



Chapter

# 6 | Agricultural and Rural Areas



## In this chapter:

- 6.1 The Greenbelt Plan
- 6.2 The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
- 6.3 Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas
- 6.4 Rural Area
- 6.5 Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas

The Regional Municipality of York

**Official Plan**

**York Region**



Office Consolidation - April 2016



# 6.0 | Agricultural and Rural Areas



## **In this chapter:**

**6.1 The Greenbelt Plan**

**6.2 The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan**

**6.3 Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas**

**6.4 Rural Area**

**6.5 Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas**

Agricultural and Rural Areas form an important part of the fabric of York Region, supporting a vibrant agricultural community and contributing to the economy, quality of life and natural heritage legacy. The diverse landscape is one of the things that makes the Region attractive to citizens and business. Approximately 38 per cent of York Region's land use is devoted to farming activities.

The Region has some of the most productive agricultural lands in Canada. The black organic soils in the Holland Marsh in King Township and East Gwillimbury areas, other market gardening areas and the equine industry distinguish the Region. Agricultural production is an important part of the Region's economy, providing jobs and agricultural products.

Approximately 69 per cent of the Region is within the Greenbelt Plan Area, including the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area. The Protected Countryside designation of the Greenbelt Plan contains the land base for agricultural production and protects prime agricultural lands as Agricultural Area, Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area and the Rural Area. York Region agriculture is evolving due to the influence of the large urban areas within the Region and in the balance of the Greater Toronto Area. This near-urban influence is expected to provide new opportunities and markets for farm operators.

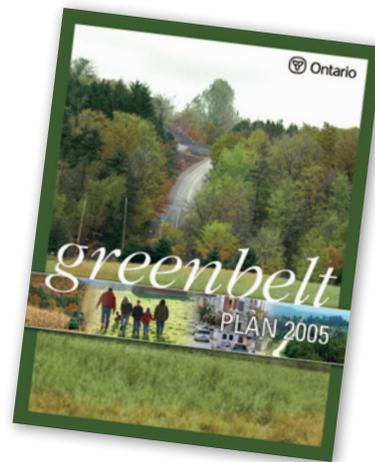
In an effort to assist in identifying the Agricultural Area and Rural Area, a Land Evaluation Area Review, was undertaken. This study analyzed Canada Land Inventory soil capability as well as fragmentation by non-farm uses, conflicting uses and current production. The results of the review were augmented with local and municipal input, to arrive at the identification of Agricultural and Rural Areas shown on Map 8. The Specialty Crop Area is based on the provincial identification of the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area in the Greenbelt Plan. Provincial policy requires that the Agricultural Area and the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area receive the highest level of protection from incompatible land uses in municipal planning documents.

► **Agricultural and Rural Areas Goal: To protect the Agricultural, Rural, and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas and support the agricultural industry as essential components of the Regional fabric.**

## ▶ 6.1 The Greenbelt Plan

The Greenbelt Plan, including lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine, provides limits to urban expansion in the Region and complements Places to Grow: The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The majority of lands outside of the Urban Area of the Region are within the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. These two Provincial Plans provide protection to agricultural and rural lands and their ecological features and functions.



▶ **Objective: To protect Agricultural, Rural, and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas within the Greenbelt from incompatible uses.**

### It is the policy of Council:

**6.1.1** That lands within the Greenbelt Plan are identified as Protected Countryside on Map 1 of this Plan. While the Greenbelt Plan includes the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area, the policies of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan prevail in the area of its coverage.

**6.1.2** That prime agricultural lands and specialty crop lands within the Greenbelt Plan in York Region are designated as Agricultural Area and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area, respectively on Map 8.

**6.1.3** That local municipalities shall identify the Greenbelt Protected Countryside and the Natural Heritage System in local official plans and determine specific permitted uses to meet the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan and this Plan.

**6.1.4** That lands designated as Agricultural Area, Rural Area or Urban Area in this Plan that are also part of the Natural Heritage System in the Greenbelt Plan are subject to the Regional Greenlands System policies of Section 2.1 of this Plan, and are intended to function as part of the Regional Greenlands System in the long term.

**6.1.5** That new multiple units or multiple lots, as defined in the Greenbelt Plan, for residential dwellings, such as estate residential developments, adult lifestyle, and retirement communities are prohibited, except in the Serviced Lakeshore Residential Area in the Town of Georgina existing at the date of approval of this Plan.

