

Growth Plan implementation Opportunities to protect nature, water and support agricultural viability

Ontario Greenbelt Alliance meeting

June 28, 2017

Joshua Wise, Ontario Nature

Debbe Crandall, STORM



Growth Plan, 2017

Building Complete Communities

Supporting a Viable Agricultural Sector

Protecting Natural Heritage and Water

Responding to Climate Change

Growing the Greenbelt

Planning for Infrastructure

Growth Plan, 2017

Building Complete Communities

Supporting a Viable Agricultural Sector

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Growing the Greenbelt

Planning for Infrastructure

Presentation

1. Opportunities through the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017
2. Overviews & policy context:
 - natural heritage system
 - agricultural system
 - water resources system
3. What we are expecting from the province
4. OGA recommendations and key messages – *discussion*
5. Next steps and strategy -- *discussion*

GGH after a decade of protection



Opinion / Commentary

Despite the Greenbelt, suburban sprawl presses on

Despite much-touted provincial regulations, dumb growth continues unabated on the ragged frontier of the megacity.



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MARCUS OLENIUK / TORONTO STAR [Order this photo](#)

The much-lauded Greenbelt is still too far off to impinge on the pre-planned sprawl now taking place in the suburbs surrounding Toronto, writes John Barber.

By: John Barber Published on Mon Nov 30 2015

Flowers will be strewn and Hosannas sung in upcoming days when elder statesman David Crombie, irrepensible bearer of good news, releases the results of his latest expert panel — a mandated review of the Ontario Greenbelt and the “smart growth” planning legislation that became law along with it a decade ago.

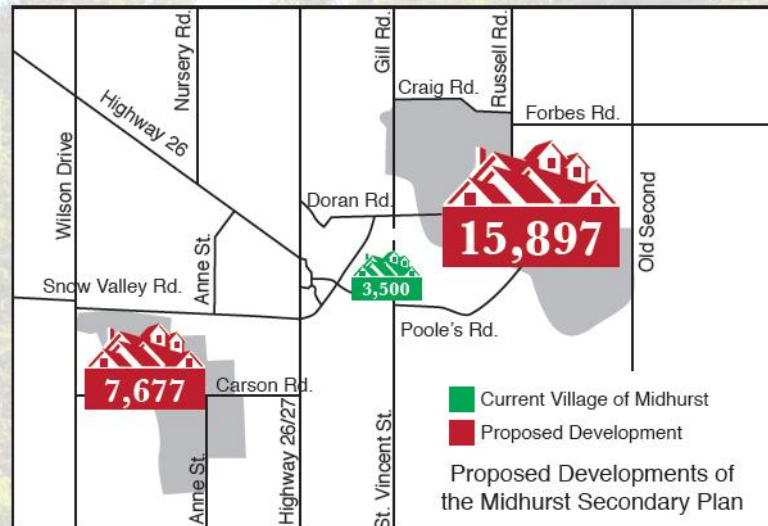
New threats to our water and nature

sprawl (sprôl)

n. Haphazard growth or extension outward especially that resulting from real estate development on the outskirts of a city
(thefreedictionary.com)

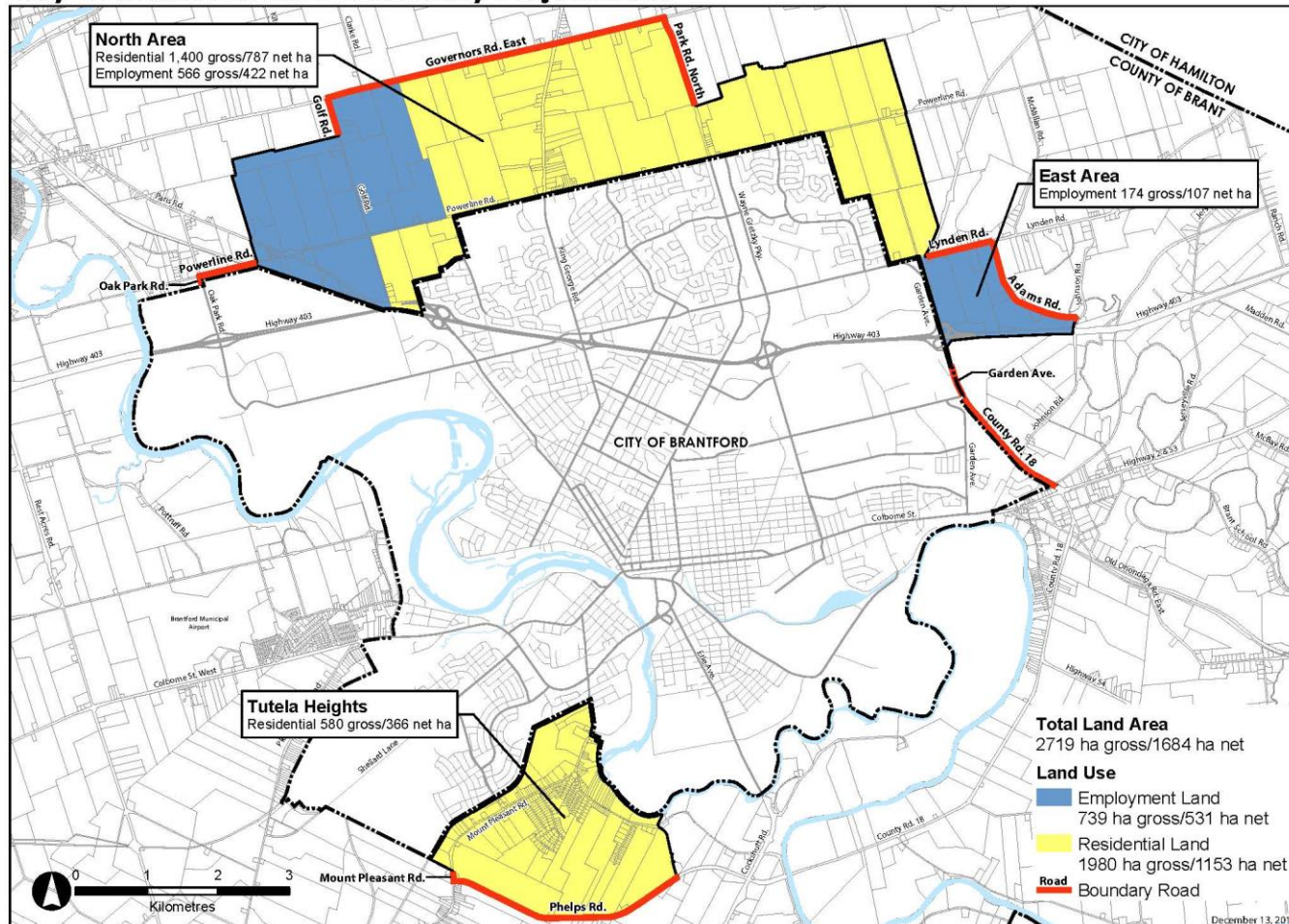
Sprawl is coming to Springwater

The urbanization of Springwater? Is this what we want?

