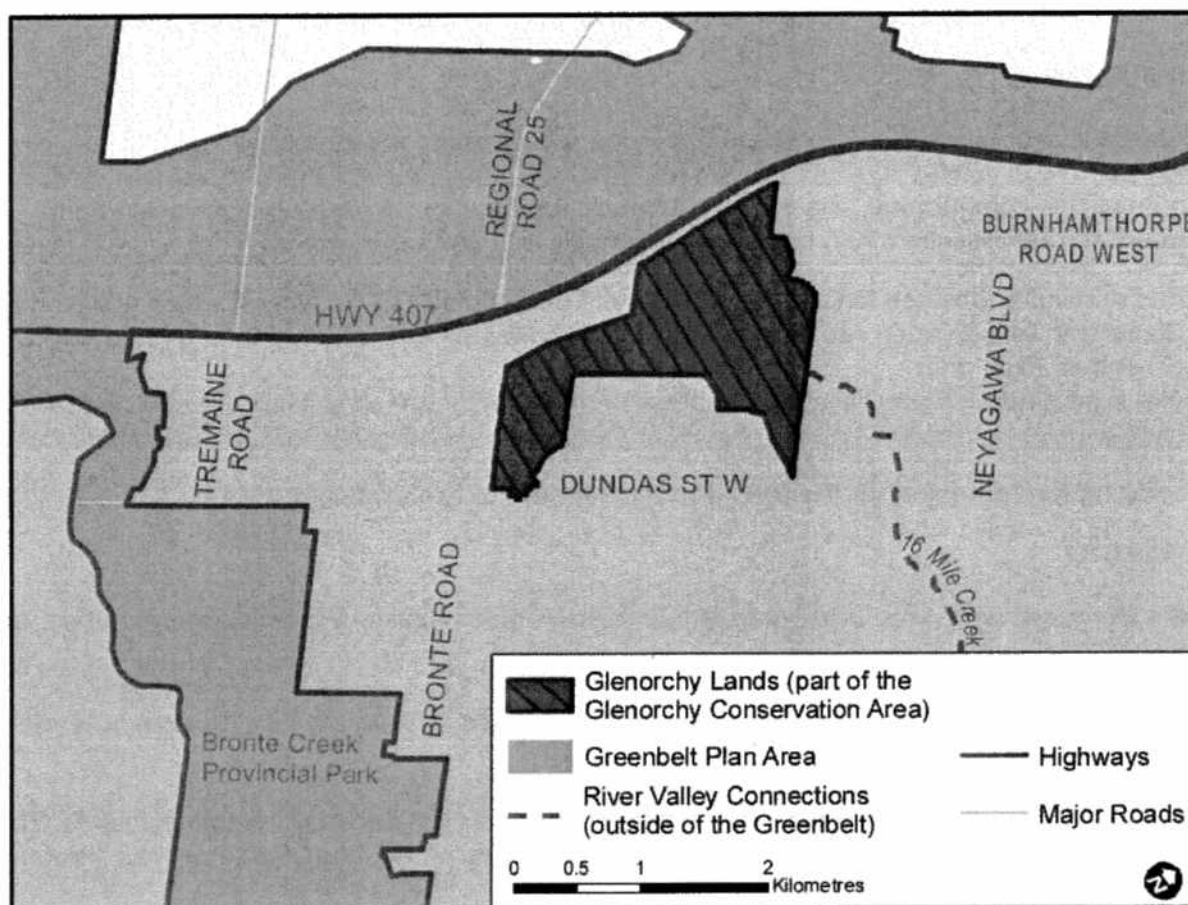
In addition, the Province wants to continue to work with its municipal partners to grow the Greenbelt in urban river valleys that are currently outside of the Greenbelt. As a next step, the Province is proposing a new Urban River Valley designation for the Greenbelt Plan. This initiative is based on initial feedback from interested municipalities and stakeholders.

The proposed amendment would add approximately 255 hectares (630 acres) of provincially owned lands in the Town of Oakville to the Greenbelt. These lands are located near the intersection of Hwy 407 and Regional Road 25 (Bronte Road), as shown on Figure 1 below.