**6.1.6** That transportation, infrastructure and utilities are permitted in the Greenbelt Plan Area, in all land use designations shown on Map 8, and *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*, where the provisions of the Greenbelt Plan have been met. Demonstrated need for a project and conformity with the Greenbelt Plan will be assessed and included as part of an Environmental Assessment Act process. If an Environmental Assessment Act process does not apply, the requirements of the Greenbelt Plan will be met through Planning Act, Condominium Act, Local Improvement Act processes, or other applicable approval processes.

**6.1.7** That where there is a conflict between policies of this Plan, local official plans and the Greenbelt Plan, the more restrictive policy shall apply, with the exception of lot creation policies as set out in the Greenbelt Plan. Local official plans and zoning by-laws shall not be more restrictive than the Greenbelt Plan as they apply to agricultural uses and mineral aggregate resources.

**6.1.8** That the Rouge Park connecting Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine in eastern Markham, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Richmond Hill is contained within the Greenbelt Plan and the Regional Greenlands System. Within the Rouge Park, land uses shall be permitted in accordance with the Greenbelt Plan and the Rouge North Management Plan.

**6.1.9** That within the Town of Richmond Hill, the Greenbelt Plan policies apply only to those lands within major river valleys and as defined by provincial regulations. Local municipal land use designations and special provisions within these portions of the Greenbelt Plan have been identified through the approval of the North Leslie Secondary Plan by the Ontario Municipal Board in 2006 and 2010.

**6.1.10** That the Keswick Business Park Study Area is subject to Section 3.4.4 of the Greenbelt Plan and special provisions in the Official Plan of the Town of Georgina. Any development of these lands will require an amendment to this Plan and the local official plan.

*Policies relating to land uses and permitted uses within the Greenbelt Plan are dispersed throughout this Plan, specifically within the following sections:*

*2.1 Regional Greenlands System: A Sustainable Natural Environment Legacy*

*2.2 Natural Features: Components of the Greenlands System*

*· Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt and Lake Simcoe Watershed Features*

*3.4 Cultural Heritage*

*5.6 Building Complete, Vibrant Communities*

*6.3 Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas*

*6.4 Rural Area*

*6.5 Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas*

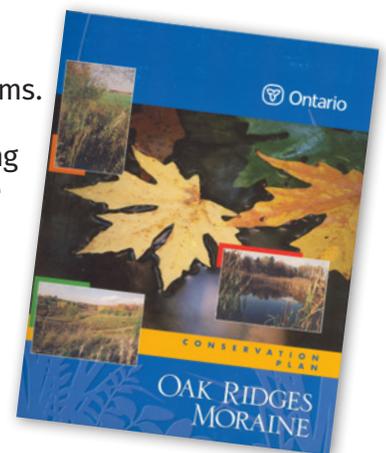
*7.3 Water and Wastewater Servicing*

*8.3 The Planning Process* ■■■

### ▶ 6.2 The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

The Oak Ridges Moraine is one of Ontario's most significant landforms. Located north of Lake Ontario, the Moraine in York Region divides the watersheds draining south into Lake Ontario from those draining north into Lake Simcoe. The Moraine shapes the present and future form and structure of the Greater Toronto Area. Its ecological and hydrological features and functions are critical to the area's continuing health.

Through the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 and the accompanying Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Province has directed the protection, restoration, and enhancement of the Oak Ridges Moraine's ecological and hydrological features and functions.





The major provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan that are relevant at the Regional level have been incorporated into this Plan, however, these policies must be read in conjunction with the detailed provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and applicable local official plans and zoning by-laws.

► **Objective: To protect and where possible improve or restore the ecological and hydrological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine.**

### **It is the policy of Council:**

**6.2.1** To recognize the boundary and land use designations of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area as shown on Map 1. Along the southern boundary of the Moraine, east of Bathurst Street, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan applies to lands within that Plan boundary and above the 245 metre above sea level Canadian Geodetic Datum contour line. In the event of a question regarding plan applicability in this area, the Region will require a topographic survey certified by an Ontario Land Surveyor, and based on field surveys tied to Ontario Geodetic Datum before planning decisions are made on specific applications.

Where lands are within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan boundary, but below the elevation of 245 metre above sea level Canadian Geodetic Datum, the lands are deemed to be within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt Plan and all of the policies of the Greenbelt Plan apply.

