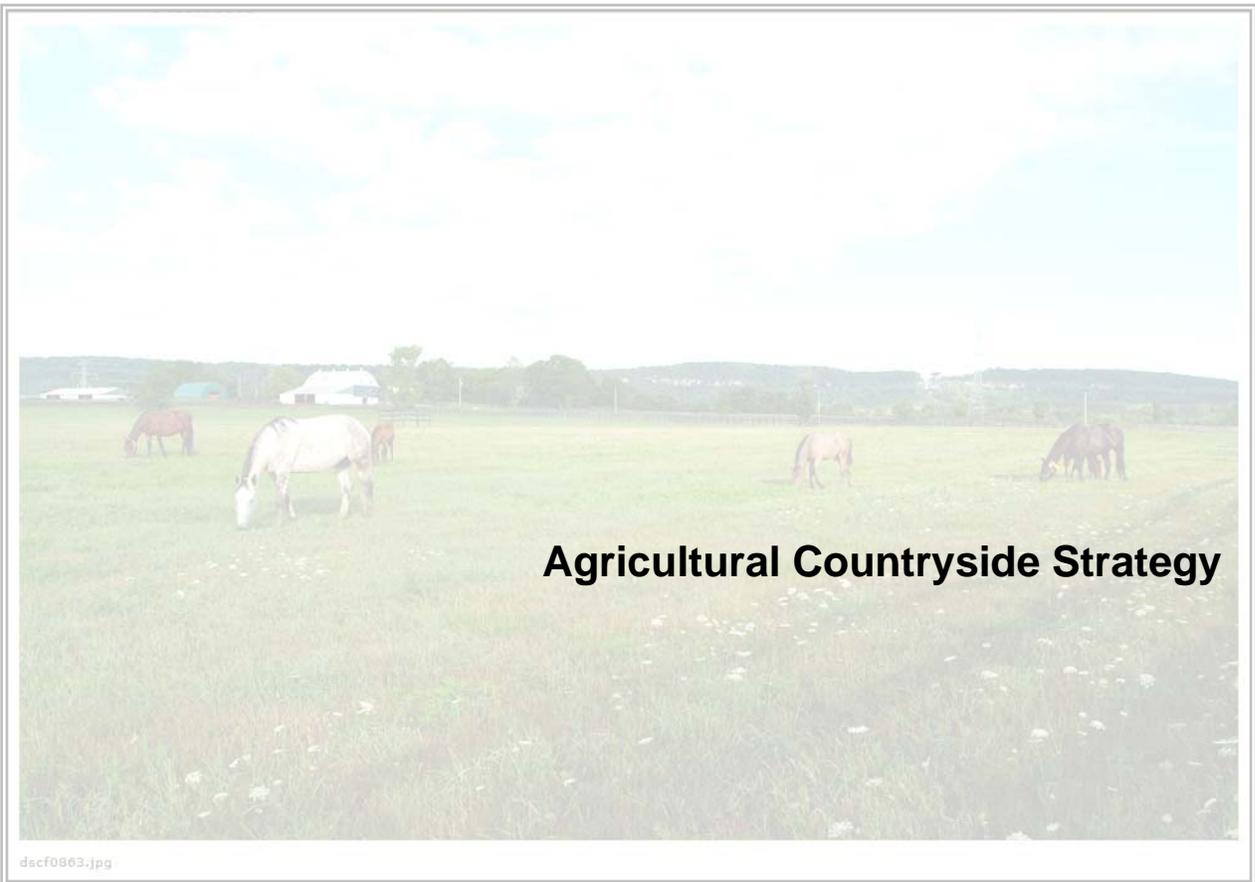


Phase 3 Sustainable Halton Report 3.04



Prepared for Halton Region



Agricultural Countryside Strategy

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April 7, 2009



Planscape
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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THIS REPORT

HAAC	Halton Agriculture Advisory Committee
GTAAC	Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee
CA	Conservation Authority
OFA	Ontario Federation of Agriculture
AAFC	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
HFA	Halton Federation of Agriculture
NEC	Niagara Escarpment Commission
OMAFRA	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
GTMA	Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance
OAFE	Ontario Agricultural Food Education



1 Introduction

This is the third in a series of reports regarding agriculture, prepared as part of Sustainable Halton. Sustainable Halton is the process through which the Regional Official Plan is being updated to bring it into conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2005 (Growth Plan) and the Greenbelt Plan, 2005. The purpose of this report is to present a preferred strategy for agriculture in Halton and to comment on the implications of the strategy.

Since its inception, the Region of Halton has deemed agriculture to be an essential component of a healthy community. Through the implementation of policies supporting sustainability and landform permanence, Halton has worked to protect the agricultural resource and create the circumstances whereby it could survive and thrive. This goal is challenging in a region subjected to pressures from urbanization. The increased demands to accommodate growth, imposed by the Province through the Growth Plan, have made achievement of this goal even more challenging. However the Region is committed to the goals of sustainability and landform permanence, an essential part of which is the preservation and support of a sustainable agricultural community and is seeking innovative ways to achieve this.

Public input, obtained through the consultation process which has been an integral part of Sustainable Halton and previous planning reviews confirms support for a strong and viable agricultural sector in Halton. Ongoing consultation with the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC) confirms a commitment to an ongoing, economically viable agricultural community in Halton. In making this commitment, HAAC emphasizes the need for strong Regional support to ensure that the circumstances to allow farmers to succeed financially are in place. This concern was echoed by the Halton Federation of Agriculture.

As the issues of sustainability, local food supply and climate change become more pressing, the importance of maintaining a strong, local agricultural presence grows. In the technical background reports prepared in Phase 1 of Sustainable Halton, a sustainable, economically viable agriculture industry was confirmed as an essential part of Halton's vision for the future.

Including a viable agricultural sector as part of the vision for Halton's future is commendable. In planning for the future, it is critical to protect the resources which sustain life. Prime agricultural land is one such resource that is both limited and irreplaceable. Recent global events including escalating prices, food shortages, protectionist policies, water shortages, fluctuating energy costs and shifting environmental pressures impact food supplies and underscore the importance of protecting agricultural resources. Circumstances change and socio economic conditions and societal values shift. Preserving the ability to feed ourselves is a fundamental requirement in planning for these shifts. However this cannot be done at the expense of farmers. An essential ingredient for a sustainable agricultural system must be a support system that provides farmers with the tools they need to thrive.

In addition to the importance of protecting the agricultural resource for sustainability, maintaining agricultural land is part of what defines Halton's character and quality of life. Agriculture is an established component of the historic landscape and provides a significant separator between areas of urban development. The vision for the Region has always been



one of a balanced landscape which, in addition to defined urban areas, includes “*farms, countryside, forested areas and other open spaces*”¹.

Halton is fortunate to have a supply of prime agricultural land, a resource that is limited in Canada. The Region has an obligation to manage this sustainable resource, one that is a major contributor to economic, physical and environmental well being, for the benefit of future generations. By doing so, Halton will retain opportunities to adjust to changing societal values regarding the production of agricultural products, ensure the availability of local food and contribute to the goal of being self sustaining. Protecting a viable agricultural sector in an urbanizing area will be a challenge. However, it is a challenge that Halton, for the benefit of its current and future residents, must rise to.

Therefore, prior to finalizing the preferred options to accommodate growth to 2031, the protection of a sustainable agricultural presence in Halton must be a prime consideration.

2 Context

Protection of the agricultural resource has been a consistent position of the Region since its creation, and the Sustainable Halton process has confirmed that this commitment should continue. The report, “*Sustainable Halton: Agricultural Countryside Vision*”, completed as part of Phase 1 of Sustainable Halton, contained an evaluation of the regional agricultural sector and confirmed that agriculture is and should continue to be an important component of Halton’s vision for the future. Building on Section 28 of the Regional Official Plan, the report concluded that maintaining a strong agricultural sector in both the Greenbelt and the Primary Study Area (PSA) is integral to Halton’s established goals of maintaining landform permanence and sustainability.

In the Phase 1 report, to determine how best to support a sustainable agricultural presence, the following questions were posed:

- What are the characteristics of agriculture in Halton and how are they changing?
- What is the nature of the agricultural resource?
- What is the relationship between agriculture in the Greenbelt and the PSA?
- What are the implications of the enhanced Natural Heritage System (NHS) and aggregate policies?
- Should a permanent agricultural area be designated in the PSA?
- What tools are required to support an ongoing viable agricultural sector?
- What policies are required to ensure that agriculture can co-exist successfully with an enhanced NHS and protected aggregate resources?
- How should the relationship between agriculture in the Greenbelt and in the PSA be enhanced?
- How should other rural uses be addressed?
- Is there an optimal size for an agricultural area? and,
- Where should this area be?

¹ Halton Region Official Plan Section 28, pg 5-6.



The first four of these questions were addressed in a second report, "*Sustainable Halton: An Agricultural Evaluation*" which contains an update of the Region's agricultural profile based on the 2006 agricultural census; the results of a Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) analysis; a specialty crop evaluation to identify potential regionally significant specialty crop lands; and consideration of how the NHS and aggregate resources are being addressed. The conclusions reached in the second report regarding these questions were that:

- The PSA in Halton is a prime agricultural area as defined in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS).
- Agriculture in Halton continues to be a productive sector.
- The majority of the PSA is comprised of prime agricultural land.
- The uncertainties associated with the future of agriculture in Halton are having an impact on the sector that is evident in changes in commodity profiles.
- There is some shifting in the commodity profile to the production of crops geared to a readily available urban market.
- Halton does have specialty crops many of which are located in the Greenbelt.
- There are scattered locations where specialty crop production is occurring in the PSA, notably in east Milton.
- Certain areas of east Milton, where there is specialty crop production, are characterized by smaller lot sizes and fragmentation.
- The Greenbelt contains areas of prime agricultural land but they are more fragmented than the areas of prime agricultural land in the PSA.
- Large portions of the proposed enhanced NHS are prime agricultural land.
- There are potential aggregate resource areas in the PSA on prime agricultural land.

3 Purpose

Based on these conclusions, the purpose of this report is to respond to the balance of the questions raised in the first report, "*Sustainable Halton: Agricultural Countryside Vision*" and to make recommendations leading to finalization of a preferred growth option for the Region.

The outstanding questions from the first report include:

- Should a permanent agricultural area be designated in the PSA?
- What tools are required to support permanency?
- What policies are required to ensure that agriculture can co-exist harmoniously with an enhanced NHS and protected aggregate resources?
- How should the relationship between agriculture in the Greenbelt and the PSA be enhanced?
- How should other rural uses be addressed?
- How large an agricultural area should be established? and
- Where should this area be?



4 Evaluation

In evaluating strategies for managing agricultural land in Halton, there are a number of factors that must be considered.

The existing policy framework consisting of the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), the Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP), and the Greenbelt Plan sets the parameters for regional policies governing land use.

The associated work being done as part of the Sustainable Halton process and the recommendations arising from it must be considered in assessing options for managing agricultural land.

Halton has existing policies addressing agriculture in the Regional Official Plan. Any updated policies, resulting from the Sustainable Halton process, will build on that base.

Input from the Local Municipalities is critical to planning for the future. As part of the analysis of the options for agriculture, the goals of the Local Municipalities must be considered and addressed.

Consultation with the regional agricultural community is essential. For agriculture to remain as a viable presence in the Region it must be economically sustainable. Land use policies can protect the land base, however unless circumstances allow farmers to operate successfully and profitably, the land will not be farmed.

Finally, any recommendations for policy must be based on the principles of good planning.

4.1 Planning Framework

Any decisions about the future of agricultural lands in Halton must be made within the context of the approved policy framework. The main elements of this framework as it applies to agriculture, are discussed below. Specific excerpts from the policies referred to are summarized in **Appendix 1** to this report.

The Planning Act

The Planning Act identifies “*the protection of the agricultural resources of the Province*” as a matter of provincial interest and authorizes the Minister to issue policy statements on matters regarding it. Municipalities, in implementing planning controls, must be consistent with these policies and therefore must address the protection of agricultural resources.

The Provincial Policy Statement 2005

The Provincial Policy Statement, issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act, provides direction on the management of the Province’s agricultural resources.



The PPS defines prime agricultural land and areas in Sections 1.1.3.9, 1.1.4.1 and 2.3² and directs that they shall be protected for agricultural uses unless the land is required for expansion of a settlement area.

The other two land uses that must be protected under the PPS are natural heritage features and areas (Section 2.1) and lands containing aggregate resources (Section 2.5). However both are expected to coexist with agriculture. In the case of natural heritage features and areas, existing agricultural uses are to be accommodated. Aggregate uses are deemed to be interim uses with a requirement that agriculture will continue until extraction occurs and will be resumed on rehabilitated land once extraction is complete. To ensure that the interests of agriculture are protected, it will be important to strike the right balance for managing the relationship between agriculture, aggregate and the natural heritage system in the revised Official Plan policies.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2006

The Growth Plan implements additional policies for areas within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The policies pertaining to agriculture are similar to those in the PPS and impose similar requirements for the protection of agricultural land. (Section 2.2.8)

Section 4.22 (1) requires provincial participation in the identification of prime agricultural areas and specialty crop land. The Growth Plan goes beyond the PPS in supporting agriculture by encouraging municipalities to develop farm infrastructure and solicit input on agriculturally related decisions, from the farm community.

The Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan contains specific policies (Section 3.1) addressing management of prime agricultural areas, specialty crop areas and rural areas within the Protected Countryside. It encourages external connections to prime agricultural resources and the agri food system beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt.

The policies which must be addressed in the updated Official Plan require protection of agricultural land. In doing so, they recognize the relationship between agriculture, aggregates and natural heritage and provide direction on managing it. The policies on external connections recognize the need to integrate agriculture in the Greenbelt with agriculture in adjacent areas. The Plan also acknowledges that in addition to protecting land, a support system is required for agriculture to thrive. In creating policies for agricultural land, the Region must conform to the policies of the Greenbelt, but should also consider the provincial direction in developing agricultural policies for the PSA.

The Niagara Escarpment Plan

The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) has been in place since 1985 and its policies have been incorporated in the Halton Regional Official Plan on an ongoing basis. As this process proceeds, it will be important to ensure that there is ongoing consistency between the Regional Official Plan and the NEP.

² See Appendix 1



Overall, this provincial policy framework requires that prime agricultural areas and land be identified and protected unless required to accommodate projected growth; and further that specialty crop land be identified and protected. In doing so, the provincial policies also address the need for balance with natural heritage and aggregate policies and acknowledge that additional support beyond just the protection of land is required to sustain agriculture.

4.2 Existing Regional Policies

Halton, since its inception as a regional government, has supported the principle that agriculture is an essential element of a sustainable region. As one of the more rural regions in the GTA, Halton has always had an interest in preserving the rural character. Of the four regions in the GTA, the approach taken by Halton to manage its agricultural land has been recognized as being very effective. The approach of designating rural lands as 'Agriculture Rural' and protecting it as a block was noted in the original Agricultural Economic Impact Study³, which led to the development of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan, as the most effective approach for the preservation of agricultural land.

Halton's fundamental position regarding the management of the agricultural resource has a long and well-documented history. In 1991, the future vision for Halton was laid out in report B4 "Land Stewardship and Healthy Communities: A Vision for the 90's and Beyond", which was the major policy paper prepared after an extensive public consultation process in support of the development of the 1995 Official Plan. This report was adopted by Council in September 1991. As noted in the witness statement of Ho-Kwan Wong Director of Long Range Planning, prepared in response to an appeal of ROPA 25, Report B4 continues to articulate the vision that Halton has for its long term future. With respect to agriculture the report states:

We strongly believe that the rural area and its resources in Halton are important assets to Halton and should remain part of Halton's permanent landscape. Agriculture is a viable industry in Halton and an important part of its economy, in spite of urban growth, but its form and scale will change. We may see smaller, specialized farms, adapted to the more urbanizing environment through more intensive production and focusing on high-value or organic crops and livestock supplemented by off-farm employment. It is in Halton's long term interest to protect the valuable agricultural land base which can co-exist with urban development. Agriculture will benefit all residents of Halton, urban and rural, from the standpoint of economy, ecology, open space, education, lifestyle, resource protection and sustainable development.

(...)

*We have to preserve valuable agricultural farmlands in Halton because agriculture has a permanent place in Halton's economy and farmlands will be part of Halton's permanent landscape.*⁴

Based on this vision, the existing Regional Official Plan (2004) deems that sustainable development and landform permanence are fundamental values upon which the Plan is based. Section 25 of the Plan states:

³ Walton & Hunter and Betsy Donald. "Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Economic Impact Study", November 1999.

⁴ Region of Halton, "Report B4, Land Stewardship and Healthy Communities: A vision of the 90's and Beyond". January 1991 Adopted by Regional Council September 25, 1991. Pg 26 & 28



Regional Council supports the notion of sustainable development which “meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need.”

Section 26 of the Official Plan states:

To maintain Halton as a desirable and identifiable place for this and future generations, certain landforms within Halton must be preserved permanently. This concept of landform permanence represents Halton’s fundamental value in land use planning and will guide its decisions and actions on proposed land use changes accordingly.

Section 28 of the Official Plan states:

The second class of permanent landforms to be preserved in large measure so that they will always form part of Halton’s landscape consists of the following:

- *Farms*

By using one designation of Agricultural Rural below the Escarpment brow, Halton has worked to maintain the integrity of the agricultural resource. Using the approach of separate rural and agricultural designations, as done in other regions, can result in the development of conflicting rural uses which degrade the integrity of the agricultural area.

Ensuring that agriculture remains a permanent, viable land use in the Region has always been and continues to be a fundamental goal in Halton, one which the Sustainable Halton process will build on. In updating the Official Plan to implement the Growth Plan, the policy of maintaining an ongoing agricultural presence in Halton must be addressed.

4.3 Sustainable Halton Process

The purpose of Sustainable Halton is to implement policies to manage growth from 2021 to 2031 and in doing so, to foster a healthy, sustainable region. The goals of sustainability and landform permanence are key to this process.

Phase 1, which generated natural heritage options and confirmation of an agricultural vision, also provided important base line data. The Region carried out 22 studies covering a range of issues. With reference to agriculture, the *Agricultural Countryside Vision* concluded:

The answer to the question, “Is it desirable for agriculture to have a permanent presence in the PSA?” is yes. An appropriate vision for the countryside in Halton is one that supports firm urban boundaries, a comprehensive natural heritage system and a permanent, prosperous agricultural presence in the PSA. The contribution of agriculture to both the economy and the quality of life in the Region is valued. The non renewable nature of the agricultural resource in the PSA is such that there is an obligation to preserve it for current and future generations.

The answer to the second question, “Is it possible for agriculture to have a permanent presence in the PSA?” is also yes, but only if a strong commitment based on a realistic assessment of the challenges is made. It will require the definition of a “mature state” for the Region where boundaries between land uses are firm and inviolable. It must be



supported by realistic programs to address the challenges that will arise. Land use policies alone will not achieve this. Other tools will have to be employed, the cost of which must be understood and accepted. Creation of a permanent viable agricultural sector in the PSA will require strong political will, commitment by the agricultural community and public support.

The *Community Food Security* report, prepared as part of Phase 1 of Sustainable Halton by the Halton Public Health Department, supports a continued agricultural presence and recommended that:

The Region endorse and implement measures that will contribute to the health of the community by preserving as much of the Primary Study area as possible to ensure that Halton residents have access to a local food system and (...) encouragement of a local food production and distribution system .⁵

The *Air Quality and Human Health* paper, prepared as part of Phase 1 of Sustainable Halton by the Halton Region Health Department, encouraged the “*development of complete communities characterized by mixed land uses*” and “*preservation of green space*”.⁶

These reports were circulated as part of an extensive public consultation process. The feedback received generally endorsed the agricultural recommendations with the proviso that a long term agricultural strategy must address economic issues impacting the sector, accommodate future growth requirements, manage the impacts of an expanded natural heritage system and provide meaningful support to promote successful operations.