The Glenorchy lands would be added to the Greenbelt Plan as Protected Countryside. Consequently, they would be subject to the Greenbelt Plan's Protected Countryside policies.

An amendment to the Greenbelt boundary regulation (O. Reg. 59/05) would be needed to allow the proposed addition of lands.

Figure 1 - Glenorchy Lands (Oakville)



The importance of external connections to the Greenbelt is recognized in the Greenbelt Plan. These urban river valleys are gateways to the Greenbelt.

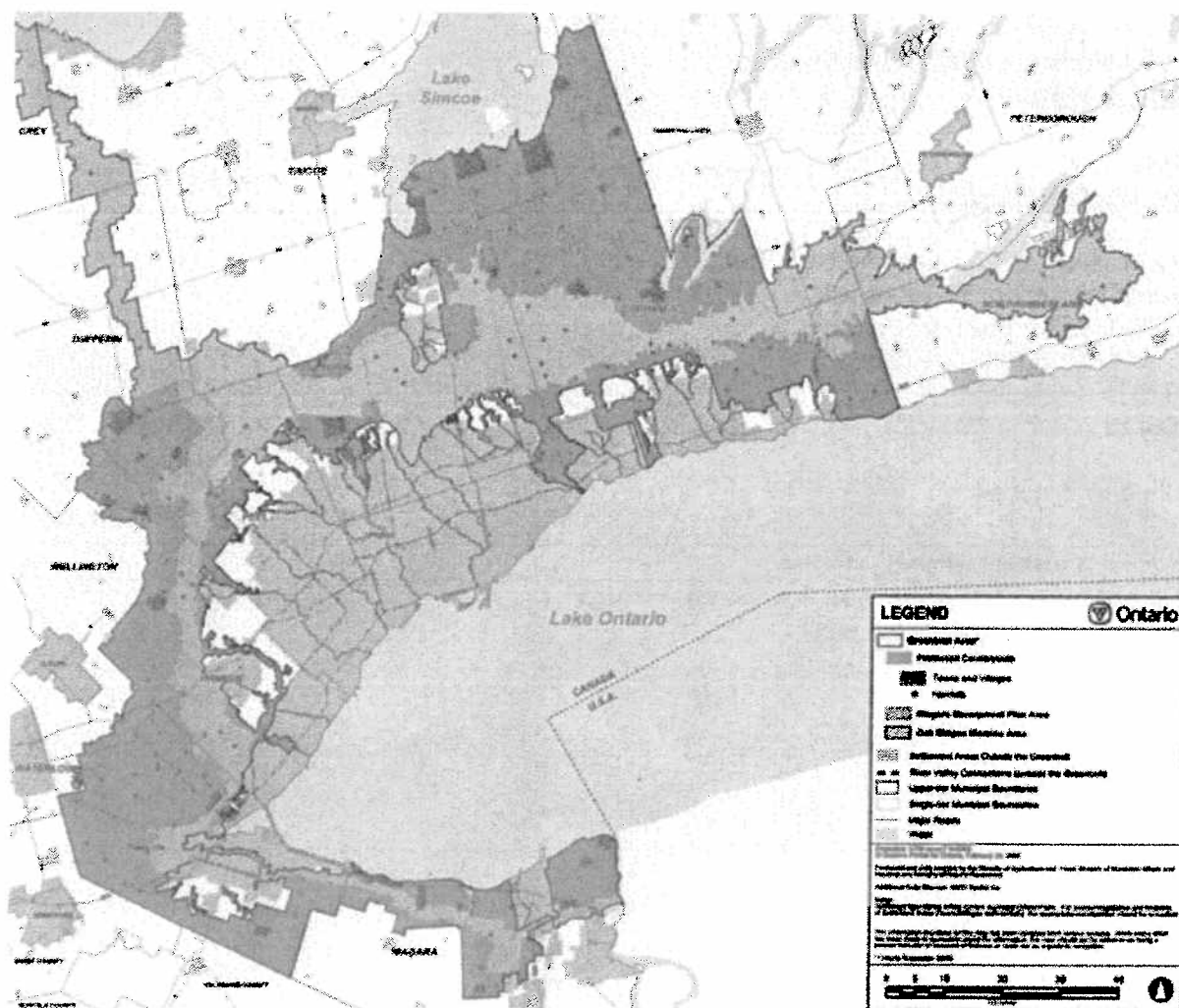
The Plan states that: "The river valleys that run through existing or approved urban areas and connect the Greenbelt to inland lakes and the Great Lakes are a key component of the long term health of the Natural System".