**6.2.2** That the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, identifies land use designations and permitted uses, including the following:

- a. Natural Core Areas have a high concentration of key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, and/or landform conservation areas and are critical to maintaining the integrity of the Moraine as a whole. New permitted uses are very limited and may include conservation and resource management, low intensity-recreation, or *agricultural uses*, as detailed in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- b. Natural Linkage Areas form part of a central corridor system that supports or has the potential to support movement of plants and animals between the Natural Core Areas, Natural Linkage Areas, river valleys and stream corridors. Limited new uses may include those permitted in the Natural Core Area designation, as well as mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits, as detailed in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.
- c. Countryside Areas contain rural land uses, which may include agriculture, land extensive *major recreational uses*, major institutional, Hamlets, mineral aggregate operations, recreational and open space. Small-scale industrial, commercial, institutional and recreational uses shall be directed to Hamlets, Towns and Villages and the Urban Area.

Hamlets, designated within local official plans and located within the Countryside Area are generally depicted on Map 1 and are intended to provide opportunities for minor residential infill and small-scale industrial, commercial and institutional and recreational uses in accordance with the policies of this Plan and local official plans.



Land extensive *major recreational uses*, and small scale industrial, commercial and institutional uses are not permitted to locate in the Agricultural Area shown on Map 8.

- d. The Urban Area and Towns and Villages are intended to be the focus of growth. These areas permit a full range of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses.

**6.2.3** That the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan designation of Settlement Areas includes portions of the Urban Area (Aurora, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan) and Towns and Villages (Ballantrae, King City, Mount Albert, Nobleton, and Stouffville). In these areas, policies contained in Chapter 5 of this Plan and local official plans shall guide permitted development. Where the local official plan is more restrictive than this Plan, the more restrictive policies shall apply.

**6.2.4** To work with local municipalities, adjacent Regions, the Province and stakeholders in implementing the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.5** To require local official plans and zoning by-laws to include appropriate policies to implement the requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.6** To support local municipalities in adopting innovative approaches to implementing the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, including but not limited to the use of development permits or zoning.

**6.2.7** That local municipalities shall adopt site alteration and tree-cutting by-laws in conformity with the Municipal Act in accordance with provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001.

**6.2.8** That applications for *development* or *site alteration* within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area will only be considered where they comply with the provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.9** That existing institutional uses and expansions are permitted subject to the Existing Use provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and local official plans and zoning by-laws. When expansion of such uses is applied for, the applicant shall demonstrate that the expansion will not adversely affect the ecological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area. Additional studies as identified in Parts III and IV of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan may be required.

**6.2.10** That all applications, matters or proceedings as defined under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, commenced on or after November 17, 2001 are required to conform with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.11** That applications in Natural Core, Natural Linkage and/or Countryside Areas that were commenced but were not decided prior to November 17, 2001, as defined in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, are required to conform with the prescribed provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.12** That applications in the Natural Core and/or Natural Linkage Areas that were commenced and decided before November 17, 2001 as defined in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 are not subject to the provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan provided that the use, building or structure for which the application was intended is legally existing as of March 27, 2003.



Policies relating to specific land uses within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan are dispersed throughout this Plan, specifically within the following sections:

- 2.1 **Regional Greenlands System: A Sustainable Natural Environment Legacy**
- 2.2 **Natural Features: Components of the Greenlands System**
  - Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt and Lake Simcoe Watershed Features
- 3.4 **Cultural Heritage**
- 5.6 **Building Complete, Vibrant Communities**
- 6.3 **Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas**
- 6.4 **Rural Area**
- 6.5 **Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas**
- 7.3 **Water and Wastewater Servicing**
- 8.4 **Interpretation**

### **It is the policy of Council:**

**6.2.13** That estate residential developments, adult lifestyle and retirement communities created by plans of subdivision or condominium are prohibited in the Natural Core, Natural Linkage and Countryside designations of the Oak Ridges Moraine unless all required applications meet the transitional provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, as amended.