Input received from the Phase 1 consultation, and the Region’s response to it, is summarized in **Appendix 2**. As part of this consultation, the point was made that for agriculture to be successful a holistic approach to supporting agriculture would be required. Tools other than just land use controls would be required as part of a comprehensive strategy.

Building on the conclusions from Phase 1, the Region proceeded with an evaluation to assess the nature of the regional agricultural resource. The analysis contained in the second report, *An Agricultural Evaluation*, leads to a number of conclusions about the outstanding questions posed in the first report, *Agricultural Countryside Vision*. These conclusions are that:

- There is sufficient land base in the PSA to support a viable agricultural industry after growth to 2031 is accommodated.
- The area south of Milton scored highest in the LEAR, but is vulnerable to the potentially adverse impacts of urban development and competing uses in relatively close proximity.
- Halton Hills has good potential for long term agricultural production, because of the extent of its rural area.
- Close connection to the Greenbelt increases the extent of a continuous rural area.
- To improve agricultural viability, fragmentation of agricultural areas and interfaces with urban areas should be minimized.

⁵ Halton Region Health Department, “Community Food Security”. pg 19

⁶ Dr Bob Nosal, “Air Quality and Human Health” February 2, 2007. Pg. 26 – 27.



- Large contiguous areas have the best potential for long term agriculture.
- In designating a Natural Heritage System, attention should be given to minimizing the impact on agricultural production by creating a partnership that benefits agriculture while protecting the environment. Farmers' role as stewards of the environment and the right to farm should be recognized.
- Potential aggregate resources have been identified in the PSA on prime agricultural land. Policies for managing these resources should acknowledge the agricultural resource and optimize opportunities to preserve it both before and after extraction of the aggregate.
- Halton has the potential to support a permanent, successful agricultural sector if it is supported by strong consistently applied policies and an appropriate support system.
- A successful agriculture sector requires more than planning policies for support. Other tools which contribute to economic prosperity for the farming community are also required.
- Agriculture is a desirable component of healthy sustainable communities.

These conclusions provide the basis for a long term vision for agriculture in Halton.

As part of the Phase 2 process, using the definitions in the PPS, a land evaluation and area review (LEAR) was conducted to identify prime agricultural lands and areas in Halton. LEAR is a process designed by OMAFRA and identified in the PPS as an accepted evaluation tool for identifying prime agricultural lands and areas. The LEAR was conducted for all of the rural lands in the PSA and the Greenbelt. Representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs were part of the working group that provided input to and oversaw the LEAR. HAAC was consulted and updated as the LEAR was done.

The conclusion reached, based on the LEAR, was that all of the land in the PSA, with the exception of a small area in south Milton, falls within the Provincial definition of prime land or prime area.(see **Map 1**) Therefore, in adopting polices, the Region is obligated to protect this land. The only exception to the requirement to protect agricultural lands is for isolated pockets and for areas that are required for establishment or expansion of a settlement area.

At the same time as the LEAR was being conducted, the Sustainable Halton process was moving forward. The data produced in Phase 1 was used to inform the Phase 2 process of moving towards a preferred growth strategy. As part of Phase 2, growth concepts were identified and an evaluation framework designed to select and refine these concepts.

Based on the work being done in support of Sustainable Halton, it has been estimated that the amount of land required to accommodate the projected growth is approximately 2,780 hectares. There are a number of options being considered regarding where the growth will go but based on established criteria, including potential impact on long term agriculture, there has been some narrowing down of options. Final decisions about the direction of growth and areas where it should be accommodated will continue to factor in consideration of how to minimize impacts on prime agricultural areas.

There will be significant areas in the PSA not required to accommodate growth. There will be Strategic Employment Lands not required for growth until post 2031 and these may be re-



evaluated in future policy reviews. For all of these lands, there is an obligation under the PPS to protect the agricultural resource.

The consultation process on the five refined growth concepts took place during the fall of 2008. Workshops were held in each of the Local Municipalities and the public was encouraged to submit comments on the various growth concepts. Numerous comments were received from a variety of sources. In these consultations, the role of the rural countryside and agricultural production was recognized as an essential element of a healthy, balanced and sustainable community.

Although maintaining an agricultural area is a fundamental goal of Sustainable Halton, there are other elements of the growth strategy that will affect how this goal will be implemented. Key amongst these are:

- Requirements for land to accommodate residential growth to 2031;
- The requirement for additional employment lands to 2031;
- Infrastructure implications;
- Co-existence with an enhanced Natural Heritage System;
- Implementation of an aggregate policy; and
- Fundamental principles key to building complete, healthy communities.

Finalizing an agricultural strategy is part of the larger Sustainable Halton process and will be an iterative process which balances these considerations and others. However there is sufficient land in Halton to meet the goals of the Growth Plan, to balance the competing needs listed above and to accommodate a large agricultural area. The Sustainable Halton process should establish a strategy to achieve this.

4.4 Local Municipalities

To be successful, a policy to sustain agriculture in Halton must have the support of the Local Municipalities. In moving forward with an agricultural strategy, the input of Halton Hills and Milton is critical. This is due to the fact that the PSA, where Halton has options for long term agriculture, is comprised of land in Milton and Halton Hills. The rural area of Burlington is part of the Greenbelt and therefore subject to established land use policies in the Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment Plans. These areas will be important in implementing a long term agricultural strategy to support a successful industry but not in the development of policy for the PSA.

Both Milton and Halton Hills have commented on the Sustainable Halton Plan process. At a meeting on August 18, 2008, Milton Council passed a resolution endorsing a set of first principles upon which the Town would be assessing the Sustainable Halton growth concepts. There is no mention of agriculture in these “first principles”.

The Town of Halton Hills held a special Council meeting on September 24, 2008, to consider the Sustainable Halton Growth Concepts. In receiving the report, Council passed Resolution 2008-0193 in which they specifically addressed agriculture. The first reference was in association with the potential expansion of Georgetown in which they stated that the preferred scale of expansion for mixed use residential development for Georgetown during



the period of 2021 -2031 “be not greater than a magnitude of 20,000 estimated persons”. In doing so Council endorsed a resolution that contained the following comment about agriculture:

“The expanded urban envelope be assessed on the basis of minimizing its impacts to the agricultural lands adjacent to the existing Georgetown Urban Area⁷.”

The resolution went on to address agriculture generally:

“AND FURTHER THAT the Region consider the development of an Agricultural Strategy that complements the land use planning framework set out in the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Regional and local Official Plans in order to support the continuing role of the agricultural industry in Halton⁸.”

4.5 Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC)

HAAC has been an integral part of the Sustainable Halton process since its inception. In Phase 1, ongoing discussions with HAAC informed the process. In Phase 2, HAAC assisted in formulating the criteria for the LEAR, commented on scoring and provided input as the LEAR was conducted and finalized.

As part of Phase 3, HAAC considered the future of agriculture in Halton and the strategy required for it to be successful. HAAC recognized the importance of maintaining an agricultural sector in Halton and supported an ongoing commitment to long term agriculture. However in doing so the Committee emphasized the importance of creating circumstances to support economical viability of agriculture in the Region. HAAC stressed the importance of ongoing Regional support to ensure that the tools are in place to allow operations to be successful and to assist farmers in dealing with the challenges of farming in urbanizing areas.

4.6 Principles of Good Planning

Finally, in developing planning policies for Halton to 2031, the principles of good planning must be implemented. These principles, clearly articulated in the Regional Official Plan, are fundamental to the Sustainable Halton process. Maintaining a balance between growth and sustainability is fundamental to building a healthy Region. Balance is achieved by ensuring that the proper mix of land uses continues and, as articulated in report B4 in 1991, agriculture is part of that balance. The vision expressed in the existing Official Plan, based on sustainable development and landform permanence, of which agriculture is a fundamental part, achieves this balance. Including policies to support a sustainable agricultural presence in Halton implements the principles of good planning.

5 Conclusions

Based on the assessment done in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of Sustainable Halton, the conclusion regarding the management of the agricultural resource is that the ongoing vision

⁷ Resolution 2008-0193 Town of Halton Hills. Attached as Appendix 3

⁸ Ibid.



of the Region as implemented in the Regional Official Plan continues to be appropriate and achievable.

We have to preserve valuable agricultural farmlands in Halton because agriculture has a permanent place in Halton's economy and farmlands will be part of Halton's permanent landscape.

Answers to the outstanding questions posed as part of the Phase 1 and 2 of Sustainable Halton confirm this conclusion and provide the basis for an agricultural strategy for the Region.

Should a permanent agricultural area be designated in the PSA?

The Region does not have the legislative authority to create a permanent agricultural preserve and must work with existing legislation to manage land use. The Region should use the tools available to it, to encourage a sustainable agricultural presence in the PSA. The PSA is comprised of prime agricultural lands, is home to an established agricultural industry and qualifies as a prime agricultural area. Only a portion of it is required to accommodate the growth projected for Halton to 2031. Given that agriculture has always been an essential component of the Region's goal of sustainable development and landform permanence, policies should be strengthened to support and protect the agricultural resource for future generations.

What tools are required to support a viable agricultural sector?

If there is to be an ongoing agricultural sector in Halton it is absolutely essential for farmers to be able to operate efficiently in conditions that maximize economic returns. Good financial returns are critical to encourage operators to continue to farm, to secure the investment required to farm successfully and to attract young operators to the area.

Agricultural economics are challenging. They are impacted by provincial, national and international factors that are beyond the ability of the Region to address. However, there are many things the Region can do to create an environment that is supportive of agriculture. A comprehensive Regional strategy implementing tools to support agriculture should be established.

What policies are required to ensure that agriculture can co-exist harmoniously with an enhanced NHS and protected aggregate resources?

Agriculture is part of the natural heritage system and should be acknowledged as such. A fundamental principle behind the proposed expansion of the NHS is to create linkages between natural heritage areas. These linkages are often on agricultural land and do not contain features that require special protection. Normal farm practices can proceed in harmony with the natural function. However the perception of some in the agricultural community is that when a NHS designation is applied, it negatively impacts the flexibility to run their operation. There is also sometimes a public perception associated with the NHS designation that the designated area should be "no touch" areas.

These perceptions and the associated burden they place on farmers must be addressed, and policies and procedures developed to allow agriculture to proceed unfettered. Farmers' contributions to the maintenance of NHS features should be acknowledged and steps taken



to address the perceptions both of the agricultural community and the public about interactions between NHS lands and agricultural operations. Conservation Halton has established an Agricultural Liaison Committee to discuss mutual areas of interest with the agricultural community. This Committee can assist in maintaining a good working relationship between farmers and environmental groups and addressing issues of concern.

Where linkages and corridors are proposed that do not include ecological features, they should be differentiated on any mapping with clear notation that agricultural uses are permitted as of right. In these areas the right to farm should be vigorously upheld.

Generally, the areas identified as aggregate resources coincide with prime agricultural land. As the aggregate policies are developed there should be consideration of how they will interact with agricultural policies. The concept of rehabilitation is integral to aggregate policies but the reality is that it rarely happens. Steps should be taken to address this and other potential conflicts between aggregate extraction and agriculture.

How should the relationship between agriculture in the Greenbelt and in the PSA be enhanced?

Although the land inside the Greenbelt is generally not of the same quality as the agricultural land in the PSA, there are prime agricultural areas within the Protected Countryside designation of the Greenbelt. Prime agricultural areas in the Greenbelt as shown on **Map 2** should be designated as "Prime Agricultural" and policies implemented to protect these areas for agriculture and to enhance functional and economic connections between agriculture in and outside the Greenbelt.

How should other rural uses be addressed?

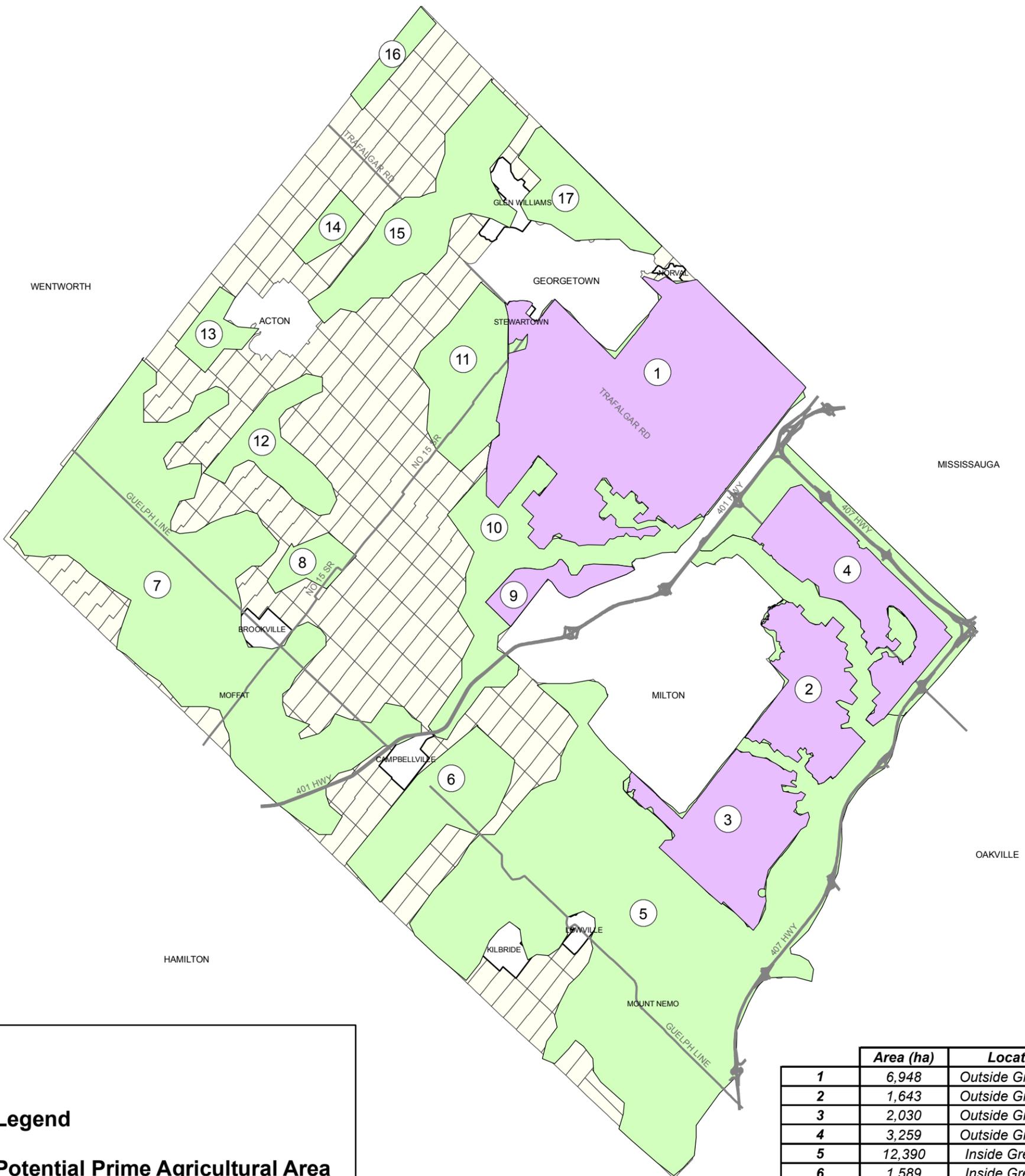
Only uses that support, retain or add value to agricultural operations should be permitted in prime agricultural areas. All other bona fide rural uses should be located on rural land that does not have value for agriculture. Non rural uses must be required to locate in settlement areas. Creation and maintenance of firm urban boundaries and strong land use policies are fundamental to the well-being of the agricultural sector.

Is there an optimal size for an agricultural area?

The issue of viability in relation to size is complex. Agriculture is comprised of many different forms of production that occur on varying parcel sizes. More important to viable production is an integral agricultural area where the right to farm is vigorously upheld, conflicting uses are not permitted, agricultural services are accessible, appropriate infrastructure is available and there is unfettered access to land.

A more appropriate question than how large should the area be, is how large an area can be retained for agriculture. The answer to this question comes from the identification of prime agricultural land and areas, the analysis done to determine land area required to accommodate growth and the decisions on the location of that area based on sound planning principles. Working with these variables, and given that the entire PSA qualifies as prime agricultural land, the area that is best suited to long term agriculture should be identified based on the following principles:





Legend

Potential Prime Agricultural Area

- Primary Study Area
- Greenbelt

Rural Area

-



	Area (ha)	Location
1	6,948	Outside Greenbelt
2	1,643	Outside Greenbelt
3	2,030	Outside Greenbelt
4	3,259	Outside Greenbelt
5	12,390	Inside Greenbelt
6	1,589	Inside Greenbelt
7	7,747	Inside Greenbelt
8	396	Inside Greenbelt
9	474	Outside Greenbelt
10	2,482	Inside Greenbelt
11	1,493	Inside Greenbelt
12	932	Inside Greenbelt
13	403	Inside Greenbelt
14	301	Inside Greenbelt
15	2,118	Inside Greenbelt
16	315	Inside Greenbelt
17	1,033	Inside Greenbelt

Note: Natural Heritage System not accounted for

March 23, 2009

MAP 2 POTENTIAL PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREAS BASED ON CRITERIA OF 250HA

**SUSTAINABLE HALTON PHASE 3
AN AGRICULTURAL COUNTRYSIDE VISION**



- infrastructure requirements,
- transportation routes,
- servicing,
- input from local municipalities,
- minimizing conflicting uses,
- optimum location for employment lands,
- linking residential and employment areas, and
- building complete, integrated communities.

How can permanency be achieved?

Land use policies alone will not ensure agricultural permanency. The Planning Act does not provide municipalities with the tools required to implement absolute permanency. However planning controls, applied in conjunction with other tools can be effective. Strong, effective economic, environmental, social, physical and servicing policies can create a positive environment for agriculture that will support permanency. To achieve this, working with the Local Municipalities and the agricultural community, a comprehensive regional agricultural strategy should be implemented.

6 Challenges

The main threat to agriculture in the Golden Horseshoe has always been encroaching urban development. The resultant speculative land values and uncertainty associated with the industry's future have constantly worked against long term permanence. The Province acknowledged the need to create more permanence and certainty for agriculture in the creation of the Greenbelt and in the establishment of firm growth targets. Halton can build on this approach by implementing rigorous polices to support a sustainable agricultural presence on prime agricultural land supported by a strategy to support agriculture generally.

In creating the Greenbelt, the Province balanced a number of competing forces and in doing so did not capture the best of Halton's agricultural resource. Implementation of the Growth Plan provides an opportunity for Halton to address this oversight. This opportunity is enhanced by more rigorous Provincial policies on settlement boundaries. By establishing long term growth targets and settlement boundaries to accommodate them, the Province has created certainty about development to 2031. By looking beyond that and creating a mature state vision, Halton can extend that certainty.

Although the Growth Plan has created more certainty about future development patterns there are some unknowns that could still impact the integrity of the agricultural area in Halton. Provincial and interregional transportation plans have proposed new routes through Halton. These routes have the potential to impact prime agricultural areas. Protection of agricultural land should be a primary consideration when transportation corridors are being identified.

Creation of a sustainable agricultural presence is reasonable and timely. Throughout the consultation that has occurred as part of the Sustainable Halton exercise, the fundamental principle that agriculture should continue to have a strong presence in Halton was



undisputed. The questions raised focused on where, how and if this could be achieved. The Region's existing Official Plan vision of an ongoing agricultural presence was not challenged. As noted, the options identified to accommodate population and employment growth leave large areas of agricultural land untouched. If a stand is not taken now and support for an ongoing viable agricultural presence given, the opportunity to do so will be lost. The Region has a strong, consistent record, of recognizing the value of the agricultural lands within its boundaries. The existing Official and Strategic Plans contain goals supporting the sector and protecting the resource for future generations. These goals are an essential component of a sustainable community.