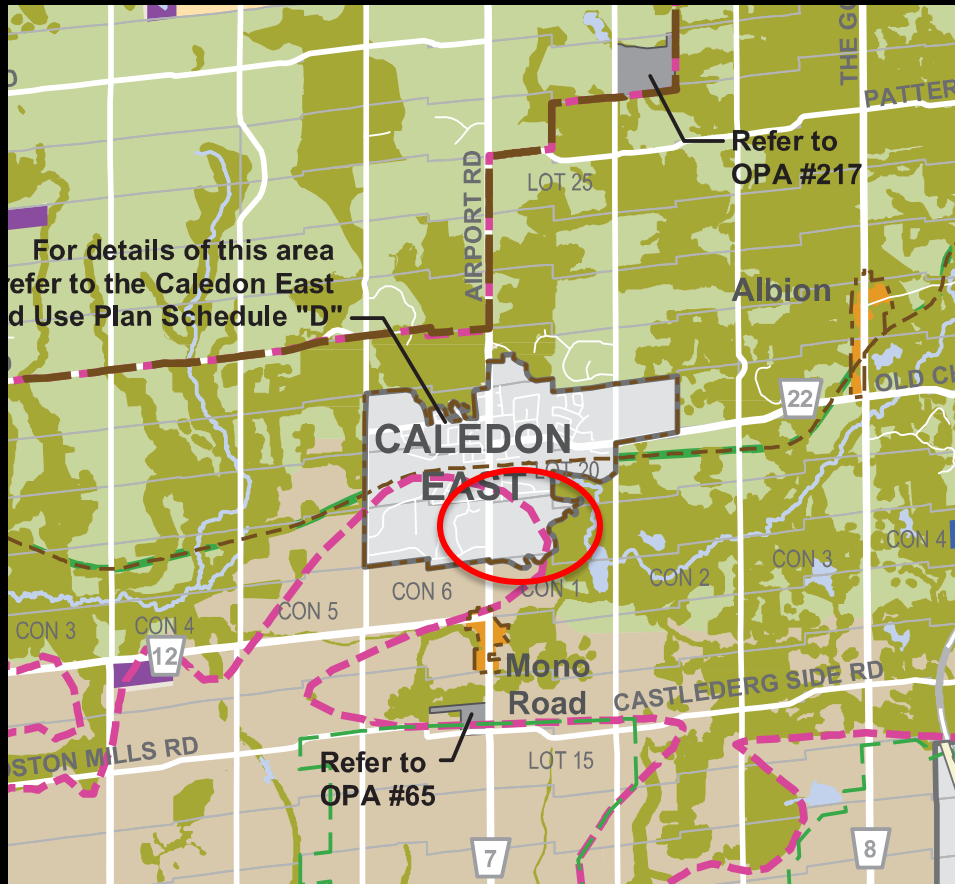


New threats to our water and nature

City of Brantford 2017 Boundary Adjustment



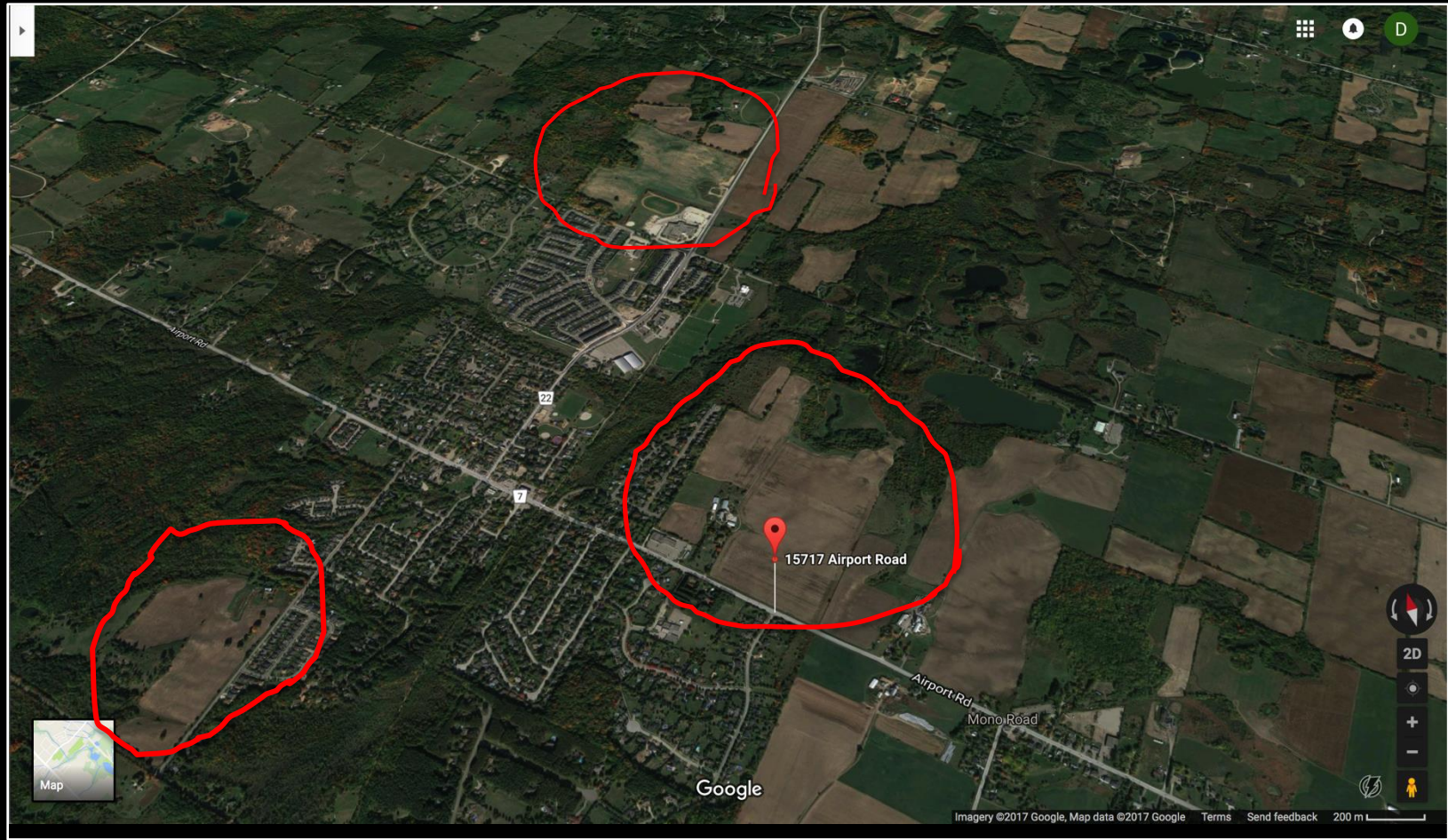
Caledon Sprawl



Caledon Citizen, May 29, 2017

“Caledon East farm sells to developer for \$97 million: Land sale for large sum indicates large residential subdivision”

The Face of Urban Sprawl



What is a natural heritage system?