In addition to important natural heritage values, river valleys in urban municipalities within, and adjacent to, the Greenbelt may contain tourist, recreational and cultural amenities that contribute to the diversity of benefits the Greenbelt offers in an urban setting.

The proposed amendment would introduce a new Urban River Valley designation to the Greenbelt Plan. This new designation would help to facilitate adding publicly owned lands in urban river valleys currently outside the Greenbelt into the Greenbelt Plan. Should a municipality be interested in the future in having the Urban River Valley designation (if approved) apply to public lands within their jurisdiction, the municipality would submit a request to the Ministry based on Growing the Greenbelt criteria, developed in 2008. The potential inclusion of any of these lands would assist in connecting the Greenbelt to inland lakes and the Great Lakes through these river valley corridors.

The proposed designation would rely on municipal official plan policies which have regard for Greenbelt Plan objectives and any other applicable criteria. The Protected Countryside policies of the Greenbelt Plan would not apply. Many of the key external river valley connections are shown on Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Excerpt from Schedule 1: Greenbelt Plan Area



COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

Submissions on the proposed amendment may be made to the Ministry at:

Growing the Greenbelt — Glenorchy Lands and Urban River Valleys
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 14th Floor
Toronto, ON, M5G 2E5

Phone: (416) 585-6014; 1-877-711-8208
Fax: (416) 585-6870

You may also submit your comments electronically by e-mailing them to: greenbelt@ontario.ca

Submissions must be received by January 4, 2013.

All comments received on the proposed amendment described above will be fully considered by the Minister prior to making a decision whether to recommend that the amendment be approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in whole or part or with modifications.

OTHER RESOURCES

For more information on the Greenbelt, visit the Ministry's website at:

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
[**Ontario.ca/Mah**](http://Ontario.ca/Mah)

Greenbelt
[**Ontario.ca/Greenbelt**](http://Ontario.ca/Greenbelt)

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2012
ISBN 978-1-4435-9622-0 (Print)
ISBN 978-1-4435-9624-4 (PDF)
ISBN 978-1-4435-9623-7 (HTML)
1.8M/06/12

Disponible en français

[CONTACT US](#) | [ACCESSIBILITY](#) | [PRIVACY](#) | [SITE MAP](#)

COPYRIGHT © QUEEN'S PRINTER FOR ONTARIO, 2008 | IMPORTANT NOTICE

- LAST MODIFIED: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2012



DRAFT

OFFICIAL PLAN

MAP 4 - GREENWAY SYSTEM

SEPTEMBER 2012

SCALE

1:35,000



Greenway System

Greenway System Boundary

GREENWAY SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Natural Heritage Network

Natural Heritage Network Enhancement Lands
(Symbols)