Achieving the goal of maintaining a vibrant ongoing agricultural sector will not be easy. Maintaining a sustainable agricultural presence in the PSA must be implemented through a comprehensive strategy developed with input from the agricultural community and designed to provide strong support for farmers. Members of HAAC have spoken of the frustrations of farming in an area where:

- services are declining or nonexistent;
- there is a perception that environmental controls are being implemented resulting in more work and less productive area;
- increasing volumes of traffic make the business of farming difficult;
- there is a lack of rural infrastructure;
- non agricultural residents complain about agricultural procedures;
- if there is an interface between agricultural and urban land use, the interests of urban residents take precedence; and
- urban regulations impede or complicate the ability to farm.

Despite these issues, HAAC has indicated it will support policies that require an ongoing sustainable agricultural presence in Halton. This support is conditional on the Region implementing a strategy to address these and other issues and to support agriculture by establishing the conditions required to operate efficiently.

The issues of economics, is one that must be addressed up front. While it is critical to ensure that circumstances support profitability, economics should not be accepted as justification for re-designating prime agricultural land. Economic downturns in the agricultural economy, inefficiencies of specific operators or changes in specific circumstances are not justification for reclassifying land. Prime agricultural land is a limited, non renewable resource which accounts for less than 5% of the Canadian land base. Even if it is not required at the present time; there is a downturn in the agricultural economy; or the current owner is not motivated to farm; there is a public responsibility to preserve the resource for future generations.

The Region has an obligation to manage this non renewable, limited resource and preserve the ability to grow crops. The future is uncertain and the ability to produce food is fundamental to life. If the Region of Niagara had not had the foresight to implement and enforce planning controls to preserve land along the Niagara bench when the grape sector was struggling financially after the North American free trade agreement and there was pressure to develop the land, the flourishing Niagara wine industry would not have developed. Unlike other economic activities, agricultural is dependent on land to survive. If there is no productive land, there is no agriculture.



In the past in Ontario, the policies for the protection of agricultural land were weakened by Provincial policies stating that land could be taken out of the agricultural designation if it was required for growth. Applications could be justified on the basis that the demand was there. Over time, the Province has addressed these weaknesses and in implementing the Growth Plan they have removed this argument as justification for re-designation of agricultural land outside of settlement areas in the Golden Horseshoe. By setting growth targets and requiring a comprehensive planning process to meet these targets, the Province has established a process that should result in firm boundaries, until 2031. This should provide some certainty for farmers and an opportunity to work with them to create circumstances where farming can be secure, profitable and successful.

7 Recommendations

Based on the evaluations contained in the Phase 1 and 2 reports, the review of the evaluation context within which an agricultural strategy should be formulated, public input received, discussions with the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee, and input from the Working Group for Sustainable Halton, the following recommendations are presented as the basis for a regional strategy to support agriculture.

1. To achieve Halton's goal of creating a sustainable, healthy community, the Region's established position of supporting agriculture as a pillar of landform permanence should be continued and strengthened.
2. A sustainable agricultural presence should be maintained in Halton. Enactment of strong, effective planning policies that are implemented on a consistent and rigorous basis and that provide farmers with flexibility to operate is essential if an ongoing agricultural presence is to be maintained in Halton.
3. To the extent possible, the agricultural area should include lands throughout the PSA that support different types of production.
4. The greenhouse and nursery sector has a significant presence in Halton. Areas where these activities occur should be protected as prime agricultural areas.
5. To ensure that potential benefits of the Greenbelt are captured and linkages created, the agricultural area designated in the PSA should be in close proximity or contiguous with the Greenbelt. Strong linkages should be established and maintained.
6. Regionally significant specialty crop production was identified in the PSA and the lands where it is occurring should be incorporated in the prime agricultural area. However, given that the Province has not established a process for evaluating and designating specialty crop areas, designating specialty crop area at this time is premature. The areas where production is occurring are scattered and can be appropriately managed through an agricultural designation.



7. The area east of Milton along the Eight Line and Trafalgar Road, exhibits characteristics of a specialty crop area and should be part of the agricultural designation. However the fragmented nature of the land base may make the long term survival of agriculture in this area challenging.
8. The area south of Milton, which scored well in the LEAR evaluation, could be impacted by potentially conflicting uses including the existing golf course, the Halton waste management facility and potential development around the rail line. However, because of the value of the resource in this area and the potential for linkages with the Greenbelt, priority should be given to maintaining an agricultural presence in this area.
9. The Halton Hills area south and west of Georgetown, has good potential to sustain ongoing agricultural uses. To support this potential, the integrity of the area needs to be protected. Interfaces with urban development should be minimized and fragmentation of agricultural areas avoided.
10. Although not as extensive as in the PSA, there are prime agricultural areas in the Greenbelt. These areas should be designated as Prime Agricultural to reinforce their importance to agricultural production.
11. All areas within the PSA not required to accommodate the growth mandated by the Province should be designated Prime Agricultural.
12. Regulations protecting the farmer's right to operate within a flexible framework, should be enacted and rigorously implemented. A specific designation should be applied to areas where farming can proceed unimpeded without detracting from the natural function the area performs. NHS designations proposed to create corridors and linkages in the PSA, which are not related to specific features including watercourses, should be removed. If the Prime Agricultural designation is changed, then appropriate controls would be applied to protect the linkage or corridor function.
13. Where there is a measurable negative impact on the ability to farm because of the NHS, consideration should be given to compensating the farmer.
14. In selecting areas for growth, the findings of the LEAR Evaluation should be considered and the highest ranked areas should be designated as Prime Agricultural Areas. Growth should be directed to areas with lower scores. Potential conflicts with urban development should be considered and interfaces between agriculture and urban development managed accordingly.
15. A Regional Economic Development Strategy to support agriculture should be developed and implemented. This should include programs to encourage businesses that support agriculture.
16. To support an ongoing, viable agricultural sector, a comprehensive set of tools is required.
17. Strong, rigorously implemented planning policies coupled with economic development policies that support agriculture will provide the foundation required to support ongoing agricultural production in Halton.



18. Food security is an important goal for a sustainable community. Maintaining a viable agricultural sector is fundamental to this sustainability.
19. In planning for new provincial or inter regional transportation routes, the impact on, or potential fragmentation of prime agricultural areas should be minimized.
20. A capital program to provide infrastructure supportive of agriculture should be part of the support framework for agriculture. Key to the program should be access to adequate water, appropriate drainage works and farm friendly transportation links.

Fundamentally, if implemented, the above recommendations would result in an agricultural policy that is consistent with provincial policy and implements the Region's vision of sustainability and landform permanence that includes agriculture to 2031. However these recommendations do more than just preserve a vision to 2031. Inherent in the recommendations is the goal to create a sustainable agricultural presence in Halton.

The mature state vision for Halton is one where the components deemed to be essential to a healthy community have a permanent presence. A viable agriculture sector is one of these components, an essential element of a sustainable region and part of an ongoing balance between urban and rural development.

The time is right to take a strong position on the sustaining a viable agricultural presence in Halton. The fundamental principles of the Provincial Growth Plan echo the policies in the Halton Official Plan that define healthy communities as a bundle of land uses, one of which is agriculture.

8 Agricultural Strategy

8.1 Achieving Sustainability – An Agricultural Strategy

In taking the step of promoting an ongoing presence for agriculture, the Region must support farming with a strategy to assist farmers. This strategy must be multi-faceted and must be focused on ensuring agriculture can provide a good economic return, that the "right to farm" is rigorously upheld, farmers are compensated for acting as environmental stewards and protected from land use conflicts that make farming difficult. Ideally it would be supported by all levels of government through integrated and coordinated policies. Unfortunately, while there are many programs to support agriculture, there is no integrated and coordinated policy for supporting agriculture at the provincial or federal levels. However there are elements which the Region can build upon to create its own strategy.

The essential elements of the strategy include:

- Planning policies;
- An economic development strategy;
- Protection of farmers' right to farm;
- Supportive infrastructure;
- Protection from conflicting uses;



- Flexible value added /value retention policies;
- Innovative tax policies;
- Farm friendly environmental controls;
- Education about agriculture and its contribution to healthy communities;
- Local food programs;
- Marketing and promotion of local agricultural products;
- Access to land;
- Reasonable development controls;
- An agricultural facilitator;
- Reduced development charges;
- Venture capital for innovative agriculture;
- Support for new, young and immigrant farmers;
- Agriculturally related employment programs;
- Support for partnerships to harness new energy sources including co-generation;
- Compensation for environmental stewardship and wildlife crop damage;
- Provision to allow processing of bio solids;
- Realistic pesticide controls;
- Succession planning; and,
- Ongoing consultation with the farming community.

Planning Policies

There are two types of planning policies required to support agriculture. Primarily policies are required to designate agricultural land, set the boundaries for the designation, limit the permitted uses and prohibit conversion of land for non agricultural purposes. As part of those policies, the interaction with the NHS and aggregate resources should be addressed.

Research indicates that where a municipality has strong policies to protect agricultural land that are rigorously and consistently applied, there is more stability in the agricultural sector. Farmers are more comfortable making investments, there is more diversity in production and the types of production that take a number of years to develop (e.g. fruit) are more prevalent.

NHS policies must acknowledge the special status of existing agriculture uses under Section 2.1 of the PPS and minimize potential negative impacts of the NHS designation on active farming operations. Policies supporting retention of viable agricultural operations and protection of NHS features should be mutually supportive. There should be a clear differentiation between heritage features and enhanced areas and linkages where agriculture can proceed as of right.

Aggregate policies must encourage partnerships with agriculture so designated areas remain under cultivation unless or until required for extraction. Rehabilitation requirements should be rigorous.

Planning policies should address the interface between agriculture and other uses. These policies should reinforce that on agricultural lands and in proximate areas, the right to farm takes precedence. Setbacks and separations should be established from lot boundaries, not farm buildings and should be imposed on the non agricultural land.



Flexibility to allow value added or value retentive uses in association with agricultural operations should be included in policies.

Economic Development Strategy

Halton should establish an economic development strategy that is specific to agriculture. Working with the agricultural community, initiatives that will support agriculture as both inputs (services) and outputs (distribution storage, connections to market) should be implemented. An inventory of agriculturally related businesses should be done, gaps identified and programs put in place to address the gaps. Halton Farm Fresh is a program which supports agriculture and which can be a base for expanding programming to support other elements of agriculture.

Protection of Farmers' "Right to Farm"

The Farming and Food Production Protection Act is provincial legislation that was enacted to protect the rights of farmers. It defines normal farm practices and protects the farmers' rights to carry them out. When conflicts arise, either with municipal planning controls or with neighbouring property owners, there is a conflict resolution process that can be implemented. If the conflict is not resolved through this process, a hearing can be convened.

The Region should establish its own "right to farm" policy to assist farmers and protect them from nuisance complaints. This policy should be the first level of protection for farmers and should support them if they need to access the provincial process.

The Region's policy should be designed to be proactive. Planning controls that are being considered should be reviewed within the context of the 'right to farm' policy and vetted through the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee. Development applications on proximate lands should be reviewed to flag potential conflicts. The policy should be widely circulated to raise public awareness of standard farm practices and to emphasize that they are permitted and encouraged as part of the Region's support of the agricultural sector.

Succession Planning

One of the biggest potential negative impacts for the future of farming is the aging farm population. Unless new, younger operators enter the business, it will be difficult to sustain a permanent agricultural presence in Halton.

The problem is multi faceted. Unless there is a connection to farming through personal affiliations, potential operators may not be aware of the opportunities associated with agriculture. Even if they are interested or have a background in agriculture, the cost of setting up an operation is prohibitive, especially in an area such as Halton where land prices are high.

There are a number of ways the Region can help address this problem. Simply raising the profile of agriculture and publicizing the opportunities associated with it will help improve the understanding of opportunities in Halton. Partnerships with the farm community can be formed to identify employment opportunities and assist with connecting farmers and potential employees. This could be done in conjunction with



social programs, retraining initiatives, co-op placements or mentoring arrangements. Various regional agencies should be involved in identifying opportunities.

Other organizations including the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) have programs to assist with succession planning. Opportunities to partner with these agencies for Halton specific program could be explored. Support could be as basic as linking operators with required expertise, more hands on by providing expertise to prepare business plans or organizing mentorship programs or comprehensive programs to facilitate access to rental land or capital.

Supportive Infrastructure

The Region should develop policies addressing the implementation of a capital improvement plan to provide infrastructure supportive of agriculture. In developing this plan the agricultural community should be consulted to identify what infrastructure would be helpful and where it should be installed. Examples of infrastructure that should be considered include wider shoulders on roads to allow movement of farm equipment independent of other traffic, drainage works, provision of three phase power, provision of water for irrigation and livestock, appropriate facilities for managing agricultural waste and ditching that facilitates the operation of tile drains. An ongoing capital program should be implemented, reviewed and updated on an annual basis in consultation with HAAC and appropriate agencies including Conservation Halton.

Agriculture should be acknowledged as an element of the Regional economy and a source of employment on lands already appropriately designated. The agricultural sector provides employment and contributes significantly to the regional economy. Therefore it is appropriate and justified to invest in infrastructure to support this employment sector. Community improvement plans should be investigated as a mechanism for funding such improvements.

Flexible Value Added /Value Retention Policies

In the 1990's Halton undertook a study regarding accessory uses that should be permitted in conjunction with agriculture. Planning controls at the regional and local levels were amended to allow flexibility for farmers. This approach should be continued and updated to ensure that it is sufficiently flexible to provide the support needed. The value added and value retention uses should be permitted both on farm and on independent lots in the agricultural area. However the policies must be rigorous in ensuring that only bona fide, agriculturally related uses that support the industry are permitted. In reviewing and updating the policies, consultations should be initiated with MPAC to ensure that assessments and tax classifications are not punitive.

In addition to accessory uses, uses required to service agriculture must also be permitted and encouraged in the agricultural area. Services such as abattoirs, seed companies, equipment dealers, grain elevators, packing houses, and distribution centres all support the sector. Integrated economic development and planning programs should be developed to encourage and manage these associated uses.



Innovative Tax Policies

The agricultural tax rebate program is supportive of agriculture but since financial responsibility for it was downloaded to local municipalities, it is often viewed negatively by municipalities. This perception should be corrected. Farmers pay at the standard residential rate for the farm house and 1 acre of land, and studies have shown that agricultural land use is not a large consumer of services and therefore is a net contributor to municipal tax revenue.

Qualifying for the agricultural tax rebate is predicated on generating in excess of \$7500 in gross farm receipts per annum. This rate is very low which can lead to abuses by land speculators who may rent land from year to year, produce a low value crop such as hay and not bother to maintain agricultural infrastructure such as tile drainage. Conversely, the impetus to qualify for the agricultural tax rate brings land into production and makes rental land available to operators who cannot afford or do not want to purchase land.

There are opportunities to use tax policies more creatively to support agriculture. If to qualify for tax reductions a required minimum level of production was imposed and a time frame of multiple years attached to it, there would be more certainty associated with the land supply. There would be incentive to improve land or maintain infrastructure. The cost effectiveness of growing crops that take multiple years to bring to production would be improved.

Numerous farm agencies have been lobbying to have the property tax issues addressed. Halton could establish an approach which supports their goals and work with these agencies in lobbying the provincial government for change.

Farm Friendly Environmental Controls

The potential impact of NHS policies and responses to mitigate these impacts, have been discussed elsewhere in this report. In addition to municipal regulations there are other environmental controls that impact farmers. Over time, legislation such as the Nutrient Management Act, have significantly impacted farmers both by reducing the area available for production, increasing paper work and complicating the business of farming. The implications of new legislation addressing issues such as the Source Water Protection and Species at Risk are of concern to farmers. In response to this, there are several possible solutions that could assist.

Rationalization of the processes associated with various pieces of legislation should be undertaken. One agency with a strong understanding of the agricultural industry such as OMAFRA should take the lead on working with farmers to implement the programs. A funded mechanism such as environmental farm plans could be used to simplify and reduce the work load for farmers.

Many environmental features enjoyed by the public are located on agricultural land. Farmers are the stewards of the rural countryside. Compensation programs similar to those in place for land owners with provincially significant wetlands on their properties could be implemented to acknowledge this contribution of farmers to the public well being. A pilot project to provide this form of compensation (the Alternative Land Use



System (ALUS)) is being undertaken in Norfolk County, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island and could be a model.

The expansion of NHS areas and enhancement of linkages and corridors increases the amount of wildlife that can move through the rural area. This can have an impact on crops and livestock through crop damage and disruption of livestock. These impacts should be considered when natural areas are being considered and provision made to reduce the damage or provide compensation.

As well as preserving rural landscape and providing habitat for plant and animal species, the agricultural area contributes to environmental sustainability in other ways. The Region has an ongoing program of recycling processed waste on farmland that provides a safe, regulated means of managing waste.

Education about Agriculture and its Contribution to Healthy Communities

To fully appreciate the contribution of farmers to societal well being, education of the public is required. To develop a better understanding of where our food comes from, how agriculture works, what support is needed to make it successful and opportunities to become involved in the industry, public awareness campaigns are essential. Halton can contribute to this through public health, education and social programs.

Local Food Programs

Awareness of food security issues and the importance of local food supplies are growing. In response to this trend, Halton could lead by example by implementing local food programs for all public institutions. This should be done in consultation with the agricultural sector to ensure programs are implemented in a way that benefits local producers.

Halton's local "Farm Fresh" program has been successfully operating for a number of years to connect consumers with producers. This program should be expanded to increase its visibility and capture the growing local food movement.

Access to Land

Access to land is a problem for producers in the Golden Horseshoe. Land values are usually driven by speculation and far exceed productive value. In response to this, many operations in the area occur on rental land. Short term or insecure lease arrangements make these arrangements tenuous which impacts the type of production that occurs. Halton should investigate opportunities for making public land available in long term arrangements for agricultural production. The Region should consider use of various techniques to encourage long term, secure rental arrangement and consider establishment of a fund to acquire significant agricultural land and make it available to farmers at a reasonable rate, on a long term basis.

The Ontario Farmland Trust was created to address the issues associated with long term management of agricultural land. The Trust has done extensive research on various approaches to securing agricultural land including the registration of easement, transfer of development rights and public ownership. Consultation with this group should be



undertaken to determine if there is an opportunity to undertake pilot projects in Halton to increase access to land for operators.

Reasonable Development Controls

When development controls are implemented at the regional or local level they should be reviewed in the context of impact on agricultural operations. The nature of agricultural operations is such that controls that apply to urban properties may be unreasonable and unnecessary on agricultural properties. There may be implications for agricultural operators that are not immediately apparent. Coordination between different municipalities and consultation with farmers can simplify the process and make the process of doing business easier.

An Agricultural Facilitator

An agricultural facilitator charged with the responsibility for assisting the agricultural sector in conducting its business should be established. This position would be responsible for assisting farmers in working through approval processes, monitoring programs and by-laws to ensure they are friendly to agriculture and representing the agricultural community at the Region. This is the position farmers would rely on for all interaction with the Region, that would identify and promote agriculturally related economic development opportunities, work with HAAC and champion the cause of agriculture at the Region.

Reduced Development Charges

There are a number of jurisdictions in Ontario that waive development charges for agriculture. Adopting this policy would put Halton farmers on equal footing with operators in areas where agriculture is exempt from development charges and send a message that the Region supports agriculture. For operations such as greenhouse and nursery, the economic value of reduced development charges can be very significant and make Halton a more attractive place to invest and farm.

Venture Capital for Innovative Agriculture

The capital cost of establishing an agricultural operation in Halton is onerous. While the Region is not expected to become a banker, facilitating access to capital is a function the Region could undertake. This could be done in a number of ways.