Photo: Joe Crowley



Elements of a natural heritage system

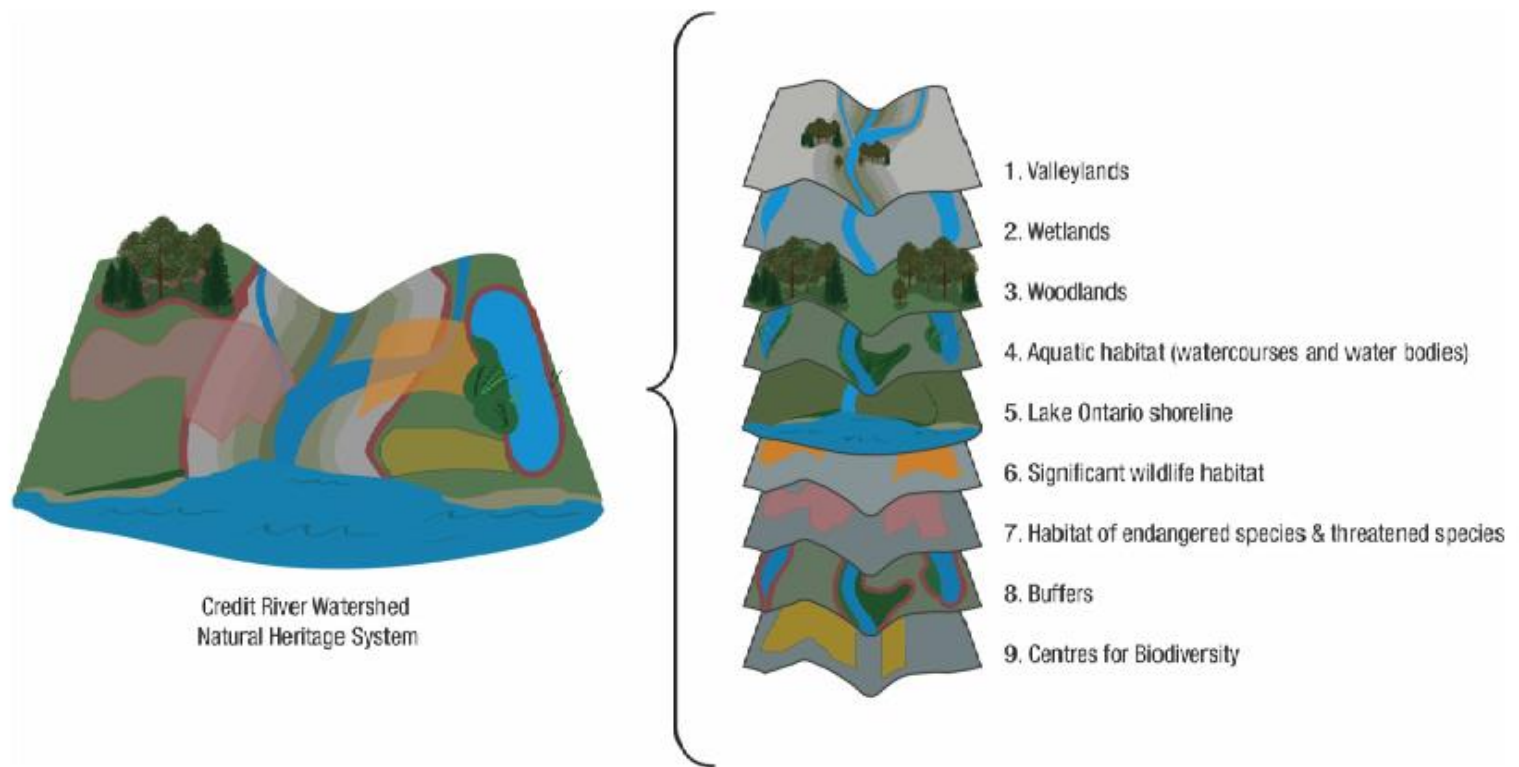


Figure 4-1 Schematic Illustration of components of the Credit River Watershed Natural Heritage System

Why are natural heritage systems needed?

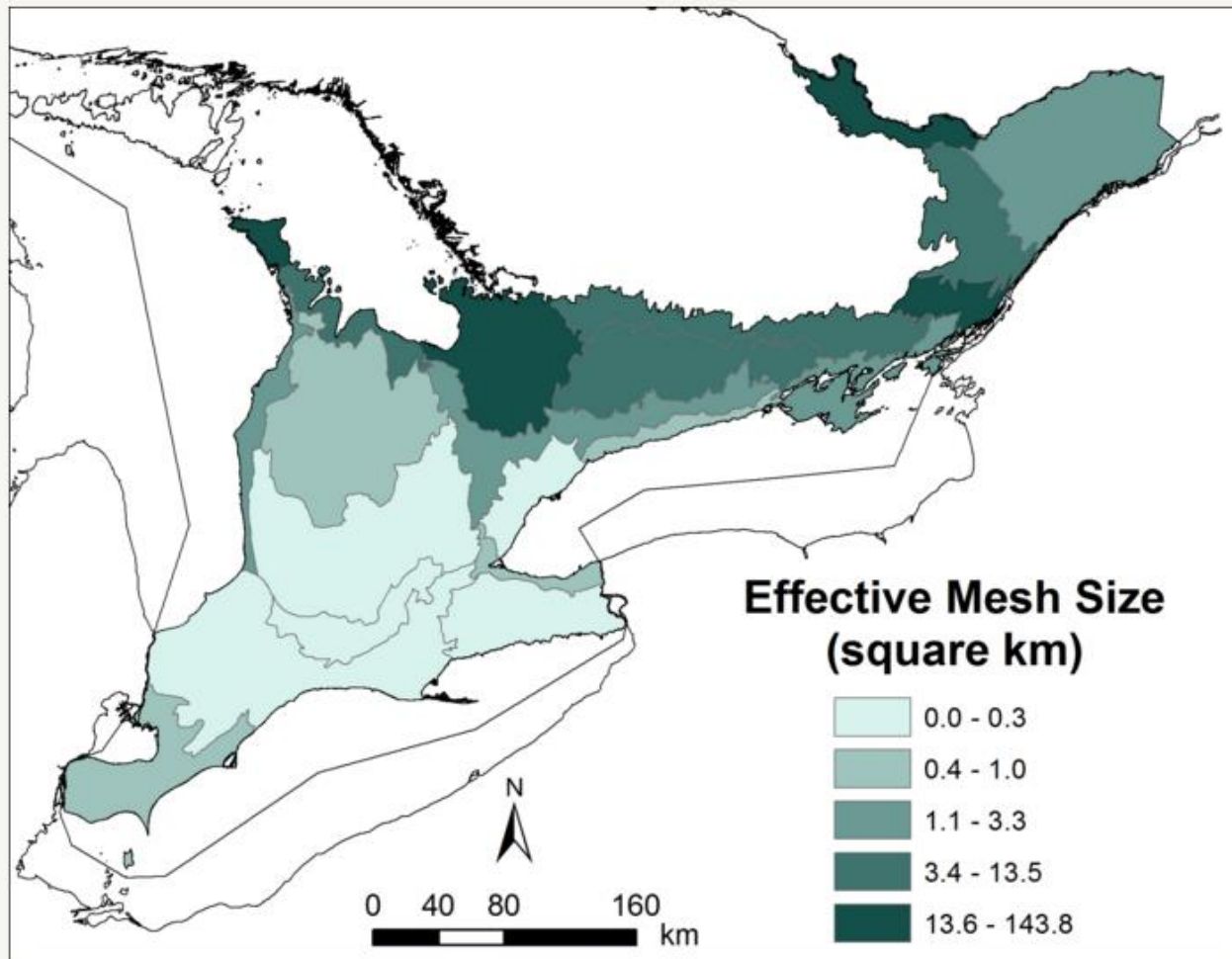


Figure 1 Effective Mesh Size for ecodistricts in southern Ontario (2011).

Value of nature in our communities



Value of nature in our communities

How Rich is Your Community?