**6.2.14** That applications for *major development* are required to meet the provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.15** That transportation infrastructure and utilities are permitted in all Oak Ridges Moraine land use designations, and key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, where the Infrastructure provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan have been met. Demonstrated need for a project and conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan will be assessed and included as part of an Environmental Assessment Act process. If an Environmental Assessment Act process does not apply, the requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan will be met through Planning Act, Condominium Act, Local Improvement Act, or other applicable approval processes. The opening of a street within an unopened street allowance is prohibited unless all other requirements of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan are met.

**6.2.16** To request that the Province clarify the provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan with respect to *alternative energy systems* and *renewable energy systems*, either prior to or as part of the 2015 review of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.2.17** That where a term is defined in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, those definitions shall prevail over those contained in this Plan.

**6.2.18** That where there is a conflict between this Plan, local official plans and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the more restrictive policies shall apply.



## ▶ 6.3 Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas

York Region has some of the most productive agricultural lands in Canada, including the black organic soils of the provincially significant Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area in King Township and East Gwillimbury, as well as muck soil areas in Georgina. The Region also has several areas with world-renowned equine facilities.

The agricultural sector contributes significant value to the Regional economy yearly. The Holland Marsh alone generates between \$95 and \$169 million of economic activity yearly to the Provincial economy.

While agricultural lands are protected with the Greenbelt Plan Area, there are also prime agricultural lands outside of the Greenbelt Plan and in *new community areas*. This Plan recognizes and encourages agricultural uses. In *new community areas*, this Plan encourages agricultural uses on the lands until such time as development occurs. Within and outside of the Greenbelt Plan, agricultural uses are important to the Region's economy and as a source of local agricultural production.

The municipalities of Markham, Vaughan, East Gwillimbury, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville have agricultural and rural lands that lie outside the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area. These lands may be required to accommodate growth, subject to the tests and policies of the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan as applied through a Regional *municipal comprehensive review* of the York Region Official Plan.

▶ **Objectives: To protect Agricultural and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Areas for the future to ensure a sustainable agricultural industry.**

**To support York Region's farmers and agricultural organizations as valuable contributors to the community.**

### **It is the policy of Council:**

**6.3.1** To recognize and protect the Agricultural Area and the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area, designated on Map 8, as natural resources of major importance to the economic and social viability of the Region.

**6.3.2** That within the Agricultural Area and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area, *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses and secondary agricultural uses* are supported and permitted.

**6.3.3** That outside of the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, refinements to either the Agricultural Area or the Rural Area, shown on Map 8, are not permitted unless undertaken through a Regional *municipal comprehensive review*.

**6.3.4** That the Agricultural Area and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area shall be designated and protected in local municipal official plans and zoning by-laws.

**6.3.5** That temporary farm related uses such as farm-gate sales of produce or goods primarily grown or made on the farm shall be permitted subject to local municipal requirements.

**6.3.6** That new permitted land uses, consents, and new or expanding livestock operations shall comply with the Province's *Minimum Distance Separation Formulae*.



**York Region’s Land Evaluation Area Review**

A numerical rating system for each lot and concession, designed to determine the long-term agricultural potential of land and assist in identifying prime agricultural areas.

York Region has utilized this review to refine Map 8 and the policies of the Agricultural and Rural sections of this Plan.

Land Evaluation Canada Land Inventory Values	Area Review Fragmentation, Conflicting Uses; Current Production
65% of total score	35% of total score
<b>Threshold of 6.0</b>	
Score > 6.0 is potential Prime Agriculture	
Score < 6.0 is potential Rural	

**It is the policy of Council:**

**6.3.7** That consents will only be permitted in the Agricultural Area and Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area in the following instances:

- a. acquisition of land by a public body for infrastructure projects;
- b. conveyances to public bodies or non-profit agencies for natural heritage or conservation purposes, providing no separate residential lot is created;
- c. minor lot adjustments or boundary additions, provided they do not create a separate lot for a residential dwelling in *specialty crop* or *prime agricultural areas* and there is no increased fragmentation of a *key natural heritage feature* or *key hydrologic feature*;
- d. agricultural uses where both the subject and retained lands are a minimum size of 16 hectares (40 acres) in the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area and 40 hectares (100 acres) in the Agricultural Area;
- e. existing or new *agriculture-related uses*, such as farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are small in scale and directly related to the farm operation and required to be located in close proximity to the farm operation. In these cases, the new lot will be limited to the minimum size required for the use and appropriate individual private on-site water and wastewater systems will be required; or,
- f. severance of an existing residence that is surplus to a farming operation as a result of a farm consolidation, providing no additional residence can be constructed on the retained farmland.