Facilitating partnerships between new operators and land owners could be undertaken. Approvals could be facilitated to ensure there is no issue if financing is applied for. Programs to create agriculturally ready land, similar to programs to establish business parks could be considered. Innovative tax policies and tax incentives could be used to attract and support farmers and operators of agriculturally related businesses.

Support for New Farmers

Halton can support agriculture by adopting a farmer friendly approach to doing business. This should extend to assisting new operators enter and stay in the business. Steps should be taken to ensuring that new operators are aware of and have a chance to participate on HAAC. Currently there are programs in the province to assist new farmers



to get into the business. Halton could consider partnering with these groups to implement the program in the Region. As noted earlier a program to acquire and make public land available for farmers on a reasonable and long term basis could be implemented.

Agriculturally Related Employment Programs

Securing reliable employees for farm operations can be challenging. The work is often physically hard and seasonal, with low pay. Many potential workers are unable to get to the work place because of the remote locations and lack of transit. Steps should be taken to develop programs to overcome these obstacles and link potential employers and employees in the agricultural sector.

In response to lack of local workers, farmers often participate in programs that bring in off shore workers. Access to these programs requires on farm accommodation and services for the foreign workers. The Region could assist farmers involved in the program by ensuring planning controls allow the amenities required for the workers and that appropriate services are available.

Support for Partnerships to Harness New Energy Sources, Co-generation

Agriculture both generates and uses large amounts of energy. Partnerships and programs that allow this energy to be captured and utilized can be effective and support agricultural operations.

Specific types of agriculture such as greenhouse production, which benefit from locations close to large urban centres, are very energy intensive. Opportunities for partnerships to use alternative sources of energy, contribute energy back into the grid and reduce costs, and can be very helpful to these operations. Programs such as capturing waste heat from landfills or allowing the production of biogas in agricultural areas can benefit and attract operators.

Facilities such as anaerobic digestors are being encouraged by government agencies in conjunction with agricultural operations. These facilities have the dual benefit of dealing with bio waste in an environmentally sustainable way and generating an alternative source of energy. OMAFRA has issued guidelines to assist municipalities in accommodating these facilities. Regional and local regulations need to be flexible to accommodate these types of innovative technology and allow the resultant partnership to happen.

Increasingly, the rural area is becoming the home for alternative energy production including wind and solar. These can be an alternative source of income for farmers but can also impact production. Policies to manage these facilities, protect the rights of farmers, and identify appropriate locations which protect the integrity of prime agricultural areas, need to be considered.

Realistic Pesticide Controls

There is an ongoing trend to impose urban controls on rural areas without a thorough assessment of whether they are required, appropriate or have negative impacts. Imposition of pesticide controls is an example of this. Unlike the urban home owner, the use of herbicides by farmers is rigorously controlled. Operators must be licensed to apply



them and must upgrade this licensing on an ongoing basis. Application of the herbicides is scientifically controlled and monitored to avoid impacts. Imposing restrictions that are not sensitive to the needs of the agricultural community is inappropriate. Failure to control noxious weeds that negatively impact production is problematic and results in a cost to the farmer.

Protection from Conflicting Uses

The Region should be rigorous in protecting farmers from conflicting uses. Uses that are not agriculturally related should not be permitted in agricultural areas. Uses that are already established must accept the impacts associated with agriculture. Off site impacts such as noise, dust, odour, hours of operation, moving of equipment and spraying of herbicides are normal bi-products of agricultural operations. Imposing controls on farmers to mitigate them creates stress, adds to the cost of doing business and negatively impacts operations. The agricultural area is for agriculture. Those who chose to live, work or recreate there must accept the impacts associated with it.

Cooperative Programs

The Region has been a strong supporter of the Greater Toronto Agricultural Action Committee since its creation in 2001. This group works to address issues associated with agriculture in the GTA and to promote the industry. Halton should continue and strengthen its commitment to this group. Halton shares many issues with the other regions in the GTA and gains strength through association. Consideration could be given to expanding the group to include Hamilton and Niagara to represent all of the Regions that are subject to the Growth Plan.

Ongoing consultation with the farming community

Finally, in implementing an effective agricultural support strategy, ongoing consultation with the agricultural sector is mandatory. Increasingly, municipal employees have little if any understanding of what is required to support a successful agricultural sector. Ongoing input from operators is required to ensure that the strategy is appropriate and effective.

Involvement of the agricultural community in decisions will have the additional benefit of strengthening the sector. Research done in the United States confirms that where farmers feel there is political support for their operations, they are more likely to stay, to make long term plans and commitments and to encourage the next generation to enter farming⁹.

8.2 Tools to Support Agriculture

In moving forward with a strategy to create a sustainable agricultural presence, there are a variety of tools that can be used. These are summarized in the attached table with comments on where they have been used, how they could be implemented and the benefits they could bring. In identifying these tools, HAAC had significant input. The tools are not presented in any order of importance and the list is not necessarily

⁹ University of Nebraska, Sustaining Agriculture in Urbanizing Counties, January 16, 2009. pg 180.



comprehensive. Some tools are appropriately implemented at the Regional level, some at the local level, some through partnerships with agricultural organizations and others will require the cooperation of senior levels of government. However a strategy should be developed, enhanced and implemented as time, commitment and finances allow. These tools should be available to all farmers in Halton regardless of their location. There should be ongoing co-ordination with the GTA AAC.

9 Summary

The three phased process of reviewing agricultural land use in Halton has confirmed that the Region's vision for its future, whereby agriculture has a sustainable presence in the Region is appropriate and consistent with approved Provincial and Regional policies. The Region's fundamental goals as articulated in the Official Plan, of achieving sustainability and landform permanence, with agriculture one of the essential components of sustainability, should be upheld to 2031 and for the long term future in Halton.

This report has laid out recommendations for managing the agricultural resource and the framework for a strategy to provide agriculture with the support it needs to remain viable and to thrive in Halton. However the Region is at a critical juncture. Agriculture has remained viable in Halton because of the nature of the resource, the tenacity of the farmers and a level of support from the Region. The sector is under stress and operators are discouraged. Land ownership is changing and there is pessimism about the future. A commitment to implementing a strong and comprehensive strategy to support the sector is required now, if the goal of having a viable agricultural presence in the Region is to be realized. Given the importance of agriculture to sustainability, quality of life and food security, moving forward with this strategy quickly and effectively is critical.



Tools to Support Agriculture Summary Table

This table is a starting point to be expanded and enhanced with input from other government agencies, farm organizations and farmers.

LIST OF ACRONYMS:

HAAC Halton Agriculture Advisory Committee
 GTAAC Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee
 CA Conservation Authority
 OFA Ontario Federation of Agriculture
 AAFC Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

HFA Halton Federation of Agriculture
 NEC Niagara Escarpment Commission
 OMAFRA Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
 GTMA Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance
 OAFE Ontario Agricultural Food Education

Category	Task	Description	Tools	Precedent / Model	Jurisdiction	Lead	Partners/ Resources
Planning	Agricultural Policies	Continuation of existing approach Agricultural designation for prime land in PSA and greenbelt Permit Value added /retention uses Restrict non agricultural rural uses	Official Plan policies Zoning Site plan control	Niagara Region Waterloo Region City of Hamilton	Region Local Municipalities	Planning	HAAC GTAAC MMA
	Flexibility	Ensure policies are flexible to allow agriculturally related businesses	Policies on value added and value retention	Niagara Region Durham Region Waterloo Region City of Hamilton	Region Local Municipalities	Planning	HAAC Economic Development OMAFRA
	NHS policies	Designation applied only to significant features for rural area If linkages and corridors are shown differentiate from features	Compensation for stewardship Environmental farm plans	ALUS Norfolk County PEI Manitoba	Region Local Municipalities	Planning	CA's OFA AAFC OMAFRA HFA GTAAC
	Aggregate	Stronger rehabilitation policies	Policies			Planning	NEC



Category	Task	Description	Tools	Precedent / Model	Jurisdiction	Lead	Partners/ Resources
	Zoning	Farm friendly standards	Policies prohibiting conflicting uses Setbacks (MDS) from farm boundary not buildings	Niagara	Region Local Municipalities	Planning	OMAFRA MMA
	Development controls	Reduced requirements for agriculture operations	Site plan Development permitting		Local Municipalities	Planning	
Economic Development	Agricultural Strategy	Create specific agricultural economic development policy	Specific policy for agricultural	Niagara Hamilton Durham	Region	Economic Development	GTAAC OMAFRA Local Municipalities
	Attract new farmers	Provide support for new farmers to enter farming	Venture capital		Region Province		Farm Start
	Support new farmers	Foster linkages with and between farm community	Mentoring programs		Region HFA	Eco Development Agriculture facilitator	Farmers Markets Ontario
	Promote agriculture Link producers and consumers Promote local food	Enhance Farm Fresh program Promote opportunities to buy local product	Farmers markets Farm fresh	Ontario Foodland Savour Niagara	Region Province	Economic Development	Ontario Foodland GTAAC
	Expedite approvals	Position with responsibility for assisting farmers with applications and expediting agricultural related approvals	Agriculture Facilitator	Niagara Hamilton Durham	Region	Eco Dev Planning	Local Municipalities
	Identify opportunities	Inventory existing agriculture related businesses and service and identify gaps	Create directory	Niagara Kawartha & Peterborough	Region	Economic Development Agriculture Facilitator	Farm organizations GTAAC



Category	Task	Description	Tools	Precedent / Model	Jurisdiction	Lead	Partners/ Resources
	Encourage local economic links	Link agriculture to economic opportunities Food processors	Map linkages	GTAAAC Hamilton Waterloo Niagara Kawartha Peterborough	Region	Eco Development Agriculture Facilitator	Farm Fresh GTMA
	Access to land	Identify opportunities to make land available for agriculture.	Easements. Transfer of development rights		Region Province	Corporate services	Ontario Farmland Trust
Public Health	Buy local initiative	Implement buy local program for all regional operations	Local food policy	Markham	Region	Public Health	
	Farm friendly Pesticides policies	Assess impacts on agricultural operations and adjust accordingly	Farm friendly by-laws				OMAFRA HAAC
Public Works	Farm Friendly infrastructure	Roads, drainage works, ditches Water for irrigation and livestock waste disposal	Capital program Local Improvement Programs	Niagara Waterloo	Region	Public Works	CA NEC
Corporate Policy	Supportive environment for agriculture	Regional council should endorse policy supporting agriculture and the right to farm	Right to farm policy	Farm Practices Act	Region	Corporate Services	Province GTAAC
	Promote local agriculture	Raise profile and understanding of agriculture	Education packages, PR campaign	OFA OMFRA	Region		OAFE OFA OMAFRA
	Facilitate agricultural development	Set circumstances where Halton farmers do not have economic disadvantage	Reduced development charges	Niagara Essex	Region		
	Innovate tax policies	Work within existing rules to improve tax regime, lobby province for change	Reduced property taxes conditional on commitment to farm		Region Local Municipalities	Finance Planning	OFA OMAFRA Greenbelt mayors
	Coordinate with other organizations	Work with other organizations with similar goals	GTA Agricultural Action Plan				GTAAC Niagara Hamilton



APPENDIX 1

Planning Policy excerpts

Ontario Planning Legislation

2008



- 1. (1) Interpretation.**—In this Act,
- “area of employment” means an area of land designated in an official plan for clusters of business and economic uses including, without limitation, the uses listed in subsection (5), or as otherwise prescribed by regulation;
- “area of settlement” means an area of land designated in an official plan for urban uses including urban areas, urban policy areas, towns, villages, hamlets, rural clusters, rural settlement areas, urban systems, rural service centres or future urban use areas, or as otherwise prescribed by regulation;
- “committee of adjustment” means a committee of adjustment constituted under section 44;
- “First Nation” means a band as defined in the *Indian Act* (Canada);
- “land division committee” means a land division committee constituted under section 56;
- “local appeal body” means an appeal body for certain local land use planning matters, constituted under section 8.1;
- “local board” means any school board, public utility commission, transportation commission, public library board, board of park management, board of health, police services board, planning board or any other board, commission, committee, body or local authority established or exercising any power or authority under any general or special Act with respect to any of the affairs or purposes of a municipality or of two or more municipalities or portions thereof;
- “Minister” means the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing;
- “Municipal Board” means the Ontario Municipal Board;
- “prescribed” means prescribed by the regulations;
- “provincial plan” means,
- (a) the Greenbelt Plan established under section 3 of the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*,
 - (b) the Niagara Escarpment Plan established under section 3 of the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*,
 - (c) the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan established under section 3 of the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001*,
 - (d) a development plan approved under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*,
 - (e) a growth plan approved under the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, or
 - (f) a prescribed plan or policy or a prescribed provision of a prescribed plan or policy made or approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, a minister of the Crown, a ministry or a board, commission or agency of the Government of Ontario;
- “public body” means a municipality, a local board, a ministry, department, board, commission, agency or official of a provincial or federal government or a First Nation;
- “public work” means any improvement of a structural nature or other undertaking that is within the jurisdiction of the council of a municipality or a local board;
- “regulations” means regulations made under this Act;
- “residential unit” means a unit that,
- (a) consists of a self-contained set of rooms located in a building or structure,
 - (b) is used or intended for use as residential premises, and

(c) contains kitchen and bathroom facilities that are intended for the use of the unit only. 1983, c. 1, s. 1; 1989, c. 5, s. 1; 1994, c. 2, s. 40; 1994, c. 23, s. 3; 1996, c. 4, s. 1(1-3); 2002, c. 17, Sch. B, s. 1; 2004, c. 18, s. 1; 2006, c. 23, s. 1(1-4).

(2) **Limitation.**—The term “public body” in subsection (1) excludes all ministries of the Province of Ontario except the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in respect of subsections 17(24), (36) and (40), 22(7.4), 34(19), 38(4), 45(12), 51(39), (43) and (48) and 53(19) and (27). 2006, c. 23, s. 1(5).

(3) **Designation.**—Despite subsection (2), the Minister may by regulation designate any other ministry of the Province of Ontario to be a public body for the purpose of the provisions referred to in subsection (2).

(4) **Exclusion.**—The Minister may by regulation exclude any board, commission, agency or official of the Province of Ontario from the definition of “public body” set out in subsection (1) in respect of the provisions referred to in subsection (2). 1996, c. 4, s. 1(4); 2006, c. 23, s. 1(5).

(5) **Uses re “area of employment”.**—The uses referred to in the definition of “area of employment” in subsection (1) are,

- (a) manufacturing uses;
- (b) warehousing uses;
- (c) office uses;
- (d) retail uses that are associated with uses mentioned in clauses (a) to (c); and
- (e) facilities that are ancillary to uses mentioned in clauses (a) to (d). 2006, c. 23, s. 1(6).

1.0.1 Information and material to be made available to public.—Information and material that is required to be provided to a municipality or approval authority under this Act shall be made available to the public. 2006, c. 23, s. 2.

1.1 Purposes.—The purposes of this Act are,

- (a) to promote sustainable economic development in a healthy natural environment within the policy and by the means provided under this Act;
- (b) to provide for a land use planning system led by provincial policy;
- (c) to integrate matters of provincial interest in provincial and municipal planning decisions;
- (d) to provide for planning processes that are fair by making them open, accessible, timely and efficient;
- (e) to encourage co-operation and coordination among various interests;
- (f) to recognize the decision-making authority and accountability of municipal councils in planning. 1994, c. 23, s. 4.

PART I

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

2. Provincial interest.—The Minister, the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board and the Municipal Board, in carrying out their responsibilities under this Act, shall have regard to, among other matters, matters of provincial interest such as,

- (a) the protection of ecological systems, including natural areas, features and functions;
- (b) the protection of the agricultural resources of the Province;
- (c) the conservation and management of natural resources and the mineral resource base;
- (d) the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest;
- (e) the supply, efficient use and conservation of energy and water;
- (f) the adequate provision and efficient use of communication, transportation, sewage and water services and waste management systems;
- (g) the minimization of waste;
- (h) the orderly development of safe and healthy communities;
- (h.1) the accessibility for persons with disabilities to all facilities, services and matters to which this Act applies;
- (i) the adequate provision and distribution of educational, health, social, cultural and recreational facilities;
- (j) the adequate provision of a full range of housing;
- (k) the adequate provision of employment opportunities;
- (l) the protection of the financial and economic well-being of the Province and its municipalities;
- (m) the co-ordination of planning activities of public bodies;
- (n) the resolution of planning conflicts involving public and private interests;
- (o) the protection of public health and safety;
- (p) the appropriate location of growth and development; and
- (q) the promotion of development that is designed to be sustainable, to support public transit and to be oriented to pedestrians. 1994, c. 23, s. 5; 1996, c. 4, s. 2; 2001, c. 32, s. 31(1); 2006, c. 23, s. 3.

2.1 Decisions of councils and approval authorities.—When an approval authority or the Municipal Board makes a decision under this Act that relates to a planning matter, it shall have regard to,

- (a) any decision that is made under this Act by a municipal council or by an approval authority and relates to the same planning matter; and
- (b) any supporting information and material that the municipal council or approval authority considered in making the decision described in clause (a). 2006, c. 23, s. 4.

3. (1) **Policy statements.**—The Minister, or the Minister together with any other minister of the Crown, may from time to time issue policy statements that have been approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on matters relating to municipal planning that in the opinion of the Minister are of provincial interest. 1983, c. 1, s. 3(1).

(2) **Minister to confer.**—Before issuing a policy statement, the Minister shall confer with such persons or public bodies that the Minister considers have an interest in the proposed statement.

(3) **Notice.**—If a policy statement is issued under subsection (1), the Minister shall cause it to be published in *The Ontario Gazette* and shall give such further notice of it, in such manner as the Minister considers appropriate, to all members of the Assembly and to any other persons or public bodies that the Minister considers have an interest in the statement. 1994, c. 23, s. 6(1).

(4) **Idem.**—Each municipality that receives notice of a policy statement under subsection (3) shall in turn give notice of the statement to each local board of the municipality that it considers has an interest in the statement. 1983, c. 1, s. 3(4).

(5) **Policy statements and provincial plans.**—A decision of the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister of the Crown and a ministry, board, commission or agency of the government, including the Municipal Board, in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter,

- (a) shall be consistent with the policy statements issued under subsection (1) that are in effect on the date of the decision; and
- (b) shall conform with the provincial plans that are in effect on that date, or shall not conflict with them, as the case may be.

(6) **Same.**—Comments, submissions or advice affecting a planning matter that are provided by the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister or ministry, board, commission or agency of the government,

- (a) shall be consistent with the policy statements issued under subsection (1) that are in effect on the date the comments, submissions or advice are provided; and
- (b) shall conform with the provincial plans that are in effect on that date, or shall not conflict with them, as the case may be. 2006, c. 23, s. 5.

(7) **Duties of Minister unaffected.**—Except as provided in subsections (5) and (6), nothing in this section affects nor restricts the Minister in the carrying out the Minister's duties and responsibilities under this Act. 1996, c. 4, s. 3, *part*.

(8) [*Repealed* 1996, c. 4, s. 3, *part*.]

(9) [*Repealed* 1996, c. 4, s. 3, *part*.]

(10) **Review.**—The Minister shall, at least every five years from the date that a policy statement is issued under subsection (1), ensure that a review of the policy statement is undertaken for the purpose of determining the need for a revision of the policy statement. 1994, c. 23, s. 6(3), *part*.