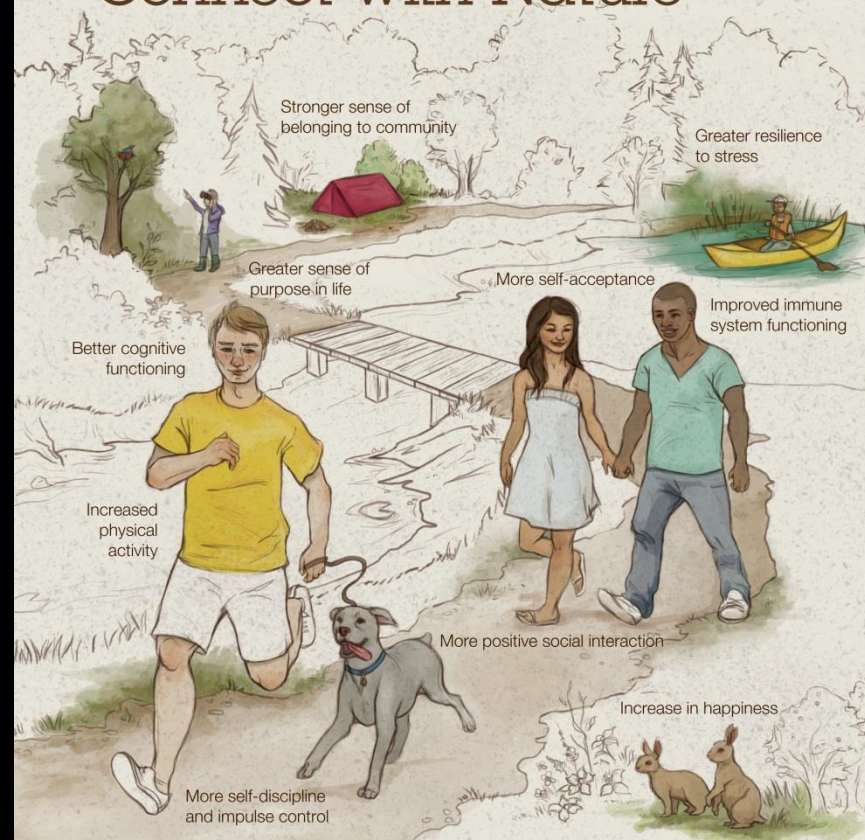


Diversify Your Portfolio. Invest in Nature.

ontarionature.org

Ontario
Nature

Be Healthy. Be Happy. Connect with Nature

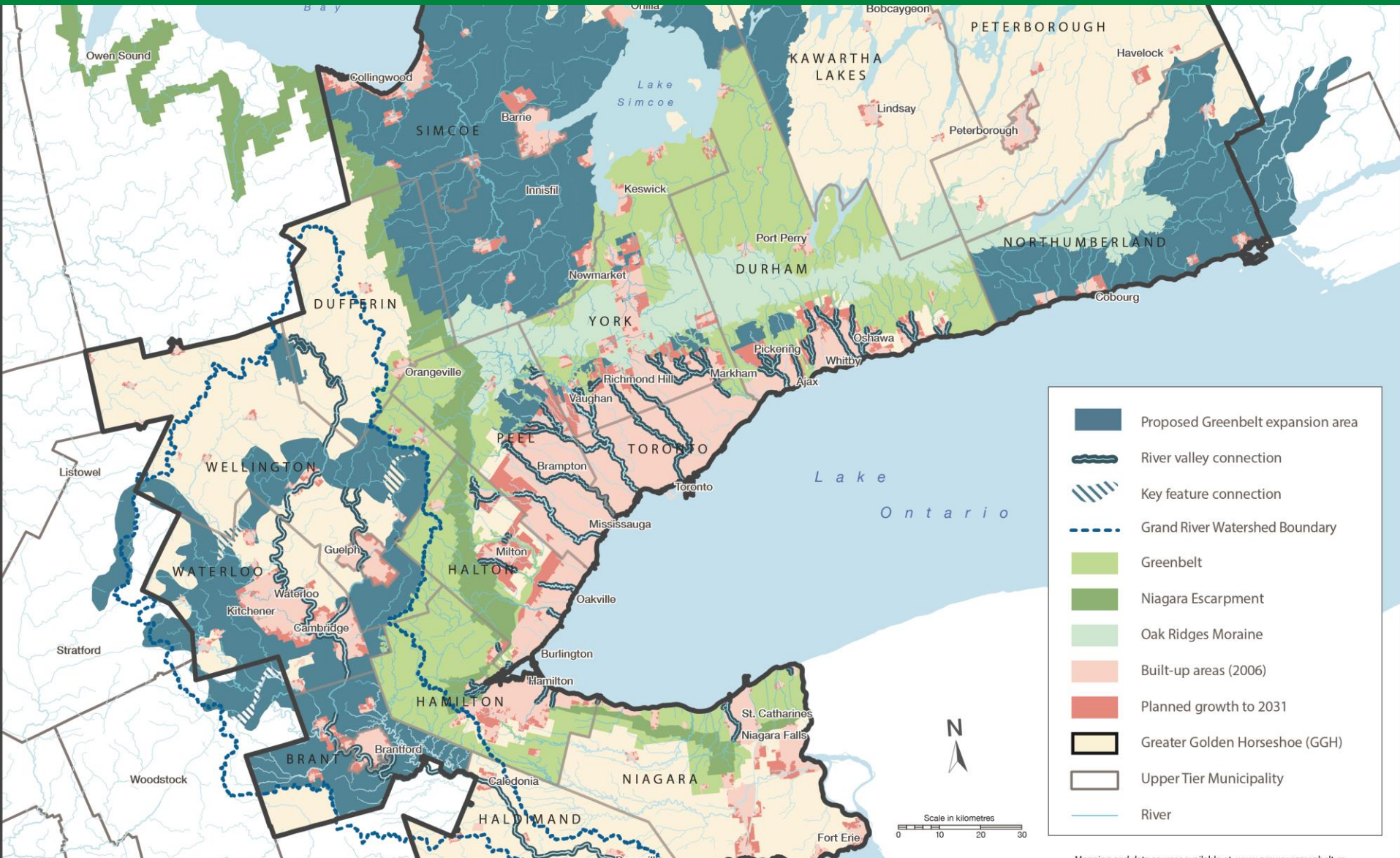


Nine in ten Canadians feel happier when connected to nature.