**6.3.8** That notwithstanding policy 6.3.7.e of this Plan, a consent for an *agriculture-related use* is not permitted on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

**6.3.9** That additional residential structures for farm help required for *agriculture uses* on the farm, may be permitted, subject to local municipal requirements and if grouped with existing farm structures. A consent to sever these structures from the main *agriculture use* is prohibited.



**6.3.10** That in those portions of the Agricultural Area in Markham, Vaughan, East Gwillimbury, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville outside the Oak Ridges Moraine or Greenbelt which may accommodate future growth, and within *new community areas*, until such time as development occurs, *normal farm practices* and a full range of *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses* and *secondary agricultural uses* shall be permitted and encouraged.

**6.3.11** To work with the farm community, agricultural organizations and conservation authorities to implement best management practices for integrated pest management, phosphorus reduction, nutrient management and soil and water conservation on agricultural lands.

**6.3.12** To promote agricultural practices which minimize impacts on air quality and climate change, such as no-till farming.

**6.3.13** To discourage the removal of topsoil and encourage local municipalities to enact by-laws, under the Municipal Act, to regulate the removal of topsoil.

**6.3.14** That *alternative energy systems* and *renewable energy systems* shall be permitted within the Agricultural Area, but not within the Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements. Any such systems not exempt from Planning Act approvals within the Greenbelt shall be subject to the policies of the Greenbelt Plan and shall be designed to minimize disturbance on agricultural operations.

**6.3.15** That in addition to uses permitted in policy 6.3.2 of this Plan, on those lands identified on Map 5 as Conservation Area/Regional Forest or Provincial Park/Nature Reserve, a full range of public open space uses, including environmental education and demonstration projects, passive and active recreation, and associated facilities are permitted.

### Local Agriculture

Access to a safe, secure food supply is a basic human right. York Region supports activities to ensure that food sources and agricultural production remain available locally and will work with local organizations to assist farmers in bringing locally grown and produced food and other agricultural products from farm to table.

#### Farmer's Markets and Agricultural Festivals in York Region

- Aurora Farmers' Market
- Newmarket Main Street Farmers' Market
- Georgina Farmers' Market
- Markham Farmers' Market
- Downtown Stouffville's Farmers' Market
- Sutton Fair and Horse Show
- Markham Fair
- Woodbridge Fall Fair
- Kettleby Fair
- Kleinburg Binder Twine Festival
- Whitchurch-Stouffville's Strawberry Festival
- Stiver Mill Farmers' Market in Unionville
- Main Street Markham Farmers' Market
- York Farmers' Market



### Eating Locally:

- Sustains small farms
- Improves air quality and pollution by reduced travel time
- Keeps us in touch with the seasons
- Reduces chance of large-scale food contamination
- Supports the local economy
- Reduces vulnerability to oil shortages and transportation problems
- Provides fresher and healthier food choices

► **Objective:** To ensure agricultural land is available for growing and producing, among other things, local food that is accessible to York Region residents and neighbouring communities.

### It is the policy of Council:

**6.3.16** To support local food production and procurement through means such as a Local Food Charter, buying and production co-operatives, farm-to-table programs, and farmers' markets at key locations in York Region communities.

**6.3.17** To support York Region's agricultural industry and assist the industry in responding to changing conditions and markets, by considering:

- a. supporting local farm organizations in promoting the availability of local food and value-added products, including the development of local farm markets and farm-gate sales, subject to public health and safety standards;
- b. promoting a variety of agricultural products originating within the Region and where possible assisting local farmers in diversifying agricultural products;
- c. encouraging continuing agriculture on lands adjacent to all communities in York Region as a source of local food;
- d. encouraging the provision of community gardens and other urban agriculture practices, but not including animal agriculture in new and existing communities;
- e. developing local food-sourcing policies for Regional facilities and encouraging other public sector agencies within the Region to adopt similar policies; and,
- f. encouraging dialogue with other levels of government, local farmers and farm organizations in York Region to ensure that the agricultural industry remains competitive, sustainable and viable in the long term.

**6.3.18** To support the Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Plan as a blueprint to strengthen the agricultural economy in the Greater Toronto Area.