2005

Provincial
Policy
Statement

- 1.1.3.8 Planning authorities shall establish and implement phasing policies to ensure the orderly progression of development within *designated growth areas* and the timely provision of the *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* required to meet current and projected needs.
- 1.1.3.9 A planning authority may identify a *settlement area* or allow the expansion of a *settlement area* boundary only at the time of a *comprehensive review* and only where it has been demonstrated that:
- a) sufficient opportunities for growth are not available through *intensification*, *redevelopment* and *designated growth areas* to accommodate the projected needs over the identified planning horizon;
 - b) the *infrastructure* and *public service facilities* which are planned or available are suitable for the development over the long term and protect public health and safety;
 - c) in *prime agricultural areas*:
 1. the lands do not comprise *specialty crop areas*;
 2. there are no reasonable alternatives which avoid *prime agricultural areas*; and
 3. there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in *prime agricultural areas*; and
 - d) impacts from new or expanding *settlement areas* on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the *settlement area* are mitigated to the extent feasible.

In determining the most appropriate direction for expansions to the boundaries of *settlement areas* or the identification of a *settlement area* by a planning authority, a planning authority shall apply the policies of Section 2: Wise Use and Management of Resources and Section 3: Protecting Public Health and Safety.

1.1.4 Rural Areas in Municipalities

- 1.1.4.1 In *rural areas* located in municipalities:
- a) permitted uses and activities shall relate to the management or use of resources, resource-based recreational activities, limited residential development and other rural land uses;
 - b) development shall be appropriate to the *infrastructure* which is planned or available, and avoid the need for the unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion of this *infrastructure*;
 - c) new land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities, shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*;
 - d) development that is compatible with the rural landscape and can be sustained by rural service levels should be promoted;
 - e) locally-important agricultural and resource areas should be designated and protected by directing non-related development to areas where it will not constrain these uses;

- f) opportunities should be retained to locate new or expanding land uses that require separation from other uses; and
- g) recreational, tourism and other economic opportunities should be promoted.

1.1.5 Rural Areas in Territory Without Municipal Organization

1.1.5.1 In *rural areas* located in territory without municipal organization, the focus of development activity shall be activities and land uses related to the management or use of resources and resource-based recreational activities.

1.1.5.2 The establishment of new permanent townsites shall not be permitted.

1.1.5.3 In areas adjacent to and surrounding municipalities, only development that is related to the management or use of resources and resource-based recreational activity shall be permitted unless:

- a) the area forms part of a planning area; and
- b) it has been determined, as part of a *comprehensive review*, that the impacts of growth will not place an undue strain on the *public service facilities* and *infrastructure* provided by adjacent municipalities, regions and/or the Province.

1.2 COORDINATION

1.2.1 A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach should be used when dealing with planning matters within municipalities, or which cross lower, single and/or upper-tier municipal boundaries, including:

- a) managing and/or promoting growth and development;
- b) managing natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral, and cultural heritage and archaeological resources;
- c) *infrastructure, public service facilities* and *waste management systems*;
- d) ecosystem, shoreline and watershed related issues;
- e) natural and human-made hazards; and
- f) population, housing and employment projections, based on *regional market areas*.

1.2.2 Where planning is conducted by an upper-tier municipality, the upper-tier municipality in consultation with lower-tier municipalities shall:

- a) identify, coordinate and allocate population, housing and employment projections for lower-tier municipalities. Allocations and projections by upper-tier municipalities shall be based on and reflect *provincial plans* where these exist;
- b) identify areas where growth will be directed, including the identification of nodes and the corridors linking these nodes;

2.0 WISE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

Ontario's long-term prosperity, environmental health, and social well-being depend on protecting natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral and cultural heritage and archaeological resources for their economic, environmental and social benefits.

Accordingly:

2.1 NATURAL HERITAGE

2.1.1 Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.

2.1.2 The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term *ecological function* and biodiversity of *natural heritage systems*, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among *natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features*.

2.1.3 *Development and site alteration* shall not be permitted in:

- a) *significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species;*
- b) *significant wetlands in Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E¹; and*
- c) *significant coastal wetlands.*

2.1.4 *Development and site alteration* shall not be permitted in:

- a) *significant wetlands in the Canadian Shield north of Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E¹;*
- b) *significant woodlands south and east of the Canadian Shield²;*
- c) *significant valleylands south and east of the Canadian Shield²;*
- d) *significant wildlife habitat; and*
- e) *significant areas of natural and scientific interest*

unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no *negative impacts* on the natural features or their *ecological functions*.

2.1.5 *Development and site alteration* shall not be permitted in *fish habitat* except in accordance with *provincial and federal requirements*.

2.1.6 *Development and site alteration* shall not be permitted on *adjacent lands* to the *natural heritage features and areas* identified in policies 2.1.3, 2.1.4 and 2.1.5 unless the *ecological function* of the *adjacent lands* has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no *negative impacts* on the natural features or on their *ecological functions*.

¹ Ecoregions 5E, 6E and 7E are shown on Figure 1.

² Areas south and east of the Canadian Shield are shown on Figure 1.

- 2.1.7 Nothing in policy 2.1 is intended to limit the ability of existing agricultural uses to continue.

2.2 WATER

- 2.2.1 Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the *quality and quantity of water* by:

- a) using the *watershed* as the ecologically meaningful scale for planning;
- b) minimizing potential *negative impacts*, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-*watershed* impacts;
- c) identifying *surface water features, ground water features, hydrologic functions and natural heritage features and areas* which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the *watershed*;
- d) implementing necessary restrictions on *development and site alteration* to:
 1. protect all municipal drinking water supplies and *designated vulnerable areas*; and
 2. protect, improve or restore *vulnerable* surface and ground water, *sensitive surface water features* and *sensitive ground water features*, and their *hydrologic functions*;
- e) maintaining linkages and related functions among *surface water features, ground water features, hydrologic functions and natural heritage features and areas*;
- f) promoting efficient and sustainable use of water resources, including practices for water conservation and sustaining water quality; and
- g) ensuring stormwater management practices minimize stormwater volumes and contaminant loads, and maintain or increase the extent of vegetative and pervious surfaces.

- 2.2.2 *Development and site alteration* shall be restricted in or near *sensitive surface water features and sensitive ground water features* such that these features and their related *hydrologic functions* will be protected, improved or restored.

Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches may be required in order to protect, improve or restore *sensitive surface water features, sensitive ground water features, and their hydrologic functions*.

2.3 AGRICULTURE

2.3.1 *Prime agricultural areas* shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

Prime agricultural areas are areas where *prime agricultural lands* predominate. *Specialty crop areas* shall be given the highest priority for protection, followed by Classes 1, 2 and 3 soils, in this order of priority.

2.3.2 Planning authorities shall designate *specialty crop areas* in accordance with evaluation procedures established by the Province, as amended from time to time.

2.3.3 Permitted Uses

2.3.3.1 In *prime agricultural areas*, permitted uses and activities are: *agricultural uses*, *secondary uses* and *agriculture-related uses*.

Proposed new *secondary uses* and *agriculture-related uses* shall be compatible with, and shall not hinder, surrounding agricultural operations. These uses shall be limited in scale, and criteria for these uses shall be included in municipal planning documents as recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective.

2.3.3.2 In *prime agricultural areas*, all types, sizes and intensities of *agricultural uses* and *normal farm practices* shall be promoted and protected in accordance with provincial standards.

2.3.3.3 New land uses, including the creation of lots, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

2.3.4 Lot Creation and Lot Adjustments

2.3.4.1 Lot creation in *prime agricultural areas* is discouraged and may only be permitted for:

- a) *agricultural uses*, provided that the lots are of a size appropriate for the type of agricultural use(s) common in the area and are sufficiently large to maintain flexibility for future changes in the type or size of agricultural operations;
- b) *agriculture-related uses*, provided that any new lot will be limited to a minimum size needed to accommodate the use and appropriate *sewage and water services*;
- c) *a residence surplus to a farming operation* as a result of farm consolidation, provided that the planning authority ensures that new residential dwellings are prohibited on any vacant remnant parcel of farmland created by the severance. The approach used to ensure that no new residential dwellings are permitted on the remnant parcel may be recommended by the Province, or based on municipal approaches which achieve the same objective; and
- d) *infrastructure*, where the facility or corridor cannot be accommodated through the use of easements or rights-of-way.

2.3.4.2 Lot adjustments in *prime agricultural areas* may be permitted for *legal or technical reasons*.

2.3.4.3 The creation of new residential lots in *prime agricultural areas* shall not be permitted, except in accordance with policy 2.3.4.1(c).

2.3.5 Removal of Land from Prime Agricultural Areas

2.3.5.1 Planning authorities may only exclude land from *prime agricultural areas* for:

- a) expansions of or identification of *settlement areas* in accordance with policy 1.1.3.9;
- b) extraction of *minerals, petroleum resources* and *mineral aggregate resources*, in accordance with policies 2.4 and 2.5; and
- c) limited non-residential uses, provided that:
 - 1. the land does not comprise a *specialty crop area*;
 - 2. there is a demonstrated need within the planning horizon provided for in policy 1.1.2 for additional land to be designated to accommodate the proposed use;
 - 3. there are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid *prime agricultural areas*; and
 - 4. there are no reasonable alternative locations in *prime agricultural areas* with lower priority agricultural lands.

2.3.5.2 Impacts from any new or expanding non-agricultural uses on surrounding agricultural operations and lands should be mitigated to the extent feasible.

2.4 MINERALS AND PETROLEUM

2.4.1 *Minerals* and *petroleum resources* shall be protected for long-term use.

2.4.2 Protection of Long-Term Resource Supply

2.4.2.1 *Mineral mining operations* and *petroleum resource operations* shall be protected from *development* and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact.

2.4.2.2 In areas adjacent to or in known *mineral deposits* or known *petroleum resources*, and in *significant areas of mineral potential* and *significant areas of petroleum potential*, *development* and activities which would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resources shall only be permitted if:

- a) resource use would not be feasible; or
- b) the proposed land use or development serves a greater long-term public interest; and
- c) issues of public health, public safety and environmental impact are addressed.

2.4.3 Rehabilitation

- 2.4.3.1 Rehabilitation to accommodate subsequent land uses shall be required after extraction and other related activities have ceased. Progressive rehabilitation should be undertaken wherever feasible.

2.4.4 Extraction in Prime Agricultural Areas

- 2.4.4.1 Extraction of *minerals* and *petroleum resources* is permitted in *prime agricultural areas*, provided that the site is rehabilitated.

2.5 MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES

- 2.5.1 *Mineral aggregate resources* shall be protected for long-term use.

2.5.2 Protection of Long-Term Resource Supply

- 2.5.2.1 As much of the *mineral aggregate resources* as is realistically possible shall be made available as close to markets as possible.

Demonstration of need for *mineral aggregate resources*, including any type of supply/demand analysis, shall not be required, notwithstanding the availability, designation or licensing for extraction of *mineral aggregate resources* locally or elsewhere.

- 2.5.2.2 Extraction shall be undertaken in a manner which minimizes social and environmental impacts.

- 2.5.2.3 The conservation of *mineral aggregate resources* should be promoted by making provision for the recovery of these resources, wherever feasible.

- 2.5.2.4 *Mineral aggregate operations* shall be protected from *development* and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact. Existing *mineral aggregate operations* shall be permitted to continue without the need for official plan amendment, rezoning or development permit under the *Planning Act*. When a license for extraction or operation ceases to exist, policy 2.5.2.5 continues to apply.

- 2.5.2.5 In areas adjacent to or in known *deposits of mineral aggregate resources*, *development* and activities which would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resources shall only be permitted if:

- a) resource use would not be feasible; or
- b) the proposed land use or development serves a greater long-term public interest; and
- c) issues of public health, public safety and environmental impact are addressed.

2.5.3 Rehabilitation

- 2.5.3.1 Progressive and final rehabilitation shall be required to accommodate subsequent land uses, to promote land use compatibility, and to recognize the interim nature of extraction. Final rehabilitation shall take surrounding land use and approved land use designations into consideration.
- 2.5.3.2 In parts of the Province not designated under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, rehabilitation standards that are compatible with those under the Act should be adopted for extraction operations on private lands.

2.5.4 Extraction in Prime Agricultural Areas

- 2.5.4.1 In *prime agricultural areas*, on *prime agricultural land*, extraction of *mineral aggregate resources* is permitted as an interim use provided that rehabilitation of the site will be carried out so that substantially the same areas and same average soil quality for agriculture are restored.

On these *prime agricultural lands*, complete agricultural rehabilitation is not required if:

- a) there is a substantial quantity of *mineral aggregate resources* below the water table warranting extraction, or the depth of planned extraction in a quarry makes restoration of pre-extraction agricultural capability unfeasible;
- b) other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unsuitable. The consideration of other alternatives shall include resources in areas of Canada Land Inventory Class 4 to 7 soils, resources on lands identified as *designated growth areas*, and resources on *prime agricultural lands* where rehabilitation is feasible. Where no other alternatives are found, *prime agricultural lands* shall be protected in this order of priority: *specialty crop areas*, Canada Land Inventory Classes 1, 2 and 3; and
- c) agricultural rehabilitation in remaining areas is maximized.

2.5.5 Wayside Pits and Quarries, Portable Asphalt Plants and Portable Concrete Plants

- 2.5.5.1 *Wayside pits and quarries*, *portable asphalt plants* and *portable concrete plants* used on public authority contracts shall be permitted, without the need for an official plan amendment, rezoning, or development permit under the *Planning Act* in all areas, except those areas of existing development or particular environmental sensitivity which have been determined to be incompatible with extraction and associated activities.

PLACES TO GROW

BETTER CHOICES. BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Growth Plan

for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

2006



Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

 Ontario

6. Municipalities will develop and implement official plan policies, including phasing policies, and other strategies, for *designated greenfield areas* to achieve the *intensification target* and *density targets* of this Plan.

2.2.8 Settlement Area Boundary Expansions

1. The policies in this section apply only to the expansion of a *settlement area* within a municipality.
2. A *settlement area* boundary expansion may only occur as part of a *municipal comprehensive review* where it has been demonstrated that –
 - a) sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth contained in Schedule 3, through *intensification* and in *designated greenfield areas*, using the *intensification target* and *density targets*, are not available:
 - i. within the *regional market area*, as determined by the upper- or single-tier municipality, and
 - ii. within the applicable lower-tier municipality to accommodate the growth allocated to the municipality pursuant to this plan
 - b) the expansion makes available sufficient lands for a time horizon not exceeding 20 years, based on the analysis provided for in Policy 2.2.8.2(a)
 - c) the timing of the expansion and the phasing of development within the *designated greenfield area* will not adversely affect the achievement of the *intensification target* and *density targets*, and the other policies of this Plan
 - d) where applicable, the proposed expansion will meet the requirements of the Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plans
 - e) the existing or planned infrastructure required to accommodate the proposed expansion can be provided in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner
 - f) in *prime agricultural areas*:
 - i. the lands do not comprise *specialty crop areas*
 - ii. there are no reasonable alternatives that avoid *prime agricultural areas*
 - iii. there are no reasonable alternatives on lower priority agricultural lands in *prime agricultural areas*
 - g) impacts from expanding *settlement areas* on agricultural operations which are adjacent or close to the *settlement areas* are mitigated to the extent feasible

- h) in determining the most appropriate location for expansions to the boundaries of *settlement areas*, the policies of Sections 2 (Wise Use and Management of Resources) and 3 (Protecting Public Health and Safety) of the PPS, 2005 are applied
- i) for expansions of *small cities and towns* within the *outer ring*, municipalities will plan to maintain or move significantly towards a minimum of one full-time job per three residents within or in the immediate vicinity of the small city or town.

2.2.9 Rural Areas

1. Rural *settlement areas* are key to the vitality and economic well-being of rural communities. Municipalities are encouraged to plan for a variety of cultural and economic opportunities within rural *settlement areas* to serve the needs of rural residents and area businesses.
2. Development outside of *settlement areas*, may be permitted in *rural areas* in accordance with Policy 2.2.2.1(i).
3. *New multiple lots and units for residential development* will be directed to *settlement areas*, and may be allowed in *rural areas* in site-specific locations with approved zoning or designation that permits this type of development in a municipal official plan, as of the effective date of this Plan.
4. For lands within the *Greenbelt Area*, the applicable policies in the Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plans apply.

4.2 Policies for Protecting What is Valuable

4.2.1 Natural Systems

1. Through *sub-area* assessment, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and other Ministers of the Crown, in consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders will identify natural systems for the *GCH*, and where appropriate develop additional policies for their protection.
2. For lands within the *Greenbelt Area*, all policies regarding natural systems set out in provincial plans, applicable to lands within the *Greenbelt Area*, continue to apply.
3. Planning authorities are encouraged to identify natural heritage features and areas that complement, link, or enhance natural systems.
4. Municipalities, conservation authorities, non-governmental organizations, and other interested parties are encouraged to develop a system of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails, including shoreline areas, within the *GCH* that –
 - a) clearly demarcates where public access is and is not permitted
 - b) is based on a co-ordinated approach to trail planning and development
 - c) is based on good land stewardship practices for public and private lands.
5. Municipalities are encouraged to establish an urban open space system within *built-up areas*, which may include rooftop gardens, communal courtyards, and public parks.

4.2.2 Prime Agricultural Areas

1. Through *sub-area* assessment, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and other Ministers of the Crown, in consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders, will identify *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, in the *GCH*, and where appropriate, develop additional policies for their protection.
2. For lands within the *Greenbelt Area*, all policies regarding agricultural areas set out in provincial plans, applicable to lands within the *Greenbelt Area*, continue to apply.
3. Municipalities are encouraged to maintain, improve and provide opportunities for farm-related infrastructure such as drainage and irrigation.
4. Municipalities are encouraged to establish and work with agricultural advisory committees and consult with them on decision-making related to agriculture and growth management.



greenbelt



PLAN 2005

3.1 Agricultural System

3.1.1 Description

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.1.2 Specialty Crop Area Policies

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

1. Within *specialty crop areas*, *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural, agriculture-related* and *secondary uses* are supported and permitted.
2. Lands within *specialty crop areas* shall not be redesignated in municipal official plans for non-agricultural uses, with the exception of those uses permitted in the general policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6.
3. Towns/Villages and Hamlets are not permitted to expand into *specialty crop areas*.
4. New land uses, including the creation of lots, as permitted by the policies of this Plan, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

3.1.3 Prime Agricultural Area Policies

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

1. Within *prime agricultural areas*, as identified in municipal official plans, *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural, agriculture-related* and *secondary uses* are supported and permitted.
2. *Prime agricultural areas* shall not be redesignated in municipal official plans for non-agricultural uses except for:

2.
 - a. Refinements to the prime agricultural and rural area designations, subject to the criteria identified in the municipal implementation policies of section 5.2; or
 - b. *Settlement area* expansions subject to the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4.
3. Other uses may be permitted subject to the general policies of sections 4.2 to 4.6.
4. New land uses and the creation of lots, as permitted by the policies of this Plan, and new or expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the minimum distance separation formulae.

3.1.4 Rural Area Policies

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

1. *Rural areas* support, and provide the primary locations for a range of recreational, tourism, institutional and resource-based commercial/ industrial uses. They also contain many historic highway commercial, non-farm residential and other uses which, in more recent times, would be generally directed to *settlement areas* but which are recognized as *existing uses* by this Plan and allowed to continue and expand subject to the *existing use* policies of section 4.5. Notwithstanding this policy or the policies of section 5.3, municipal official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to the types of uses permitted within *rural areas*.
2. *Rural areas* also contain many existing agricultural operations. *Existing* and new *agricultural uses* are allowed and *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural, agriculture-related* and *secondary uses* are supported and permitted.
3. *Settlement area* expansions are permitted into *rural areas*, subject to the *settlement area* policies of section 3.4.
4. Other uses may be permitted subject to the general policies of sections 4.1 to 4.6.
5. *New multiple units or multiple lots for residential dwellings*, (e.g. estate residential subdivisions and adult lifestyle or retirement communities), whether by plan of subdivision, condominium or severance, shall not be permitted in *rural areas*. Notwithstanding this policy, municipal official plans may be more restrictive than this Plan with respect to residential severances and shall provide guidance for the creation of lots within the *rural area* not addressed in this Plan. Regardless, new lots for any use shall not be created if the creation would extend or promote strip development.
6. New land uses, the creation of lots (as permitted by the policies of this Plan), and new and expanding livestock facilities shall comply with the *minimum distance separation formulae*.