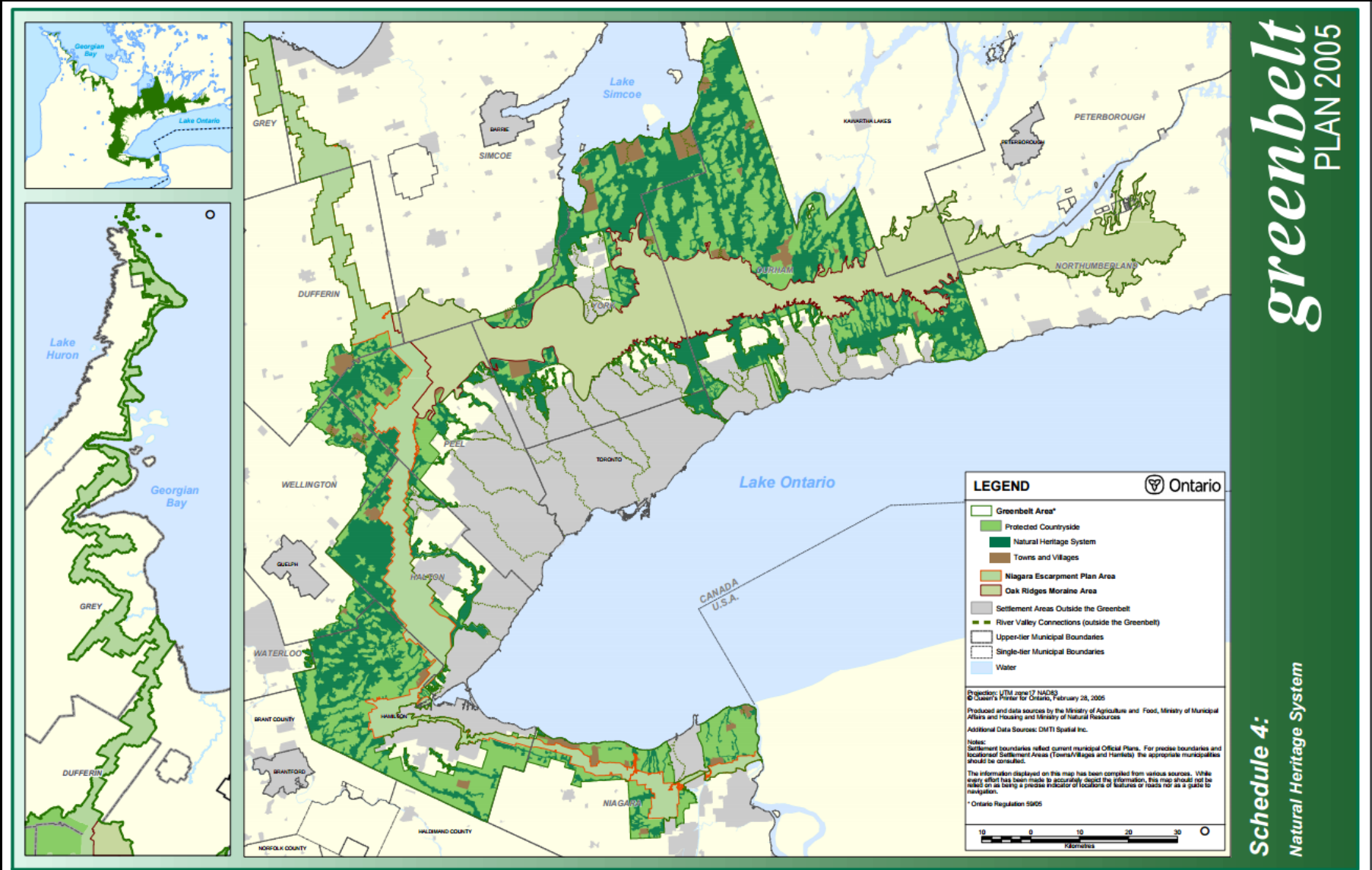
ontarionature.org

Ontario
Nature

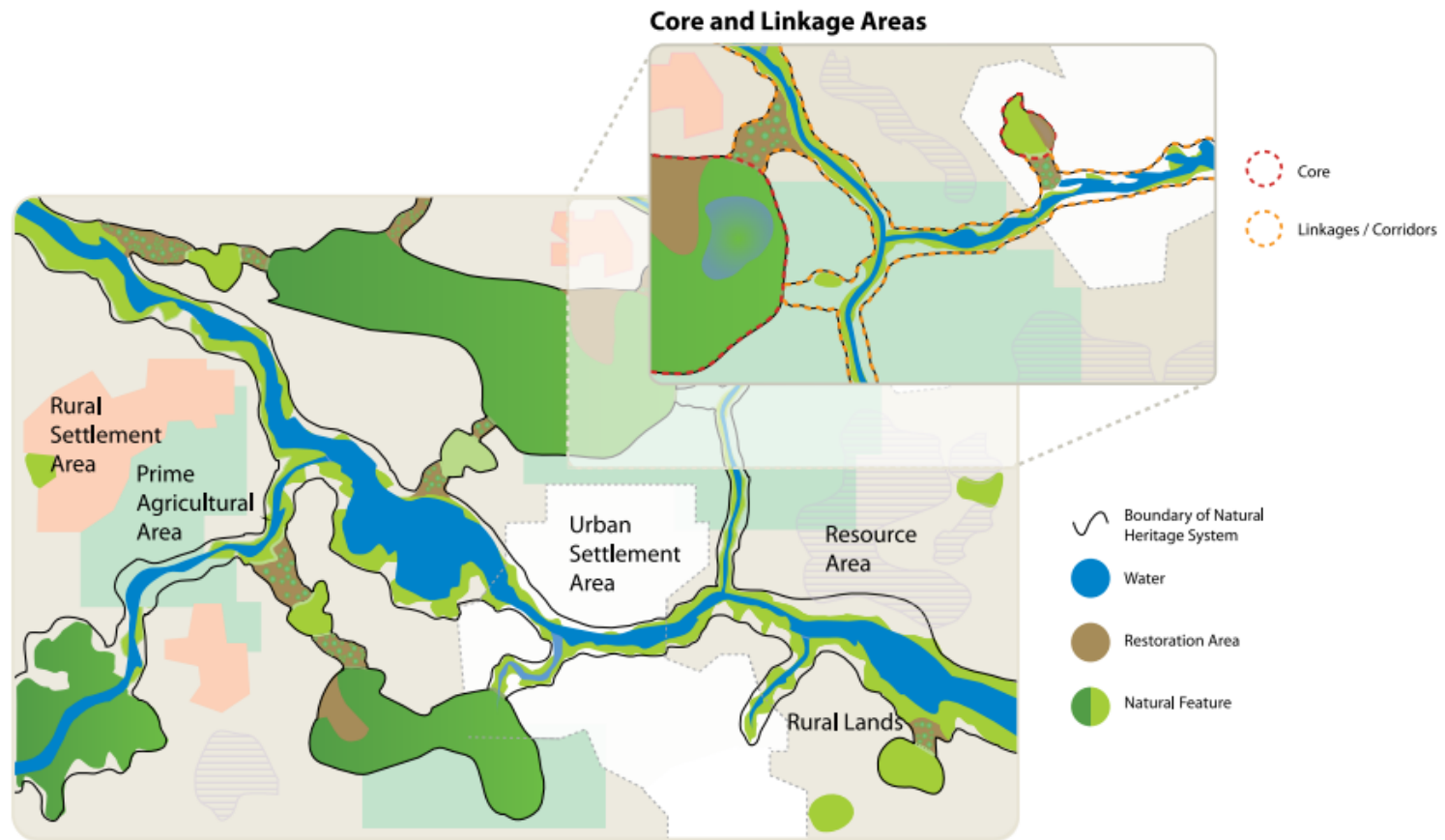
Bluebelt + “Green Suspenders”



Greenbelt's natural heritage system



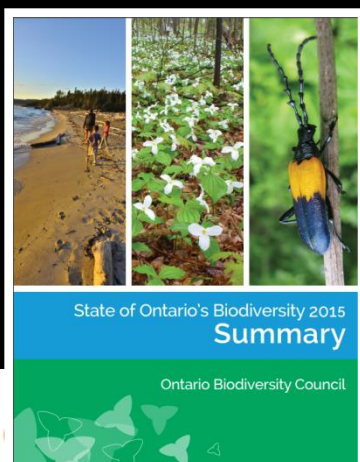
Protecting natural heritage ... well



Building Blocks of a Natural Heritage Systems

This diagram shows the components of a natural heritage system running through areas with different land uses.