Core Linkage Enhancements

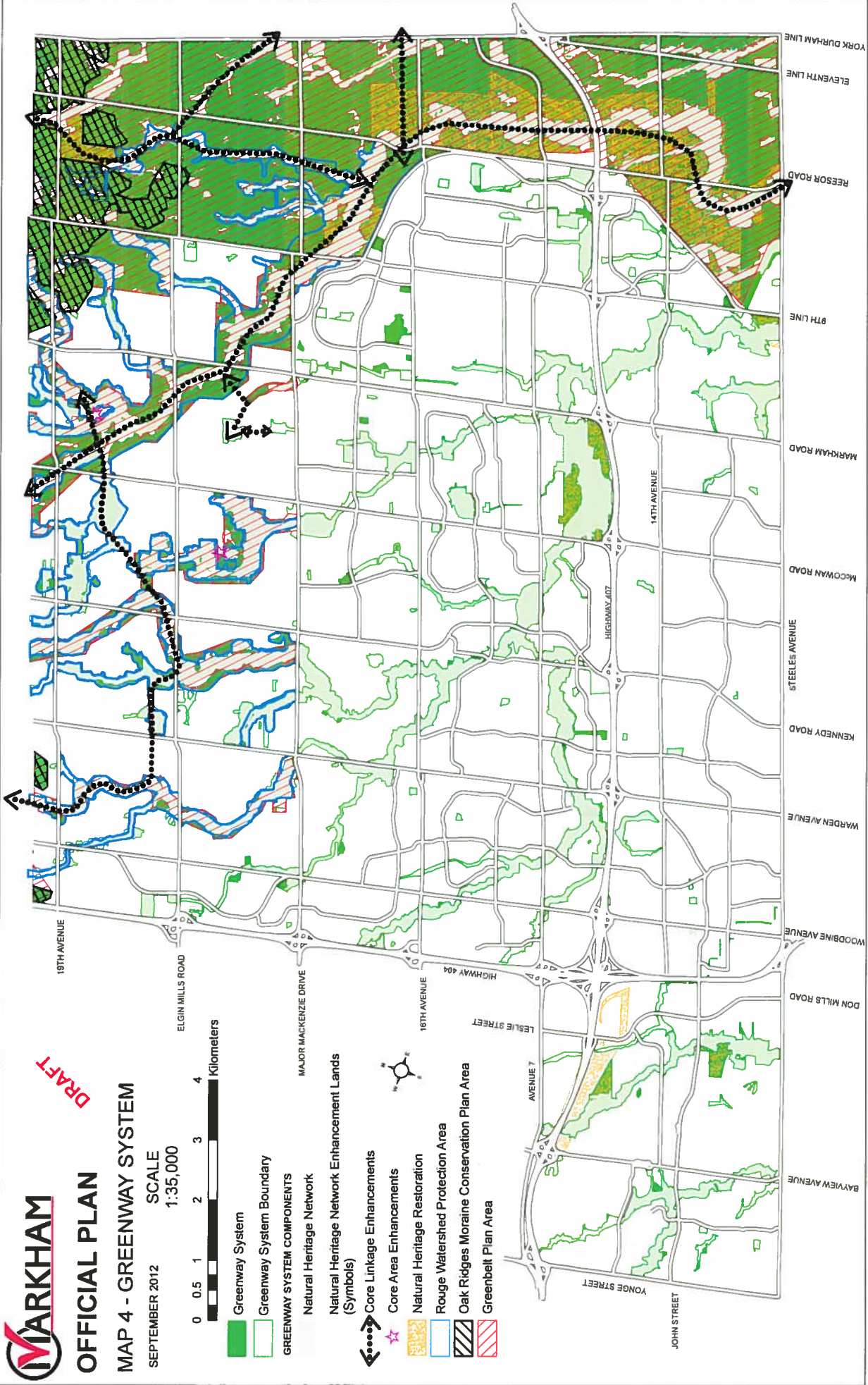
Core Area Enhancements

Natural Heritage Restoration

Rouge Watershed Protection Area

Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area

Greenbelt Plan Area





OFFICIAL PLAN

MAP 7 - PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL POLICY AREAS

SEPTEMBER 2012

SCALE

1:35,000



DRAFT

OAK RIDGES MORaine

- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area
- Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Linkage Area
- Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside

GREENBELT

- Greenbelt Plan Area
- Greenbelt Natural Heritage System
- Greenbelt Protected Countryside

MINISTER'S ZONING ORDERS

- Minister's Zoning Order - Parkway Belt West
- Minister's Zoning Order - Airport
- Minister's Zoning Order - 516-01

SPECIAL POLICY AREAS

- See Map 8/