3.1.5 External Connections

The Greenbelt Agricultural System is connected both functionally and economically to the prime agricultural resource lands and agri-food sector beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt.

To support the connections between the Greenbelt's Agricultural System and the prime agricultural resource areas of southern Ontario, municipalities, farming organizations, and other agencies and levels of government are encouraged to consider how activities and changes in land use, both within and abutting the Greenbelt, relate to the broader agricultural system and economy of southern Ontario and they should plan appropriately to ensure both functional and economic connections are maintained and strengthened.



HALTON REGION OFFICIAL PLAN [2006]

Regional Municipality of Halton

Office Consolidation

August 17, 2006

[Print Version Date: August 31, 2006]

REC'D - [unclear]

PART II BASIC POSITION

HALTON'S PLANNING VISION

25. Regional Council supports the notion of **sustainable development**, which "meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need." (Our Common Future, The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) Planning decisions in *Halton* will be made based on a proper balance among the following factors: protecting the *natural environment*, enhancing its economic competitiveness, and fostering a healthy, equitable society. The overall *goal* is to enhance the quality of life for all people of *Halton*.
26. *Halton* recognizes its strategic location within the Greater Toronto Area and the importance of population and employment growth to the social and economic life of its residents. *Halton* expects further urbanization and major changes to its landscape in the next decades. In this regard, *Halton* will undertake the necessary steps to ensure that growth will be accommodated in a fashion that is orderly, manageable, yet sensitive to its *natural environment*, heritage and culture. To maintain *Halton* as a desirable and identifiable place for this and future generations, certain landforms within *Halton* must be preserved permanently. This concept of **landform permanence** represents *Halton's* fundamental value in land use planning and will guide its decisions and actions on proposed land use changes accordingly.
27. In *Halton's* vision, its future landscape will have, outside the settlement areas, two classes of permanent landforms. The first class, which is meant to be maintained in their current form and extent with no or as little displacement or encroachment as possible, consists of the following:
- the Niagara Escarpment,
 - environmentally sensitive areas,
 - *wetlands*,
 - streams and valley systems, and
 - Ontario and Burlington Bay shoreline.
28. The second class of permanent landforms, to be preserved in large measures so that they will always form part of *Halton's* landscape, consists of the following:
- farms,

- countryside,
 - forested areas, and
 - other open space.
29. The concept of landform permanence will be reflected in the *goals, objectives, and policies* of this Plan. In pursuit of this concept, Regional Council will exercise its powers and authority, as permitted by legislation, and deploy its resources accordingly. Other government agencies, as well as individuals or corporations, making decisions affecting *Halton's* landscape are also encouraged to incorporate this concept.
30. Although the best means of preserving landforms is by public ownership, the *Region* believes that this is impractical or unnecessary in most cases. Instead, the preservation should be a shared value among *Halton's* residents, land owners, business sector, *development* industry and government agencies. Regional Council therefore advocates the principle of **land stewardship**--that all land owners are entitled to reasonable use and enjoyment of their land but they are also stewards of the land and should give proper regard to the long term environmental interests in proposing any land use change to their land. In its approach to making planning decisions, Council will refer to the principle of sustainable development, i.e., seeking a balance among the environmental, economic and social interests.
31. In its vision of planning for *Halton's* future, *Halton* believes in the development of **healthy communities**. A healthy community is one:
- 31(1) that fosters among the residents a state of physical, mental, social and economic well-being;
 - 31(2) where residents take part in, and have a sense of control over, decisions that affect them;
 - 31(3) that is physically so designed to minimize the stress of daily living and meet the life-long needs of its residents; and
 - 31(4) where employment, social, health, educational, recreational and cultural opportunities are accessible for all segments of the community.
32. Finally, *Halton* recognizes the importance of a sustainable and prosperous economy and the need for its businesses and employers to compete in a world economy. Towards this end, *Halton* will actively maintain, develop and expand its economic and assessment base through economic development strategies, timely provision of *infrastructure*, cost-effective delivery of services, strong fiscal management, proactive planning *policies*, and support for *development* opportunities that respond to the vision and *policies* of this Plan.

33. In summary, *Halton* will use the principle of sustainable development in making its land use decisions and it advocates the concepts of land stewardship and healthy communities, with the vision “to preserve for this and future generations a landscape that is rich, diverse, balanced and sustainable, and a society that is economically strong, equitable and caring”.

PLANNING HORIZON

34. For certain physical elements of this Plan for which incremental decision-making is practical and desirable, e.g. population forecasts and urban envelopes, the planning horizon is the year 2021.
35. For other more durable elements and the planning vision of this Plan, the horizon is far beyond the year 2021. Regional Council is cognizant of the fact that land use decisions have a permanent impact on the landscape and should be made in the context of a time frame well beyond 20 years.

HALTON AND THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

36. In preparing and adopting this Plan, the *Region* has recognized and considered carefully those Provincial plans and policies affecting *Halton*. To the extent Regional Council deems appropriate for *Halton* and on the premise that *Halton* can adopt positions and *policies* more **restrictive** than the Province, this Plan has incorporated those Provincial plans and policies currently in effect. The approval of this Plan by the Province represents its endorsement of *Halton's* approach in reflecting the Province's direction. **Parkway Belt West Plan Area*
37. The *Region* views its relationship with the Province of Ontario as encompassing the following:
- 37(1) effecting Provincial plans and policies in the context appropriate for *Halton* and its Local Municipalities and within the *Region's* financial capability;
 - 37(2) acting as the Province in planning approvals, application reviews and matters that have been delegated to the *Region* under The Planning Act or other Provincial legislation;
 - 37(3) coordinating plans, programs and activities among Provincial ministries, the *Region* and the Local Municipalities; and
 - 37(4) responding to Provincial initiatives and proposed policies, plans and legislation after consulting its Local Municipalities and public agencies

in *Halton*.

38. The *Region* will encourage the Province to:
- 38(1) provide clear Provincial direction on planning issues;
 - 38(2) streamline Provincial legislation and the land use planning process, especially regarding The Planning Act and The Environmental Assessment Act;
 - 38(3) increase coordination and set priorities of mandate among Provincial ministries and agencies; and
 - 38(4) sort out and assign responsibilities to the appropriate level of government based on the principle of direct accountability supported by appropriate fiscal resources.

HALTON AND ITS SURROUNDING REGION

39. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA), as currently defined, comprises the City of Toronto and the Regional Municipalities of Halton, Peel, York and Durham (see Figure 1). Extending this area southwards to the border with the United States would encompass the Golden Horseshoe region, the most populous and economically active part of Ontario. Surrounding this region and not too far away is a ring of urban centres including the Cities of London, Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge, and Barrie. Some of these centres are the fastest growing areas within the Province. *Halton* is remarkably well situated within this conurbation of settlement.
40. Halton Region acknowledges the need to consider its own planning area as part of a larger physical, social and economic entity such as the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe. The *natural environment* traverses political boundaries and environmental problems can only be dealt with effectively on a multi-jurisdictional, cooperative basis. Many social and economic issues that face *Halton* result from forces over which the *Region* has little control. Particular attention must be paid by Regional Council to inter-regional issues and forces affecting the GTA and the surrounding area in an effort to apply Regional resources strategically to those matters over which it does have some control.
41. Halton Region views its role within the GTA and its participation on GTA issues as one of partnership with the other regions or cities and the Province to promote understanding of issues, to exchange openly information and views, and to seek solutions to common problems. In so doing, Regional Council will express and pursue its planning vision and *objectives* with vigour, firmly believing that the

- 89(22) Recognize approvals given by the *Region* existing as of the date of approval of this Plan to permit, on an interim basis until full *urban services* are available and subject to the approval of the Ministry of the Environment, limited industrial *development* requiring low volumes of water to locate within the Acton and Milton Urban Areas, based on private services or on municipal water supply and private wastewater treatment systems. Such interim servicing shall be subject to all of the following criteria:
- a) Areas for such servicing are determined in conjunction with the *Region* and are clearly delineated in Local Official Plans by appropriate maps and/or text.
 - b) Detailed implementation schemes for industrial *development* in each of these areas which address, among other matters, the specific type of servicing proposed, are adopted by both Regional and Local Councils.
 - c) The design and approval of private services are in accordance with Regional Bylaws, standards and guidelines and with Provincial requirements.
 - d) Where considered necessary by the *Region*, approval of such industrial servicing systems is to be conditional upon the owners of the individual proposals entering into one or more agreements with the *Region* to satisfy all Regional concerns, financial or otherwise, relating to water supply and wastewater treatment.
 - e) When full *urban services* are available as determined by the *Region*, the property owners are required to connect and pay the applicable fees for connection.
- 89(23) Minimize the number of disturbances to the Greenlands System affected by the provision of *urban services*, by integrating, if possible, construction plans for both water supply and wastewater treatment services, and by designing the *urban services* at those locations to take into account any possible future system expansion.

THE RURAL SYSTEM

Goal and General Policies

90. The Rural System consists of the designations of Escarpment Protection Area,

Escarpment Rural Area, Agricultural Rural Area, *Hamlets*, Mineral Resource Extraction Areas and the Halton Waste Management Site, all of which are shown on Map 1, and *Rural Clusters*, which are shown in Local Official Plans. In addition, Prime Agricultural Areas are generally defined as lands below the *Escarpment Brow*, for the purpose of prohibiting non-farm uses in the Escarpment Protection Area, Escarpment Rural Area, Agricultural Rural Area, Mineral Resource Extraction Areas, and Greenlands B.

91. The *goal* of the Rural System is to maintain a permanently secure, economically viable *agricultural industry*, as well as other resource industries, and to preserve the open-space character and landscape heritage of *Halton's* non-urbanized areas.
92. It is the *policy* of the *Region* to:
- 92(1) Adopt and update from time to time, and incorporate by amendment to this Plan appropriate recommendations of, an Aquifer Management Plan that will, among other things:
- a) determine whether the groundwater resources can support in the long term activities and land uses within the Rural System and in those Urban Areas relying on well water supply;
 - b) identify those areas which are susceptible to water quantity and quality problems;
 - c) identify those areas where good quality water is generally available to sustain additional rural settlement;
 - d) examine the impact of private, individual wastewater disposal systems on the quality of groundwater; and
 - e) propose procedures for the on-going monitoring and protection of the aquifers.
- 92(2) Prohibit the creation of new *lots* by rural estate residential development or infilling throughout the Rural System except in *Hamlets* or *Rural Clusters*. *D8, D9, D10, D13
- 92(3) Require that all *development* in the Rural System be only on the basis of private, individual well water supply and private, individual waste water treatment system that conform to Regional Bylaws and standards, and to Provincial legislation, regulations and standards. *D13
- 92(4) Adopt, after consultation with the Ministry of the Environment and other affected parties, *Urban Services Operating Policies and Guidelines* for

Hydrogeological Studies and Best Management Practices for Groundwater Protection that contain, among other things, design standards for private services, minimum *lot* sizes taking into account infiltrative capacity of the soils and hydrogeological information, guidelines for undertaking hydrogeological studies, procedures for processing *development* applications on private services, and criteria by which the Medical Officer of Health determines a water supply to be inadequate or the impact of a private wastewater treatment system to be unacceptable.

- 92(5) Consider recreation uses including golf courses and driving ranges in the Rural System other than Escarpment Protection Area only by site-specific amendment to this Plan unless permitted by specific *policies* and provided that:
- a) the following have been demonstrated through appropriate studies to the satisfaction of Regional Council:
 - [i] necessity for such uses;
 - [ii] amount of land area needed for such uses;
 - [iii] reasons for the choice of location;
 - [iv] justification that there are no reasonable alternate locations of lower capability agricultural lands; and
 - [v] no significant impact to adjacent *agricultural operations* and the *natural environment*; and
 - b) the proposed use be subject to the following conditions:
 - [i] any changes to the natural topography are kept to a minimum;
 - [ii] buildings and structures are minor in scale and are located in a manner that will secure an open-space character of the area;
 - [iii] there is no overnight accommodation for users or guests of the facility;
 - [iv] landscaping and berms are provided where necessary to secure an open-space character of the area;
 - [v] the impact on adjacent *agricultural operations* is kept to a

minimum, through the preparation by the proponent of an Agricultural Impact Assessment to the satisfaction of the *Region*;

- [vi] if the use involves significant taking of ground or surface water, the proponent must demonstrate, through a detailed study and to the satisfaction of the *Region*, that the water resource in the general area will not be adversely affected;
- [vii] there should be a net gain, or at the minimum no net loss, of overall natural features and functions as a result of the *development*, through appropriate studies, site designs and mitigative measures, to the satisfaction of the *Region*; and
- [viii] the design and construction of the use are in keeping with the Golf Course and Recreational Facilities Best Management Guidelines adopted by Regional Council.

Escarpment Protection Area

93. The *objectives* of the Escarpment Protection Area are:

- 93(1) To maintain and enhance the open landscape character of Escarpment features.
- 93(2) To provide a buffer to prominent Escarpment features.
- 93(3) To maintain natural areas of regional significance and cultural *heritage features*.
- 93(4) To encourage *agriculture, forestry* and recreation.

94. This designation includes lands that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 94(1) Escarpment slopes and related landforms where existing land uses have significantly altered the *natural environment* (e.g., *agricultural operations* or residential *development*).
- 94(2) Areas in close proximity to Escarpment slopes which visually are part of the landscape unit.
- 94(3) *Regionally Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest* (Life Science).

95. Subject to other *policies* of this Plan, provisions of The Niagara Escarpment Plan,

and applicable Local Official Plan polices and Zoning Bylaws, the following uses may be permitted:

- 95(1) *agricultural operations,*
- 95(2) *existing uses,*
- 95(3) *single detached dwelling on existing lots,*
- 95(4) *mobile or portable dwelling(s) accessory to an agricultural operation,*
- 95(5) *non-intensive recreation uses such as nature viewing and pedestrian trail activities, only if the lands are publicly owned or are part of the Bruce Trail,*
- 95(6) *forest, wildlife and fisheries management,*
- 95(7) *archaeological activities,*
- 95(8) *transportation and utility facilities,*
- 95(9) *accessory buildings, structures and facilities (e.g., a garage or farm pond) and site modification to accommodate them,*
- 95(10) *incidental uses (e.g., swimming pools, tennis courts and ponds) and site modifications required to accommodate them, provided the impact on the natural environment is minimal,*
- 95(11) *small scale public uses only on lands above the Escarpment Brow,*
- 95(12) *cemeteries,*
- 95(13) *uses permitted in an approved Niagara Escarpment Park and Open Space Plan,*
- 95(14) *home occupations and cottage industries with a gross floor area not exceeding 100 sq m or 25 per cent of the residential living area, whichever is lesser,*
- 95(15) *home industries with a gross floor area not exceeding 200 sq m and located on a commercial farm,*
- 95(16) *bed and breakfast establishments with three or fewer guest bedrooms,*
- 95(17) *veterinary clinics,*
- 95(18) *animal kennels in conjunction with a single detached dwelling,*

- 95(19) *watershed management* and flood and erosion control projects carried out or supervised by a public agency, and
- 95(20) with a valid licence issued pursuant to The Aggregate Resources Act, *mineral resource* extraction and accessory uses on the expanded portion of an existing sandstone *quarry* located on the east half of *Lot 21*, Concession V, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills.
- 95(21) greenhouses, stockpiling and processing of soil, processing and sale of *local* farm products, sale of garden centre or landscaping products, sale and storage of bulk firewood and hay, cold storage and fruit packing operation, and incidental facilities necessary to support these uses on approximately 7.1 hectares of lands described as Parts 1, 2 and 3, Plan 20R-15247 located on Part *Lot 18*, Concession I, North of Dundas Street in the City of Burlington.

Escarpment Rural Area

96. The *objectives* of the Escarpment Rural Area are:

- 96(1) To maintain scenic values of lands in the vicinity of the Escarpment.
- 96(2) To maintain the open landscape character by encouraging the conservation of the traditional *cultural landscape* and *cultural heritage features*.
- 96(3) To encourage *agriculture* and *forestry*.
- 96(4) To provide a buffer for the more ecologically sensitive areas of the Escarpment.
- 96(5) To provide for the designation of new Mineral Resource Extraction Areas which can be accommodated in accordance with the *policies* of this Plan and by amendment to The Niagara Escarpment Plan and this Plan.

97. This designation includes lands that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 97(1) Minor Escarpment slopes and landforms.
- 97(2) Lands in the vicinity of the Escarpment necessary to provide an open landscape, and/or of ecological importance to the environment of the Escarpment.

98. Subject to the provisions of The Niagara Escarpment Plan, the uses permitted in this designation and the *policies* that apply to this designation are identical to those for the Agricultural Rural Area. Further, subject to other *policies* of this Plan and applicable Local Official Plan *policies* and zoning bylaws, the following uses may be permitted:
- 98(1) a golf course and accessory uses on the west half of Lot 10, Concession III, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills.