Provincial Priorities– Recovering Biodiversity



ENHANCE RESILIENCE

ies and ecosystems of
is improved.

LITTLE PROGRESS – Although the status of some species at risk has improved, more species have declined. Trends in ecosystems not yet assessed.



11. By 2015, the proportion of private lands in Ontario that are managed for biodiversity is increased.

SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS – The proportion of private lands with stewardship and lands acquired for conservation have increased.



12. By 2015, natural heritage systems plans and biodiversity conservation strategies are developed and implemented at the municipal and landscape levels.

LITTLE PROGRESS – Municipal natural heritage system planning has increased, but in 2013 natural heritage systems were identified in less than 30% of municipal plans.



13. By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial and aquatic systems are conserved through well connected networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.

LITTLE PROGRESS – Although the amount of protected areas and conservation lands has increased since 2010, at 11.2% it is still well below 17% target.



14. By 2020, programs and policies are in place to maintain and enhance ecosystem services.

LITTLE PROGRESS – Although there are many biodiversity related policies and programs that help maintain ecosystem services, there are few that specifically address ecosystem services.



Updated Policy Context -- NHS

Growth Plan, 2007

- 4.2.1. Through *sub-area* assessment, the Minister of Infrastructure and other Ministers of the Crown, in consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders will identify natural systems for the *GGH*, and where appropriate develop additional policies for their protection.

Updated Growth Plan, 2017

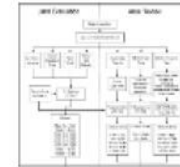
- 1. The Province will map a *Natural Heritage System* for the *GGH* to support a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to planning for the protection of the region's natural heritage and biodiversity. The *Natural Heritage System* mapping will exclude lands within *settlement area* boundaries that were approved and in effect as of July 1, 2017.
- 2. Municipalities will incorporate the *Natural Heritage System as an overlay in official plans* , and will apply appropriate policies to maintain, restore, or enhance the diversity and connectivity of the system and the long-term ecological or *hydrologic functions* of the features and areas as set out in the policies in this subsection and the policies in subsections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

Agricultural System

Process for Mapping the Agricultural Land Base

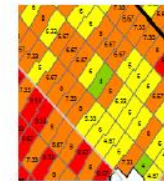
Step 1

- Complete Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study to identify high quality agricultural areas for protection (Fall 2016).



Step 2

- Prepare draft map of the agricultural land base for public consultation, based on LEAR results and other factors (Winter 2017).



Step 3

- Collaborate with municipalities to adjust mapping, based on consistent criteria (Spring 2017).



Step 4

- Finalize provincial mapping (Summer 2017).

Step 5

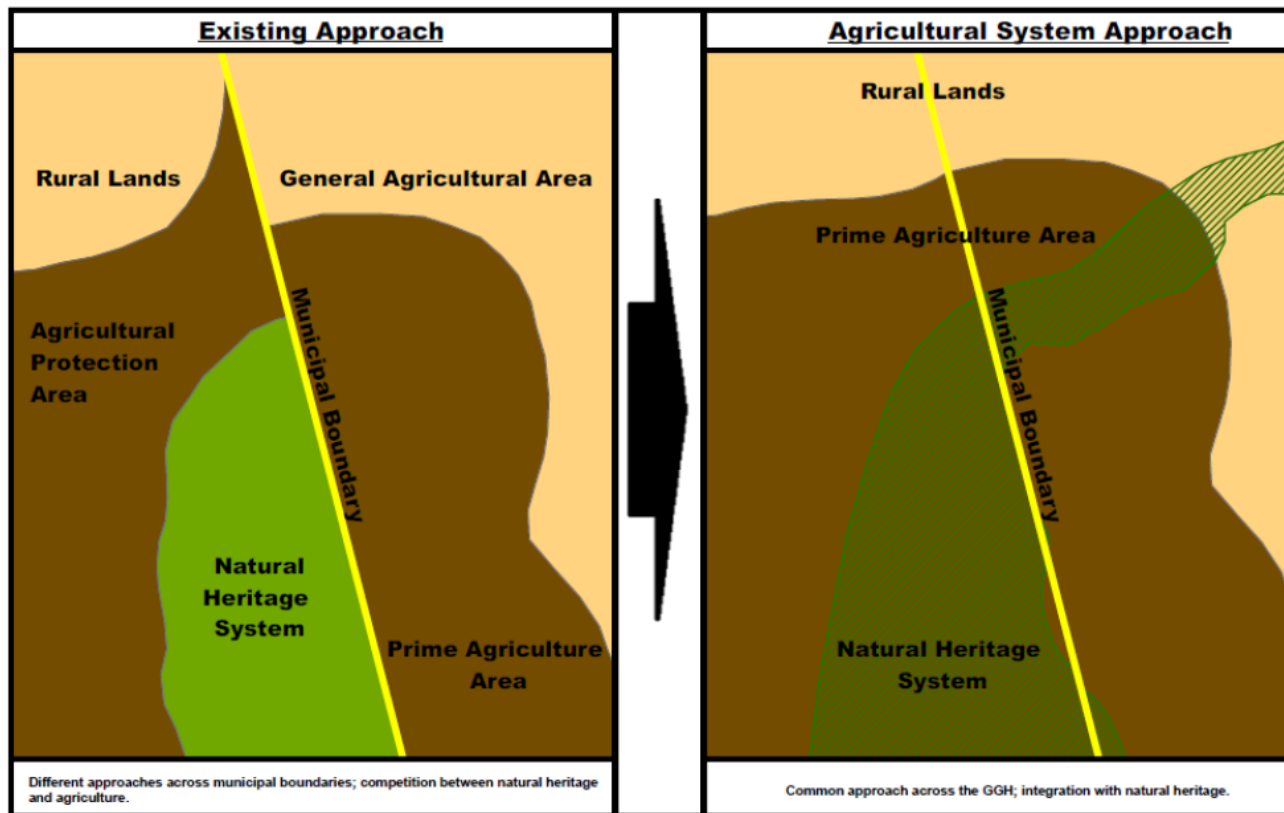
- Support municipal implementation and refinements (2018-2021).



Agricultural System

Agricultural Land Base

The province will map the Agricultural Land Base in collaboration with municipalities and other stakeholders. The goal is to consistently protect farmland across the GGH, based on a variety of factors.



Updated Policy Context – Ag System

Growth Plan, 2007

- 4.2.2 Prime Agricultural Areas
 - 1. Through *sub-area* assessment, the Minister of Infrastructure and other Ministers of the Crown, in consultation with municipalities and other stakeholders, will identify *prime agricultural areas*, including *specialty crop areas*, in the GGH, and where appropriate, develop additional policies for their protection

Updated Growth Plan, 2017

- 4.2.6 Agricultural System
 - 1. The Province will identify an *Agricultural System* for the GGH
 - 3. Where agricultural uses and non-agricultural uses interface outside of settlement areas, land use compatibility will be achieved by avoiding or where avoidance is not possible, minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts on the Agricultural System. Where mitigation is required, measures should be incorporated as part of the non-agricultural uses, as appropriate, within the area being developed.
 - 4. The geographic continuity of the agricultural land base and the functional and economic connections to the agri-food network will be maintained and enhanced.

Updated Policy Context – NH & Ag

Natural heritage systems and agriculture:

- 4.2.2 b) the full range of existing and new *agricultural uses* , *agriculture-related uses* , *on-farm diversified uses* , and *normal farm practices* are permitted. However, new buildings or structures for *agricultural uses* , *agriculture-related uses* , or *on-farm diversified uses* are not subject to policy 4.2.2.3 a), but are subject to the policies in subsections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.
- **4.2.3 Key Hydrologic Features, Key Hydrologic Areas and Key Natural Heritage Features**
 - f) expansions or alterations to existing buildings and structures for *agricultural uses* , *agriculture-related uses* , or *on-farm diversified uses* and expansions to existing residential dwellings if it is demonstrated that:
 - i. there is no alternative, and the expansion or alteration in the feature is minimized and, in the *vegetation protection zone* , is directed away from the feature to the maximum extent possible; and
 - ii. the impact of the expansion or alteration on the feature and its functions is minimized and mitigated to the maximum extent possible; and
- **4.2.4 Lands Adjacent to Key Hydrologic Features and Key Natural Heritage Features**
 - b) new buildings and structures for *agricultural uses* , *agriculture-related uses* , or *on-farm diversified uses* will not be required to undertake a natural heritage or hydrologic evaluation if a minimum 30 metre *vegetation protection zone* is provided from a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*

Water Resource System (WRS)

- One of the three protection pillars in Growth Plan area led by MOECC
- Municipal-led watershed planning approach to identify and protect a WRS
- W/S planning outcomes to inform growth allocation, infrastructure planning, water, waste water and storm water master planning
- W/S Planning to “consider” Great Lakes strategy, elements of the GL Act

Protecting the land to protect the water

The Oak Ridges Moraine is a ridge of rolling hills running across the GTA about 50 kilometres north of downtown Toronto. As more and more housing development encroaches on the moraine, there is increased concern that the water supply for more than 400,000 people in the GTA will be contaminated.

Where the water goes

①

Rain and melting snow seep through the highly permeable surface of the moraine.

②
Water percolates through the moraine's layers of sand, gravel and clay and collects in a network of underground aquifers.

50-80 metres
60-100 metres

MORaine

AQUIFERS

BEDROCK

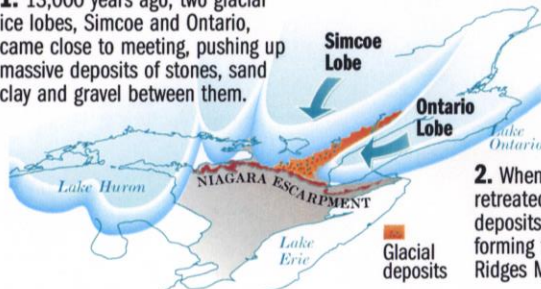
③ Private and municipal wells draw water from aquifers.

④

Water surfaces as springs, wetlands and streams which provide the headwaters for rivers flowing into Lake Ontario.

How the moraine was formed

1. 13,000 years ago, two glacial ice lobes, Simcoe and Ontario, came close to meeting, pushing up massive deposits of stones, sand and gravel between them.



2. When the ice retreated, the glacial deposits remained, forming the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Glacial deposits

Moraine facts:

- 160 kilometres long
- 3 to 24 kilometres wide
- 70 to 240 metres deep
- Highest point 300 metres above surrounding area

The GTA watershed



Water runoff from the Oak Ridges Moraine replenishes the GTA's underground aquifers and feeds more than 30 major waterways including the Rouge, Don, Humber and Credit rivers.

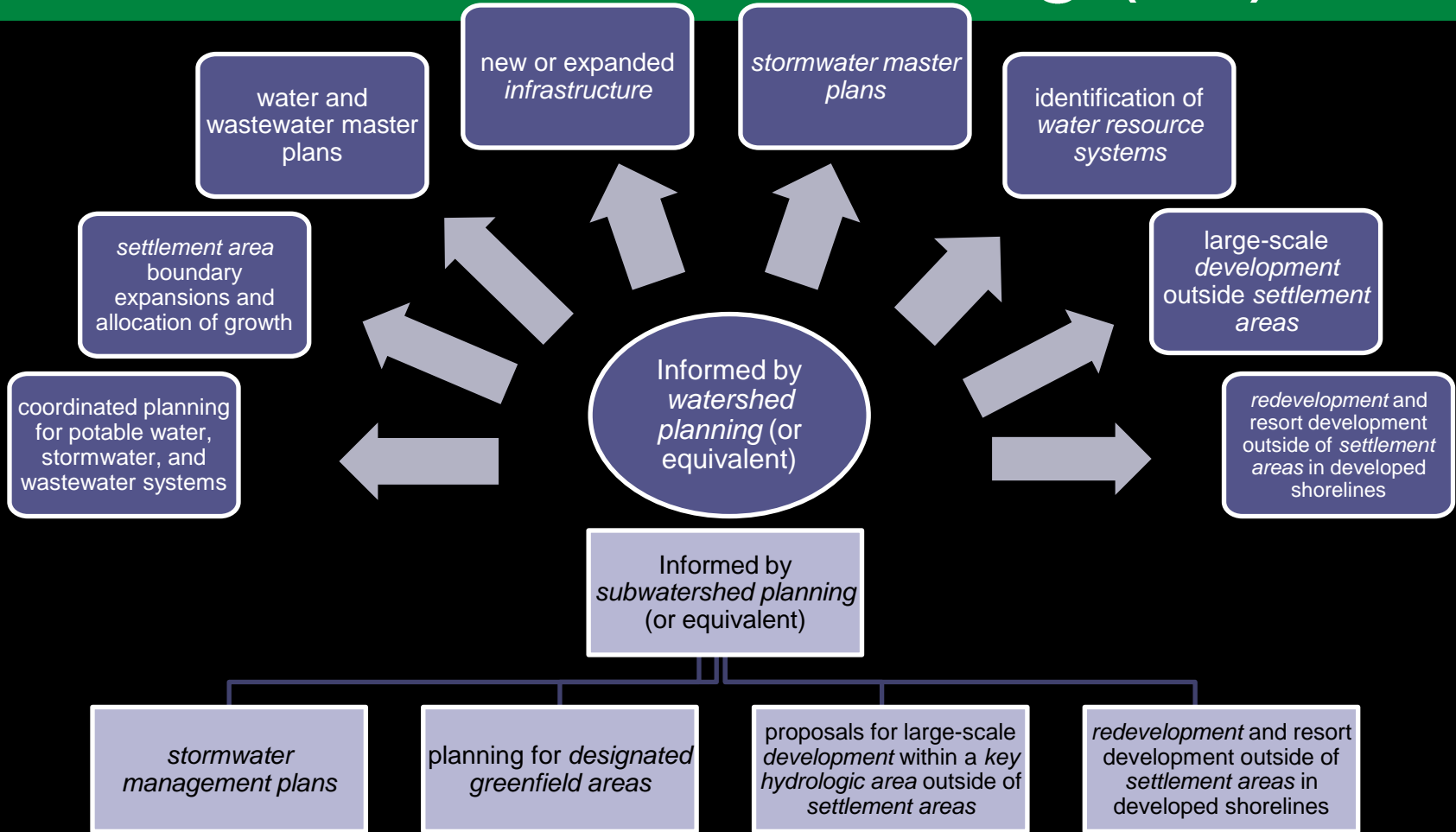
SOURCE: Special Places: The Changing Ecosystems of the Toronto Region