Agricultural Rural Area

99. The *objectives* of the Agricultural Rural Area are: *D1
- 99(1) To recognize *agriculture* as the primary activity and land use in the Agricultural Rural Area. *D1
- 99(2) To preserve *prime agricultural soils*. *D1
- 99(3) To maintain as much as possible lands for existing and future farm use. *D1
- 99(4) To protect farms from incompatible activities and land uses which would limit agricultural productivity or efficiency. *D1
- 99(5) To reduce the fragmentation of lands suitable for *agriculture* and provide for their consolidation. *D1
- 99(6) To promote the rental for *farming* of lands not so used. *D1
- 99(7) To promote a diverse, innovative and economically strong *agricultural industry* in *Halton* by tailoring its products and marketing to meet local and regional needs and demands. *D1
- 99(8) To promote *agriculture*-related tourism and direct sales of farm produce and accessory products to visitors and local businesses. *D1
- 99(9) To preserve the farm community as an important part of *Halton's* rural fabric. *D1
- 99(10) To promote environmentally sensitive and sustainable farm practice. *D1
- 99(11) To retain or increase *tree* cover for harvest, soil erosion protection, and buffering from adjoining non-farm land uses. *D1
- 99(12) To encourage a strong farm support service industry in *Halton*. *D1

- 99(13) To encourage the participation of the *agricultural industry* and community in dealing with concerns of an agricultural nature. *D1
- 99(14) To preserve the open-space character, topography and landscape of the Agricultural Rural Area. *D1
- 99(15) To ensure that lands and waters can sustain settlement without environmental degradation. *D1
- 99(16) To promote rural uses in a manner sensitive to the ecological balance and the *farming* community. *D1
- 99(17) To provide for the designation of new Mineral Resource Extraction Areas which can be accommodated in accordance with *policies* of this Plan and by amendment to this Plan. *D1
- 100.** Subject to other *policies* of this Plan and applicable Local Official Plan *policies* and Zoning Bylaws, the following uses may be permitted: *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(1) *agricultural operations*, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(2) *existing uses*, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(3) *single detached dwelling* on existing lots, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(4) dwelling(s) accessory to an *agricultural operation*, which must be mobile or portable if located in the Escarpment Rural Area, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(5) non-intensive recreation uses such as nature viewing and pedestrian trail activities, only if the lands are publicly owned or are part of the Bruce Trail, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(6) forest, wildlife and *fisheries management*, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(7) archaeological activities, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(8) transportation and *utility* facilities, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(9) *accessory buildings*, structures and facilities (e.g., a garage or farm pond) and site modifications required to accommodate them, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(10) *incidental uses* (e.g., swimming pools, tennis courts and ponds) and site modifications required to accommodate them, provided the impact on the *natural environment* is minimal, *D7, D8, D9, D10, D13
- 100(11) small scale *public uses* only on lands above the *Escarpment Brow*, *D7,

D8, D9, D10, D13

- 100(12) cemeteries only on lands above the *Escarpment Brow*, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(13) uses permitted in an approved *Niagara Escarpment Park and Open Space Plan*, if the subject land is located within the Niagara Escarpment Plan area, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(14) *home occupations and cottage industries* with a gross floor area not exceeding 100 sq m or 25 per cent of the residential living area, whichever is lesser, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(15) bed and breakfast establishments with three or fewer guest bedrooms, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(16) *veterinary clinics* serving primarily the agricultural community, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13, D21
- 100(17) *animal kennels* in conjunction with a *single detached dwelling*,
- 100(18) *watershed management* and flood and erosion control projects carried out or supervised by a public agency, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13, D21
- 100(19) *wayside pits or quarries* and *portable asphalt plants* for public road construction purposes without amendment to this Plan, Local Official Plan and Zoning By-laws, provided that they comply with the requirements of the Ministry of the Environment (*portable asphalt plants* are not permitted within the Escarpment Rural Area), *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(20) sanitary landfill operation and accessory uses, only on the Halton Waste Management Site shown on Map 1, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(21) following uses only if located on a *commercial farm* and secondary to the *farming* operation:
- a) *home industries* with a gross floor area not exceeding 200 sq m,
 - b) retail uses with a gross floor area not exceeding 500 sq m and the majority of the commodities for sale, measured by monetary value, produced or manufactured on the farm,
 - c) *agriculture*-related tourism uses with a gross floor area not exceeding 250 sq m, and
 - d) businesses that may not be related to *agriculture* provided that:

- [i] such uses are permitted by specific Niagara Escarpment Plan policies if applicable, Local Official Plan *policies* and Local Zoning Bylaws;
 - [ii] their scale is minor and does not change the appearance of the *farming* operation;
 - [iii] their impact such as noise, odour and traffic on surrounding land uses is minimal and will not hinder surrounding agricultural uses; and
 - [iv] they meet all Regional criteria as stated in the On-Farm Business Guidelines adopted by Council;
- 100(22) a horse racetrack and accessory uses on the part of Lot 7 north of Highway 401, Lot 8 and Lot 9, Concession III, former Township of Nassagaweya, in the Town of Milton, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(23) industrial and ancillary uses on private services located generally on the west half of Lot 6, Concession III, in the Town of Halton Hills, *D7, D8, R15, D10, D13
- 100(24) a seasonal special event commercial/recreational attraction and accessory uses located on part of Lots 7 and 8, Concession VIII, New Survey, in the Town of Milton, former Township of Trafalgar,
- 100(25) a driving range and accessory uses on the north half of the west half of Lot 18, Concession XI, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills,
- 100(26) office, manufacturing and warehousing uses with a total gross floor area not exceeding 16,300 square metres and a total site area not exceeding 10.3 hectares on Part of Lots 32 and 33, Concession I, N.D.S., Town of Oakville. The uses may be developed on private services as a demonstration project; however, it is intended that this area will be serviced with *urban services* in the future. These lands will be the subject of a future Regional Official Plan Amendment implementing the Halton Urban Structure Plan, as per Section 53(3) and Sections 75 and 76 of this Plan. Prior to *development* occurring on this site, the landowner must:
- a) enter into an agreement with the *Region* to pay the Development Charges applicable for the uses at the time when *urban services* are required;
 - b) obtain the necessary approvals from the Ministry of the

- Environment and the *Region* for any on-site private servicing systems; and
- c) satisfy the *Region* in terms of transportation access to the site,
- 100(27) a church and existing private, non-commercial cultural and outdoor recreational uses, connected to the Region of Peel's water service, on an aggregate land area not exceeding 29 hectares on the east half of Lot 6, Concession XI, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills,
- 100(28) a golf course and accessory uses on the west half of Lot 7, Concession II, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills,
- 100(29) a golf course and accessory uses on the east half of Lot 10, Concession X, former Township of Esquesing,, in the Town of Halton Hills,
- 100(30) a new 9.3-hectare golf driving range and a new or expanded 929-square-metre day use education facility on lands in the east half of Lot 6, Concession II, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills, to be further described by an amendment to the Town of Halton Hills Zoning Bylaw 74-51 to be prepared in consultation with the Region of Halton,
- 100(31) Residential use on private services on two land parcels identified in the Halton Land Registry Office by property identification numbers 07196-0146 and 07196-0147 as of April 13, 2000 and located in Lot 17, Concession I, N.D.S., in the City of Burlington,
- 100(32) a painting and sandblasting operation and accessory office use located on a 2.7-hectare parcel of land generally on the west half of Lot 1, Concession IX, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills,
- 100(33) a golf course, practice range, clubhouse and accessory uses on the east half of Lots 7 and 8, Concession VII, former Township of Trafalgar, in the Town of Milton, and on the basis of private services notwithstanding Section 92(3) of this Plan, provided that the landowner obtains the necessary approval from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation Halton and the *Region* for any water takings and treatment systems,
- 100(34) a municipal sports facility, associated parking, cemetery, expanded municipal works yard and related uses on part of Lot 18, Concession VII, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills, and
- 100(35) a golf course and accessory uses on the west half of Lot 9, Concession

III, former Township of Esquesing, in the Town of Halton Hills.

100(36) a golf course, club house and accessory uses on part of Lots 4 and 5, Concession VIII, of the former Township of Trafalgar, in the Town of Milton. Notwithstanding Section 92(3) of this Official Plan, such uses may be permitted on the basis of private services provided that the landowner obtains the necessary approvals from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation Halton and Town of Milton for water takings, wastewater disposal systems and water reservoirs. Accommodation shall be limited to the single detached dwelling as of November 28, 2005.

101. It is the *policy* of the *Region* to: ***D1**

- 101(1) Recognize and protect lands within the Agricultural Rural Area as an important natural resource to the economic viability of *agriculture* and to this end: ***D1**
- a) Direct non-farm uses to Urban Areas, *Hamlets* and *Rural Clusters*, unless specifically permitted by *policies* of this Plan. ***D1, R15**
 - b) Promote the maintenance or establishment of *woodlands* and *treescapes* on farms. ***D1**
 - c) Encourage farmers to adopt farm practices that will sustain the long term productivity of the land and minimize adverse impact to the *natural environment*. ***D1**
- 101(2) Recognize, encourage and protect *agriculture* as an important industry in *Halton* and as the primary long-term activity and land use throughout the Agricultural Rural Area, and to this end: ***D1**
- a) Support and develop plans and programs that promote *agriculture*. ***D1**
 - b) Monitor, investigate and periodically report on its conditions, problems, trends and means to maintain its competitiveness. ***D1**
 - c) Adopt a set of Livestock Facility Guidelines to support and provide flexibility to livestock operations and to promote best management practices in improving their compatibility with non-farm uses.
 - d) Require Local Municipalities to apply provincially developed Minimum Distance Separation formulae in their Zoning Bylaws in accordance with Council-adopted Livestock Facility Guidelines. ***D1**

- e) Require the proponent of any non-farm land use that is permitted by specific *policies* of this Plan but has a potential impact on adjacent *agricultural operations* to carry out an Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), based on guidelines adopted by Regional Council. *R15
 - f) Support programs to reduce trespassing on *agricultural operations* and discourage the location of public trails near *agricultural operations*. *D1, D13
- 101(3) Recognize, encourage and support secondary industries essential to *Halton's agricultural industry* and as a major contributor to its economic base and to this end: *D1
- a) Promote the location of major secondary agricultural processing, manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing operations within the Urban Areas. *D1
 - b) Promote *life science industries* in *Halton* that complement and support *agriculture*.
 - c) Promote the location of farm support operations within the Milton, Georgetown and Acton Urban Areas and within *Hamlets*. *D1
 - d) Ensure that Local Official Plans provide opportunities and directions for the *development* of these industries. *D1
- 101(4) Recognize, encourage, protect and support *Halton's farmers and agricultural operations* and to this end: *D1
- a) Consult with and support *Halton's farm organizations*. *D1
 - b) Maintain a broad-based Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise Council on *agriculture-related matters* and review and comment on AIAs provided under this Plan. *D1
 - c) Provide sewage sludge suitable for fertilizer, subject to Regional and Provincial environmental protection guidelines. *D1
 - d) Ensure, in cooperation with the Local Municipalities, enforcement of Weed Control Bylaws. *D1
 - e) Allow *bona fide farmers* who meet the criteria of this Plan as set out in Section 66(3), a *lot severance* for retirement purpose provided that the approval is given by a Local Land Division Committee on or prior to July 15, 2005. *D1

- f) Promote diverse and innovative *farming* that caters to local and regional specialty markets. *D1
- g) Introduce programs that will encourage visitors to experience and understand *agricultural operations* in *Halton*. *D1
- h) Support a farm-fresh produce network that promotes direct sales of farm produce and related products to residents, local businesses and visitors. *D1
- i) Support provincial and federal programs to attract farmers to *Halton*.
- j) Encourage the Local Municipalities to: *D1
 - [i] permit, without creating a new *lot*, one second dwelling within the existing farm building cluster of an active farm for accommodating farm helps or a retiring farmer. Such permission shall be restricted to only portable or mobile dwellings for farm help within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. *D1
 - [ii] adopt Zoning Bylaws that will allow *home occupations, cottage industries, home industries on commercial farms, on-farm businesses and agriculture-related tourism* in accordance with *policies* of this Plan. *D1
 - [iii] permit or provide permanent or temporary facilities for farmers' markets in the Urban Areas or *Hamlets*. *D1
- k) Encourage the Provincial government to: *D1
 - [i] lease to farmers Provincially owned lands on a long-term basis for agricultural use. *D1
 - [ii] maintain a property tax system that encourages *farming* and reflects the true farm, i.e. productive, value of lands. *D1
- l) Encourage the Federal Government to pursue a national agricultural policy that provides incentives to farmers and *agricultural operations* and supports the *agricultural industry* in the global markets. *D1

APPENDIX 2

Halton Region Report PPW162-07 Excerpts:
Conclusion of Sustainable Halton Phase 1: Technical
Background Reports and Results of Consultation

DRAFT TECHNICAL BACKGROUND REPORT	THEMES	HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	SERVICING CONSTRAINTS	There needs to be recognition of physical development and servicing constraints, and the related higher development and servicing costs due to the proximity to natural features, the NHS linkages, and core areas. These could impact the viability and competitiveness of Halton's employment lands within the GTA market.	The land base and cost required to accommodate the Growth Plan targets and provide for an enhanced natural heritage system will be investigated as part of Phase II of the process.
	FIT WITH OTHER USES	There is a need to determine how the NHS fits with agriculture, aggregates, and urban uses.	This will be investigated as part of Phase II of Sustainable Halton.
	POLICY FRAMEWORK	There is need to create a policy framework to recognise the policy and legislative differences between the Greenbelt and the NHS beyond the Greenbelt.	This policy framework will be created as part of the Region's Greenbelt Plan conformity exercise (Phase IV of Sustainable Halton).
AGRICULTURE COUNTRYSIDE VISION	PRIORITY FOR AGRICULTURE	Agriculture should be considered a high priority as it contributes to Halton's food supply and helps maintain air quality. The Official Plan should put agriculture first, with the NHS, aggregate, and urban development as lower priorities. Urban development can occur on poorer agricultural soils unlike food production.	The Halton Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton) will further investigate Halton's rural areas to define in greater detail prime agricultural areas based on various factors. This will feed into the Sustainable Halton process.
	PERMANENT AGRICULTURE	Maintaining agriculture is an important land base, but, it should not be permanent. Careful evaluation is required	The Halton LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton) will further investigate Halton's rural areas to define in greater

DRAFT TECHNICAL BACKGROUND REPORT	THEMES	HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS	RESPONSE
		<p>to determine the appropriateness of agriculture, prior designating lands as such. This should include the limitations associated with the abilities of the land. Further understanding of this approach is needed.</p> <p>Establishing a permanent agriculture preserve at this time is premature and would restrict opportunities to accommodate growth beyond 2031.</p> <p>To preserve agricultural land beyond 2031 and to realise permanency, the Region would have to buy the land and rent it back to farmers. A discussion on permanency has to consider what agriculture needs to survive. Agriculture also needs the opportunity to evolve. Zoning and legislation can ensure permanency.</p> <p>Compensation needs to be on the table. We must pay development rights to permanently freeze the land.</p>	<p>detail prime agricultural areas based on various factors. This will feed into the Sustainable Halton process.</p> <p>The Province does not permit designation of land beyond a 20 year planning horizon so permanent preservation of agricultural land beyond 2031 cannot be reviewed until after 2011.</p> <p>This is not something that will be dealt with as part of Sustainable Halton but is a broader Regional issue.</p>
	RECRUIT FARMERS	The Region should develop a programme	This is not something that will be dealt with

DRAFT TECHNICAL BACKGROUND REPORT	THEMES	HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS	RESPONSE
		to recruit farmers similar to the one used to recruit physicians.	as part of Sustainable Halton but is a broader Regional issue.
	FIT BETWEEN AGRICULTURE AND THE NHS	There is a need to determine the fit between the agriculture and the NHS land bases. The conflicts between these land uses must be reconciled. Agricultural lands and natural heritage lands could work hand in hand by protecting each other from urban land encroachment.	These issues will be investigated as part of Phase II of Sustainable Halton.
	AID TO FARMERS – REGIONAL AND MUNICIPAL INCENTIVES	There is a need to develop a way to provide financial assistance to farmers, enabling them to buy new equipment and grow marketable crops. There should also be start-up funding for young farmers, assistance with preparing 5-year business plans, access to low interest loans, and land leasing to potential farmers for farming purposes. Government could develop education programmes to help farmers learn how to grow new crops successfully. Either Halton Region or a farm trust could purchase land and thereby protect the land base.	Issues such as assistance and education will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV of Sustainable Halton) however some of the other issues identified are broader Regional issues and will not be dealt with as part of Sustainable Halton.

DRAFT TECHNICAL BACKGROUND REPORT	THEMES	HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	SPECIALITY CROPS, AND FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION	There is no analysis to support the suggestion that the area is good for speciality crops.	This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV of Sustainable Halton).
	AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN HALTON	A thorough review is needed to assess agricultural productivity, beyond the three variables (number of farms, farmland acres, and gross farm receipts) cited.	This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton).
	FARM SIZES	The report refers to farm operations size instead of parcel size. Farm operations may consist of more than one parcel.	This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton).
	INFORMATION AND DATA	Current information and data needs to be used.	The Region will ensure that the most up-to-date information and data are utilized.
	PROVINCIAL POLICY FRAMEWORK	Sustainable Halton needs to integrate the Agricultural Systems policies contained in the Greenbelt Plan. Sustainable Halton must reconcile prime agricultural lands outside the Greenbelt with the land base for future growth as per the Provincial Policy Statement. Also need to ensure that prime agricultural	This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton) and the Region's Greenbelt Plan conformity exercise.

DRAFT TECHNICAL BACKGROUND REPORT	THEMES	HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS	RESPONSE
		<p>areas will not conflict with PPS policies and other applicable provincial plans.</p>	
	<p>AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>If the infrastructure necessary to support agriculture cannot be maintained or provided in the Primary Study Area, then forestry might be considered as an appropriate land use.</p>	<p>This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II of Sustainable Halton) and related agricultural studies.</p>
	<p>MISSING ELEMENTS</p>	<p>The report does not address other rural land uses including utilities, roads, recreational uses.</p>	<p>This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).</p>
		<p>The report does not address water which is a critical factor in intensive agriculture. Water supply is critical in having an agriculture preservation area, and is an important determinant of soil capability.</p>	<p>This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).</p>
<p>COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY</p>	<p>ENERGY COSTS AND FOOD MILES</p>	<p>As energy costs rise it would be more expensive to import food into Halton Region. Local farmers should be supported and agricultural land protected.</p>	<p>This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).</p>
	<p>FARMERS' SKILLS</p>	<p>The report is silent on the lack of farmers with the necessary skills to farm in view of climate change and energy shortages.</p>	<p>This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase II) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).</p>

DRAFT TECHNICAL BACKGROUND REPORT	THEMES	HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	PESTICIDES AND OTHER INPUTS	The environmental costs associated with production, and pesticide, fertilizer, and water use was not considered. Food security needs to consider the impacts on the methods of production.	IV). This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase I) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).
	SELF-SUFFICIENCY	There is a need to be realistic about self-sufficiency within the context of a global industry.	This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase I) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).
	CLIMATE CHANGE	The ability to grow new crops in a warmer climate is one of the positives of global warming.	This will be investigated as part of the Region's LEAR study (Phase I) and related agricultural studies which will feed into the Region's 5-year Official Plan review (Phase IV).
	FOOD STORES	Food stores should be located within walking distance for every neighbourhood in Halton.	The principles and evaluation criteria developed through Phase II to evaluate the growth options will include walkable communities. Specific land uses are a local responsibility.
AGGREGATE RESOURCES STRATEGY	SUPPLY	There is an inconsistency in the interpretation of supply for Southern Ontario between the Sustainable Halton report and the Gartner Lee report prepared for the NorthWest Brampton	Staff is in talks with the Province to gain clarity on state of supply in Ontario and the Phase I report has been revised with respect to this issue.

APPENDIX 3

**Halton Hills Report PDS-2008-0065
Excerpts**

* (v) Resolution No. 2008-0193

Moved by: M. O'Leary
Seconded by: B. Lewis

THAT Report No. PDS-2008-0065 dated September 19, 2008, regarding the Sustainable Halton Growth Concepts be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the public and other stakeholders be thanked for their comments, participation and submissions to the Town in its process to formulate a response to the Region on the Sustainable Halton Growth Concepts and the seven questions set out in Report No. PPW 42-08;

AND FURTHER THAT the Region of Halton be advised that the Town of Halton Hills is supportive of the provision of additional employment lands on the Highway 401/407 Employment Corridor in Halton Hills as set out in all of the Sustainable Halton Growth Concepts as a means to improve the local non-residential to residential assessment ratio and the local activity rate (ratio of jobs to population) to 2031;

AND FURTHER THAT the Region consider the provision of additional serviced employment lands in the Mansewood area of Halton Hills as shown on Figure 8, and as identified in Report PDS-2008-0065;

AND FURTHER THAT in keeping with the Joint Submission from the Halton Area Planning Directors regarding the Province's Background Paper entitled *Planning For Employment in the Greater Golden Horseshoe* and Report No. PDS-2008-0055, the Region advance opportunities:

- i) to increase the additional supply of employment land for the 2021-2031 period to better match land needs with supply while ensuring choice, competition and flexibility in the land market;
- ii) to identify and protect strategically located employment lands beyond the 2031 planning horizon.

AND FURTHER THAT in keeping with the complete communities provisions of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area (GGHA), as well as the general direction set out in the Town's Strategic Plan and the Halton Hills Official Plan, the Region of Halton be advised that the Town is supportive of an expansion to the Georgetown Urban Area to accommodate new residential mixed use development;

AND FURTHER THAT Council advise the Region of Halton that a preferred scale of expansion for mixed use residential development to the Georgetown Urban area during the period of 2021-2031 be not greater than the magnitude of 20,000 estimated persons and that this amount of growth be included as part of a short list of growth options released later this year by the Region, in accordance with the following parameters:

- a) The Region confirming the financial and servicing feasibility, and the sustainability of the residential mixed use expansion;
- b) The expanded urban envelope be assessed on the basis of minimizing its impacts to the agricultural lands adjacent to the existing Georgetown Urban Area;
- c) The expanded urban envelope take into account the Strategy for Aggregate Resources developed by the Region, particularly as it pertains to the shale deposits previously identified by the Province;

- d) The expanded urban envelope be assessed on the basis of a greater level of detail being provided with respect to the Enhanced Natural Heritage System;
- e) The Region of Halton servicing investigations include options for connecting to the Region of Peel system as a means to provide the necessary servicing to the Georgetown Urban Area; and
- f) That any further submissions by the public and other stakeholders be evaluated in the context of confirming a preferred growth option.