GRAPHIC BY CATHERINE FARLEY/TORONTO STAR

Water Resource System (WRS)

- WRS comprised of
 - key hydrological features (streams, lakes, wetlands, seepage areas)
 - Key hydrological areas (groundwater recharge areas, vulnerable aquifers, headwater areas aka significant surface water contribution areas)
 - Functions associated with above features

Role of Watershed Planning (sic)



Implementation

- Watershed Engagement Group to advise MOECC/consultant on development of a Watershed Planning Guidance document to assist municipalities
- OGA is represented by EcoSpark, Environmental Defense and Ontario Nature
- Consultations on draft guidance expected late 2017

Updated Policy Context – Water System

Growth Plan, 2007

- *NOTHING*

Updated Growth Plan, 2017

- 4.2.1 Water Resource Systems
 - 1. Municipalities, partnering with conservation authorities as appropriate, will ensure that watershed planning is undertaken to support a comprehensive, integrated, and long-term approach to the protection, enhancement, or restoration of the quality and quantity of water within a watershed.
 - 2. Water resource systems will be identified, informed by watershed planning and other available information, and the appropriate designations and policies will be applied in official plans to provide for the long-term protection of key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas, and their functions.
 - 3. Decisions on allocation of growth and planning for water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure will be informed by applicable watershed planning. Planning for designated greenfield areas will be informed by a subwatershed plan or equivalent. 4

Updated Policy Context – Brief Analysis

- Natural heritage protection in updated Growth Plan:
 - Stronger than the Provincial Policy Statement, weaker than the Greenbelt Plan
- Agricultural System
 - Should raise the bar for any urban boundary expansion proposals that would affect the agricultural system
- Water Resources System
 - A big step up from previous growth plan
 - Still left in the municipalities hands with tools and guidance materials coming from the Province

What to expect from the Province

- A commitment has been made to release the natural heritage and agricultural system this summer
- Key anticipated concerns re: natural heritage system:
 - One (or two) size(s) fits all won't work for core areas
 - Corridor widths will not be wide enough to allow species movement in an era of climate change
 - Lack of community voices in development of mapping

Post-Review Timelines

Summer 2017 Consultations on:

- Natural Heritage System, MNRF
- Agricultural System, OMAFRA

Late 2017

Watershed Planning/WRS, MOECC – draft W/S Planning Guidance document released on EBR

- Growing the Greenbelt?

Key messages from the OGA



“Nature needs half”

- Reed Noss

Key messages from the OGA



Corridor widths must be large enough to prepare this region for climate change

Key messages from the OGA



vs



Landscape variabilities must be factored in

Key messages from the OGA



Community voices & local knowledge are needed!

Key messages from the OGA



Early & sustained engagement is critical

Next Steps & Strategy

- Consultation on all three systems will require OGA members be informed to participate fully
- Natural Heritage System – ORM Partnership has available resources to deliver key messages
- Water Resource System – through OGA representation on W/S engagement group, key messages and will be developed for input

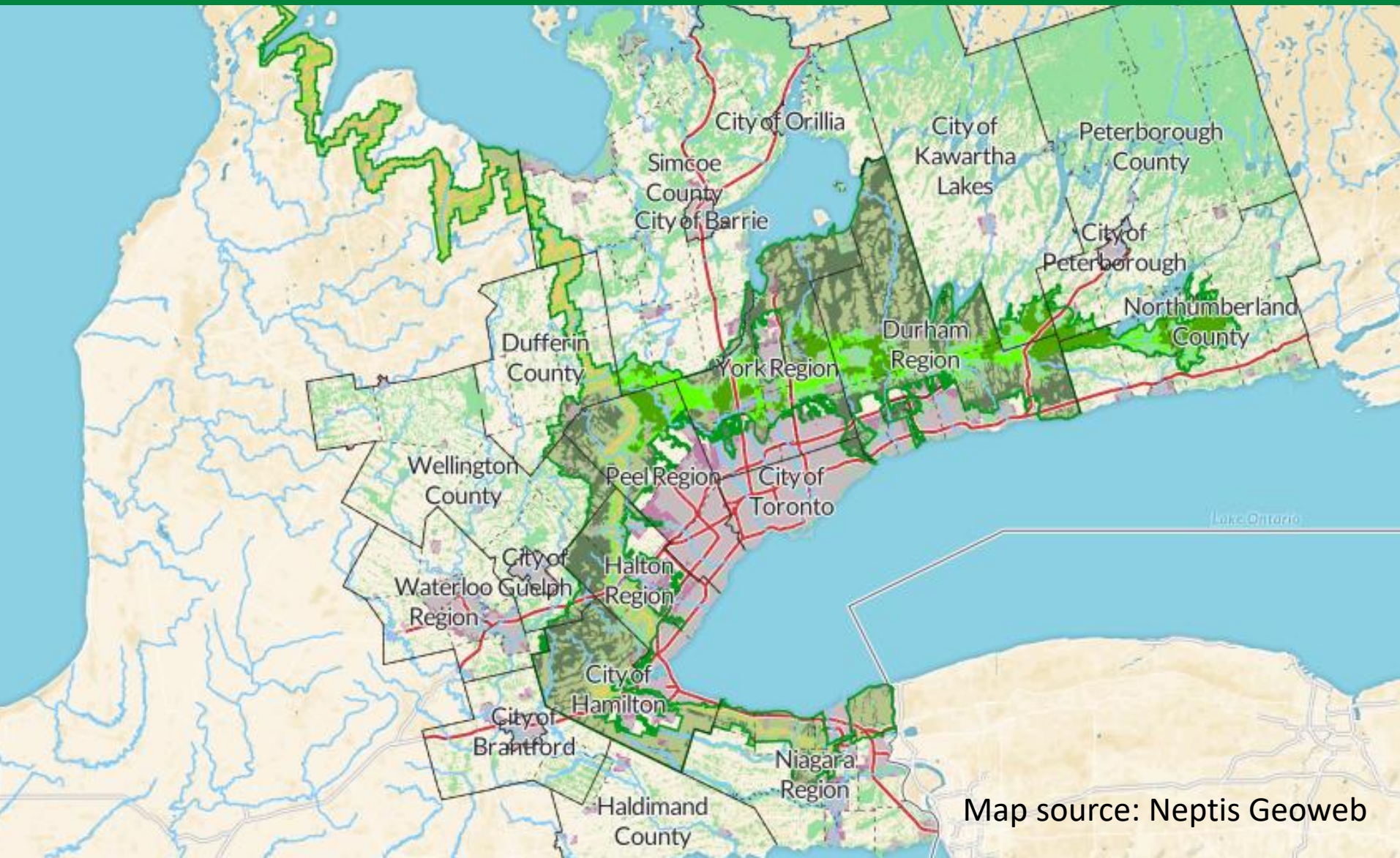
Connect people with natural areas

- Different timelines and processes for the three systems begs the questions:
 - How will the NHS, Ag System and Water Resource System intersect?
 - How will success be measured?
 - Will local groups step up to push through these three protection pillars?

Engage, engage, engage!



Regional natural heritage systems



Map source: Neptis Geoweb