AND FURTHER THAT the Region of Halton be requested to respond to landowner concerns regarding the Enhanced Natural Heritage System and more specifically the spatial extent of the proposed centre of regional biodiversity located in the concession block bounded by Steeles Avenue, Hornby Road, Trafalgar Road, Five Side Road, and Eighth Line;

AND FURTHER THAT the Region consider the development of an Agricultural Strategy that complements the land use planning framework set out in the Greenbelt Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Regional and local Official Plans in order to support the continuing role of the agricultural industry in Halton;

AND FURTHER THAT the Region formally consult with the local municipalities, the public and other stakeholders on the short list of growth options;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Halton, the City of Burlington, and the Towns of Milton and Oakville, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure of the Province of Ontario, and the Region of Peel, M.P.P.'s, Leaders of the Opposition, and the Premier.

CARRIED

Resolution No. 2008-0194

Moved by: M. Johnson
Seconded by: B. Inglis

THAT the Council for the Town of Halton Hills hereby waives the adjournment hour of 11:00 p.m. as contained in Section 8.7 of By-law 2008-0002 to deal with Item Nos. 5, 6, and 7.

CARRIED

5. COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Letter from the Town of Milton dated August 19, 2008, regarding Region of Halton – Sustainable Halton Plan – Town of Milton – First Principles.
- B. Town of Milton Report No. PD-076-08, dated September 22, 2008, regarding Region of Halton Sustainable Halton Plan (SHP) Town of Milton's Response to Five Refined Growth Concepts.
- C. Address to the Credit Valley Conservation Authority (CVC) Board of Directors dated September 12, 2008 by Rae Horst, CAO, CVC.

APPENDIX 4
LEAR Strategy

HAAC Final Comments

Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC)

Committee Report on the Regional LEAR Study

NOTES: Comments in this report refer to the Sept. 15, 2008 draft of report 3.03 and to the Feb. 20, 2009 draft of report 3.04.

Section E Going Forward – was addressed in Section 8 and the Tools Summary Table in Report 3.04, dated April 7, 2009 which was endorsed by HAAC (See Resolution in Appendix 5).

Introduction

In January 2009 the Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC) appointed a sub-committee to review the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study that was conducted to identify prime agricultural lands and areas in Halton, as part of the much larger Sustainable Halton Official Plan.

The sub-committee reported its findings, comments and recommendations to HAAC at a special meeting convened for this purpose on February 23, 2009. The sub-committee's report was endorsed by HAAC.

The report is divided into sections:

- A. Overall Assessment and Major Concerns
- B. Response to the Recommendations
- C. Response to the Conclusions
- D. Additional Thoughts re Farm Land Development
- E. Going Forward – HAAC's Recommendations to the Region re Policies and Programs that will protect what is left of agriculture in Halton in a viable and sustainable manner

Section A.

Overall Assessment and Major Concerns

Upon review of the LEAR study, HAAC is of the opinion that the LEAR was conducted properly, applied correctly and explained well.

However, there are three major areas of concern that negatively impact the overall acceptance of the study.

- The designation of Specialty Crop Lands
- Comparisons with the Greenbelt
- Failure to move forward with Urban Intensification

1. *Specialty Crop Lands*

HAAC disagrees with the designation “Specialty Crop Lands” as used in the report.

On a provincial basis, OMAFRA only uses these words (Specialty Crop Lands) in planning terms for two regions of Ontario. The Niagara Tender Fruit and Wine Region and the Holland Marsh. Other areas such as the Bradford Marsh and Thedford Marsh are larger than the single farms in Halton that are designated in the report, but they (Bradford and Thedford) are not considered large enough to gain specialty crop status.

There are several farms in the Halton study area that do grow a large variety of vegetable and fruit crops. Much of this horticultural production is very dependent on soil type, available heat units, irrigation etc. but the long term success of many of these farms is due to the expertise and management ability of the individual farmer/owner and the nearby markets.

For example, an apple farm (10th Side Road and 6th Line) formerly owned by Peter McCarthy was an apple farm as long as he was there to manage it. A fruit and vegetable farm (Concession 4, Halton Hills) owned by Bert Andrews has been a successful operation for many years and a well-known farm in Halton’s agri-tourism sector. However, the farm is currently for sale and if not purchased as an on-going business by someone with the same level of horticultural and marketing expertise as the current owner this land may well revert to cash crops.

To designate farms in Halton such as these, and others, as specialty crop farms because of current cropping practices and land use would, in HAAC’s judgement, represent a serious error in planning. These farms could be growing what might be considered a “specialty” or “exotic” crop this year but next year and perhaps many years thereafter grow traditional crops of wheat, soybeans and grain corn.

HAAC considers that farm management, knowledge, ability, financing and available markets are critical factors – as well as soil suitability – in determining land use.

2. *Comparisons With Greenbelt*

HAAC is deeply concerned with the report’s frequent comparison of the Study Area with the Greenbelt.

HAAC does not accept the Provincial Government’s contention that the Greenbelt was primarily instituted to save land for agricultural use, nor do we accept that land included

in the Greenbelt was designated using the same rigorous standards that were applied in this report.

The Halton Region study area was very consistently scored through the LEAR study. However the same is not true for the Greenbelt, where **transparency** was not evident. HAAC strongly suggests there should be **no equivalency** between the Greenbelt and land use designation in the Study Area.

3. Urban Intensification/Densification

HAAC believes that urban intensification should have been applied years ago.

To plan for urban intensification beginning in 2015 is somewhat like closing the barn door after the horse has bolted.

HAAC believes that had the Region made a strong move to intensification several years ago this policy endorsement may well have made a difference on the total land area needed for further development. For example, Milton's proliferation of sprawling, single-family development will be mostly complete by 2015. To introduce intensification at that point is too late – the horse will be gone !

Section B.

NOTE: Commentary is in reference to recommendations (section 8) as contained in a draft version of the report, dated Sept. 15, 2008. A copy of these recommendations, which subsequently changed, is attached for reference. (See pgs. 27 & 28)

HAAC response to LEAR Study recommendations.

1. Establishment of strong, effective planning policies that are consistently implemented on a farmer friendly basis will be necessary. The Region must also be cognisant of how other planning entities such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission and Conservation Halton interpret and implement policies and regulations that affect farm property owners –e.g. Generic Regulations, Source Water Protection and Species At Risk – if the Region wants farmers and landowners to continue to farm.
2. The conclusion indicates that a permanent food producing agricultural presence will continue to be difficult to accommodate in Halton Region, for the reasons already given. A basic challenge is that soil is only one variable, and that capital, labour needs, and management expertise are equal factors.
3. The greenhouse sector can survive on non-prime land. The nursery industry is a non-food agricultural industry and has taken a segment of the land base. Viability and the ability to provide a family living are much more important than further restrictive designations on the land.

4. See our comments re Greenbelt.
5. See our comments re Specialty crops.
6. East of Milton the area around the Eighth Line and Trafalgar Road (area 5 on map 1) exhibits some characteristics of a vegetable crop area. But this could be temporary if there is not the expertise to continue, along with a return on investment for the farm owners.
7. No change recommended.
8. No change recommended.
9. We have concern about the availability and proximity of service infrastructure necessary for agriculture to flourish.
10. The tools to support a viable agricultural sector in Halton could in part be the *Going Forward* section at the end of this report, and definitely in the well-stated *Agriculture Countryside Vision Phase 3* report (pages 19- 30). Once again we reiterate that policies and regulations that are restrictive, and come with a “no compensation” clause, are not the way to encourage and support agriculture for the future.
11. See above.
12. “Places to Grow” must be the prime urban growth vehicle, with densification to start immediately, and no “nimby” excuses or delays.
13. Even with Regional planning support, agricultural survival in Halton is not guaranteed unless provincial policies, and regulations are much more farmer friendly, and come with a **vision** of the real contribution made by agriculture. Implementing such a vision may make agriculture sustainable in Halton after 2031.

Section C

NOTE: Commentary is in reference to conclusions (section 7) as contained in a draft version of the report, dated Sept. 15, 2008. A copy of these recommendations, which subsequently changed, is attached for reference. (See pgs. 25 & 26)

HAAC response to the LEAR Study Conclusions.

1. No change recommended.
2. Non-food agriculture in Halton is a strong and productive sector. The livestock sector is largely in decline and particularly the dairy sector which is now down to 9 operations. There is also concern that there has been considerable change in other sectors since the most recent census date.

3. No change recommended.
4. There is a shifting in the commodity profile to the production of crops geared to a readily available urban market. The region has been supportive of this change to local food, in the production of its brochure “Simply Local” and its membership in the GTA Agricultural Action Committee.
5. As has been discussed before, soil type is not the only factor determining what is grown where. Crop production also depends on management ability and markets as well.
6. There are scattered locations where vegetables are presently grown in the Study Area, notably in east Milton.
7. No change recommended.
8. The LEAR study shows consistency. Whether the limit for prime agricultural land should be 7.5 rather than 6.0, to take into account the errors induced by the large unit size chosen is open for debate.
“Places to Grow” densification must not wait to be implemented until the proposed date of 2015. The longer it is delayed, the more urban sprawl will take place into agricultural areas.
9. This conclusion should read: The Greenbelt contains some prime, but more less-than-prime agricultural land, while the LEAR Study (white belt) area contains prime agricultural land.
10. This conclusion should read: The Study Area will have less agricultural land after growth to 2031 is accommodated, but should be as contiguous as possible and as near to infrastructure services as possible.
11. No change recommended.
12. No change recommended.
13. The Greenbelt has done little to support agriculture except for some minor funding from the Greenbelt Foundation for some Environmental Farm Plan categories and farmers markets. We are not sure that there will be additional support in the future for agricultural operators in the Greenbelt.
14. To improve agricultural viability for certain crops, further fragmentation of agricultural areas and interfaces with urban areas should be minimized.
15. If the Region wishes to sustain agriculture, large contiguous areas have the best potential.
16. No change recommended.

17. Halton Region does support a permanent, successful, agricultural sector but it cannot be done by strong consistent planning policies only. It requires vision at both the Provincial and Federal levels. Farmer friendly regulations, together with farmer friendly resolutions to an increasing number of urban-rural differences can be helped by mediation facilitated at the Regional level.
18. As above.
19. Sustainable agriculture is a large component of a healthy community. Agriculture must be seen as part of the solution, not only for food production but also energy production and environmental protection.
20. The Region has a strong consistent record, of recognizing the value of the agricultural lands within its boundaries and protecting this resource for future generations. This will become more critical.

Section D

Additional Thoughts.

With the consistency shown in the LEAR scoring, we have applied some different criteria to provide guidance on which 3000 to 4000 hectares of land should be taken, when needed, to satisfy the Provincial demand for urban growth. With the bulk of the land in Halton that is situated in the Greenbelt in the northwest quadrant of the Region, and with the goal to maintain contiguous parcels of farm land, then it would seem that the lands around Georgetown should not be built upon.

When one examines the history of land ownership in the Region over the past half-century, one notices that as urban pressures squeezed farmers out of areas such as Clarkson, Woodbridge and Brampton many of these farm families purchased land in North Halton. While a number of these farmers were breeders and exporters of purebred cattle and chose the area because of its proximity to the international airport many others made their choice based on the easier worked, more forgiving land around Georgetown, rather than lands south of Milton. Other than CN amassing a parcel of land south of Milton for a rail yard, no significant land changes have taken place in this part of Halton, other than to speculator/developers. Although the land (south Milton) scores well under a LEAR study because of its soil type, primarily clay, and it is relatively stone free and flat, it requires drainage to be productive. From a livestock perspective water availability can be a serious limitation.

Section E

Going Forward

NOTE: Section E Going Forward – was addressed in Section 8 and the Tools Summary Table in Report 3.04, dated April 7, 2009 which was endorsed by HAAC (See Resolution in Appendix 5).

Farmers are very much in favour of protecting prime agricultural land, sustainability, stewardship, permanency, simply local foods, future economic planning and environmental enhancements but not at the expense of the farm families now on the land. It would seem that present Official Plans of the Municipalities of Oakville, Burlington, Milton, Halton Hills and the Region of Halton already protect Prime Agricultural Land from development.

HAAC requests the Region of Halton to hold consultative public meetings where farmland owners can have input before any recommendations for farmland permanency are made..

The Region should be proud that once again it is ahead of the curve in actually having some vision for agriculture – something the Province does not have. The Region is also a very strong supporter of the GTA Agricultural Action Plan and many of the actions in that Plan refer to the support tools necessary if agriculture is to survive in this near-urban environment.

There are many potential projects that can be “put on the table,” some of which will need Regional and/or Provincial help with no direct remuneration to the landowner and others which may involve compensation or financial assistance.

All municipalities are aware of the farm property tax rebate program and they have differing feelings about its use and implementation. There are options under that program to further reduce, below 25%, the taxation rate. Some municipalities have already made such concessions and HAAC recommends the Region review these options as a means of encouraging the agricultural base of the Region. HAAC affirms that when land is not being used for agriculture it should be taxed at a higher rate.

The implementation of the Greenbelt Act has meant that in some cases people who are not farmers’ are moving into the Region, putting a mansion in the middle of their newly purchased property and potentially taking what had been a farm out of production. This practice needs to be addressed and where it is abusive to the tax system and where productive farm land is not being used for its highest purpose – agriculture – it should be stopped.

Throughout the Sustainable Halton process, we have tended to focus on agricultural land being changed to residential or residential/industrial. However, in the past five years we have seen legislation from both the provincial and federal government that has placed additional regulation and designation on farmland. Legislation such as Generic

Regulations, Source Water Protection and Endangered Species – with no hint of compensation – are becoming harder and harder for farmers and landowners to bear. The sweeping introduction of a natural heritage designation at the Regional level is seen as potentially very restrictive and punitive.

Farmers have long been considered the environmental stewards of land. They will not knowingly contaminate their land, or do things that would affect their livelihood and quality of life. We need planners to be mindful that when restrictive land-use legislation is being prepared there should, through consultation with HAAC, be a full review of the potential impact of the legislation/regulations on agriculture. Further, we ask the Region to encourage all Conservation Authorities operating within Halton, all of whom enforce such legislation, to be mindful of the practical agricultural interpretation to avoid driving agriculture out of the Region.

HAAC notes there is provincial legislation, called the Farm Practices Protection Act, often referred to as “The Right To Farm” legislation. Support is needed from the Regional government, and all other levels of government, to enforce or back up this Act to prevent nuisance complaints from impeding normal farm operations and in effect driving the remaining farmers from the Region.

Further, we encourage the Region to seriously consider such programs as ALUS (Alternative Land Use Systems) and payment for Ecological Goods and Services (EGS). Programs of this type are currently being supported by the Federal Government and provincially by governments in Manitoba and PEI. Ontario farm organizations need assistance in the promotion of such programs at both upper levels of Government.

The minimum distance separation (MDS) standards need to be imposed realistically at the rural-urban interface. Applying MDS standards from the lot line rather than from the barn would greatly assist the continuance of on-farm livestock production. Farmers have been advised that a “cloud on title” cannot be applied at this interface. However, HAAC believes it is time to promote this idea again at the provincial level. The least that should be done is to change the established real estate disclosure to include full disclosure of proximity to an active farming area.

The Provincial government has recently introduced the Cosmetic Pesticide Ban. HAAC is concerned that this legislation will lead to additional weed pressure at the rural/urban interface. Moreover, this legislation of the provincial government calls into question the regulatory authority of the federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) which approves the sale and use of pesticide products.

With the explosion of development there has been a loss of terrain for wildlife. Consequently, many wild species are intensifying on the remaining land base, devastating farm crops, injuring and killing farm livestock, and damaging livestock feed. A revised compensation package that reflects today’s values is urgently needed. This is a municipal responsibility. Further, assistance to bring crop compensation to the attention of the Ministry of Natural Resources would be appreciated rather than these substantial losses being buried in crop insurance statistics.

From a planning standpoint, agriculture is a very diversified and ever-changing animal. Through the GTA AAC, we are encouraging more on-farm production to better supply the large and diverse GTA population. With this will come the need for more processing, shipping and storage facilities for crops and livestock. Regional support is needed to have MPAC correctly designate such facilities as value adding or value retention. This will allow farmers the opportunity to move ahead, diversify and stay in business, and not face taxation levels that make many projects unsustainable. For example, local abattoirs must be encouraged if the local food movement is to become reality for the livestock industry.

To maintain and encourage livestock production in the agricultural area, HAAC requests that for areas where there is a shortage of water for livestock – often caused by the increased ground water usage of municipalities – that water be provided from the municipal drinking water system.

Another emerging issue is the use of farmland products and by-products in the production of energy. Such items as bio-digesters and other technologies for energy generation were not considered in the last OP. This equipment is, or soon will be, very much a part the ever-changing rural scene. Projects such as co-generation and production alongside the Region's landfill site or other relevant facilities should be considered because the availability of co-generated heat and power is conducive to greenhouse development. Such systems represent a win for the environment, a win for local food production and a win for rural development and sustainability.

With the recent increase in the cost of inputs for agriculture, HAAC requests the Region to take a serious look at better utilization of bio-solids and reconsider changing them into fertilizer products. With today's cost structure bio-solids do have value and should be seen as a win-win proposition for the Region and the farmers.

Looking to the future, HAAC recommends a revision of the Development Charges Act to allow for a small portion to be set aside to form a venture capital fund for innovative agricultural initiatives, including funding start-up opportunities for young farmers.

HAAC did receive a presentation by Sue Coverdale, from Hamilton Region, explaining her role in economic development and also serving as a watchdog on Hamilton Planning and other departments with respect to decisions that have an impact on agriculture. HAAC recommends that such a champion/advocacy role also be present in Halton Region's staff complement. In addition this staff member would be responsible for promoting Halton to the food processing industry of the world. There are six million people within two hours and 30 million people within 12 hours driving time of Halton Region.

We feel now is the appropriate time – especially when the Region itself is questioning the province's right to impose future population increases, without forwarding an increase in infrastructure dollars – for a study to be conducted quantifying the contribution that agricultural land makes to the tax base. This will be part of this year's aims and objectives for HAAC.

HAAC thanks the Region for the opportunity to become integrally involved in the Sustainable Halton process. It is encouraging to note that Regional planners also realize that help will be needed to sustain the agriculture that will be left after this planning process is implemented.

This paper is respectfully submitted by the members of the HAAC sub-committee:

Sandy Grant, Lee Nurse, Lieven Gevaert and Peter Lambrick

This paper approved and endorsed in principle by HAAC at a special meeting,
February 23, 2009.

Final version approved unanimously by HAAC,

March 3, 2009.

(Notes have been added to Page 1 and Sections B, C and E for clarification, April 7, 2009)

APPENDIX 5

**Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee
March 31, 2009 - Motion**

March 31st HAAC meeting,

MOTION: Moved by Peter Lambrick, seconded by Glenn Powell

(All in favour, except Lieven Gevaert)

“Whereas there are many concerns expressed by HAAC as it pertains to the Sustainable Halton Report, most of which are due to the state of the agricultural economy and the age of Halton’s farmers;

However, be it resolved that we accept the Phase III Report and encourage the Regional Council to move ahead with the implementing the recommendations of this report into the Official Plan for those farmers in Halton who remain, because agriculture is identified as a major part of the Official Plan as it is now.”