**6.3.19** To encourage the Province to proactively assess, encourage and promote policies and programs directed to the production, distribution and use of local food by residents and business.

## ► 6.4 Rural Area

The Rural Area includes viable farms, businesses, and land uses such as equestrian facilities, farm markets, rural settlements, existing rural residential and estate residential development and golf courses. A number of factors, including soil capability, topography, land use fragmentation by non-agricultural uses such as large churches and cemeteries, as well as natural features and conflicting uses in the area have combined to make these lands more rural in character than lands in the Agricultural Area designation. Regardless of



these challenges, viable agriculture and agriculture-related activities within the Rural Area are expected to continue for the long term.

The Rural Area is protected by the Greenbelt Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and contains areas of environmental significance, including large portions of the Natural Core Area and Natural Linkage Area designations of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Within the Rural Area, outside of Towns and Villages and Hamlets, and shoreline areas in the Town of Georgina, development will be limited in order to retain the rural character of the landscape and ensure viable agricultural uses remain.

► **Objective: To retain the character of lands in the Rural Area and to protect the viability of existing *agriculture, agriculture-related* and *secondary agricultural uses*.**

### **It is the policy of Council:**

**6.4.1** To recognize and protect the Rural Area on Map 8, as a natural resource of major importance to the economic and social viability of the Region.

**6.4.2** The Rural Area designation of this Plan and local official plans establish the permitted uses within the Greenbelt Plan and acts as an overlay within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan to inform the permitted uses within the Countryside designation of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

**6.4.3** That existing and new *agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, normal farm practices, forestry, conservation, land extensive recreational uses, and resource-based commercial and industrial uses* are permitted in the Rural Area, consistent with the policies of the Provincial Plans and local municipal official plans and zoning by-laws.

**6.4.4** That new land uses, consents, and new and expanding livestock operations shall comply with the Province's *Minimum Distance Separation Formulae*.

**6.4.5** That within the Rural Area, applications for redesignation of lands for non-agricultural uses are only permitted if they comply with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Greenbelt Plan and local municipal official plans.

Such applications may require an amendment to this Plan and the local official plan and zoning by-law, demonstrating:

- a. that the proposed use is appropriate in the Rural Area when considered in the context of Provincial Plans and local official plans;
- b. that the proposed use will not adversely impact the ability of adjacent agricultural activities to undertake normal farm practices;
- c. that the proposed water and wastewater servicing is appropriate for the type of use; and,
- d. that there are no negative impacts on key natural heritage or hydrologic features and functions, biodiversity or connectivity of the Regional Greenlands System.

**6.4.6** That non-resource-based industrial and commercial uses and institutional uses shall be directed to the Urban Areas, Towns and Villages and Hamlets.



**6.4.7** That new land extensive *major recreational uses*, such as golf courses and outdoor playing fields, or expansion to these uses, may be permitted in the Rural Area subject to an amendment to the local official plan and zoning by-law, where the following provisions are met to the satisfaction of the Region and local municipality:

- a. the size of the use is appropriate for the area and will not further fragment the Rural Area;
- b. the proposed use will not introduce a conflicting use that adversely impacts ongoing agricultural activities or related uses in the immediate and surrounding areas;
- c. there is a plan to enhance and improve connections between *key natural heritage features* and *key hydrologic features*;
- d. there is an integrated pesticide and fertilizer management plan that minimizes or excludes applications;
- e. water conservation, wastewater and stormwater management plans that ensure adequate water quality and quantity are submitted; and,
- f. the provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Greenbelt Plan or the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan are met, where applicable.

**6.4.8** That notwithstanding policy 6.4.5, new *cemeteries* and accessory uses such as mausolea, columbaria, small scale chapels, expansions of existing cemeteries, but not freestanding places of worship, may be permitted in the Rural Area of the Greenbelt Plan subject to an amendment to this Plan and the local official plan and zoning by-law, where the following provisions are met to the satisfaction of the Region and local municipality:

- a. the area and capacity of the *cemetery* and the accessory uses are appropriate for the Rural Area and intended to serve the Region's population, as demonstrated by a demand analysis based on the 2031 planning horizon;
- b. the proposal demonstrates opportunities for alternative interment or burial practices meeting the needs of a diverse cultures and efficient use of the use of the land area;
- c. lands are not available for *cemetery* uses in the existing Urban Area, Towns and Villages or Hamlets in the Regional market area;
- d. the *cemetery* and accessory uses will not create the need to develop other uses, such as a freestanding place of worship on the site in the future;
- e. appropriate hydrological and hydrogeological studies have been completed, which indicate that the use will not have adverse impacts on the quality and quantity of ground and surface water on or nearby the site or a *Wellhead Protection Area*;
- f. the proposal has no adverse traffic, parking or visual impacts on the surrounding land uses or residents and maintains the rural character of the area;
- g. there is an enhancement plan that demonstrates the use of existing site characteristics, such as topography and vegetation, identifies natural native vegetation enhancement and sequential plantings, including opportunities for memorial groves and the establishment of arboreta, improvements to connectivity between key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features, provides for the development of a forest canopy; and,
- h. the use conforms with the policies in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

Subject to Region-wide appeal. Refer to ROP 1994 Section 5.9



**6.4.9** That consents may be permitted in the Rural Area subject to the criteria contained in policy 6.3.7, and local official plans and zoning by-laws.

**6.4.10** To work with the Town of Georgina and others in formulating additional local official plan policies to recognize the unique aspects of the municipally serviced lakeshore areas between the urban area of Keswick and Sutton/Jackson's Point. Such policies will conform with the Greenbelt Plan and the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the policy direction of this Plan.

**6.4.11** That lands within the Rural Area generally to the west of the community of Sutton along the Lake Simcoe shoreline are subject to the Lakeshore Residential Policies of the Georgina Official Plan.

**6.4.12** That *alternative energy systems* and *renewable energy systems* shall be permitted within the Rural Area in accordance with provincial and federal requirements. Any such systems within the Greenbelt Plan Area shall be subject to the policies of the Greenbelt Plan.

**6.4.13** That within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Countryside Designation in the Town of Aurora, on lands described as Part 2 of Plan 65R-11866 and Plan 65R-15508, a cluster residential development in condominium ownership is permitted subject to the following:

- a. servicing shall be by a privately owned and operated communal wastewater treatment system and a privately owned and operated communal water system, approved through a Class Environmental Assessment or equivalent process which includes the following:
  - i. an inventory of the existing environment and possible impacts;
  - ii. an evaluation of alternatives in consultation with affected agencies;
  - iii. preliminary design of the preferred alternative, which will ensure construction of collection and distribution systems to municipal standards;
  - iv. specifications of the interrelationship with the adjacent recreational use; and,
  - v. preparation of a maintenance, monitoring and system failure contingency plan.
- b. a Responsibility Agreement(s) being executed for the communal wastewater treatment and water systems, identifying among other things the following:
  - i. operation and maintenance standards;
  - ii. the definition of default and required remediation;
  - iii. financial guarantees that no public funds will be required in the case of a malfunction;
  - iv. easements, rights of entry and inspection; and,
  - v. monitoring systems.
- c. an economic/fiscal impact analysis shall be completed to confirm the financial viability of the proposal, the proposed economic benefits to the Region and to ensure that the local and Regional financial impacts are accounted for in keeping with policy 4.5.14;



- d. prior to any development taking place, approval shall have been given to an amendment to the local official plan, supported at a minimum by the following:
  - i. a market support study;
  - ii. an engineering report;
  - iii. an environment and landscaping analysis; and,
  - iv. an economic/fiscal impact analysis confirming the viability of the proposal and the proposed economic benefits to the municipality.
- e. overall density of development shall generally be compatible to that achieved through estate residential policies of the local municipal plan and shall be determined through supporting environmental and servicing studies; and,
- f. design shall effectively screen development from arterial roads and existing uses through sensitive siting and landscaping. Access shall be from internal paved streets constructed to municipal standards and designed to discourage through traffic.

## ▶ 6.5 Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas

The Region has limited sand and gravel resources remaining. The majority of these are located on the Oak Ridges Moraine. Oak Ridges Moraine land use designations permit new aggregate extraction only in Natural Linkage and Countryside Areas and subject to Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan provisions for key natural heritage features. It is important that remaining aggregate resource areas be protected from incompatible uses or uses that would limit the extraction of the resource in the future, as they provide local building materials for communities and infrastructure.

The availability of aggregates close to market is important for economic and environmental reasons. It is equally important that these resources are extracted in an environmentally sensitive way and that exhausted pits and quarries be rehabilitated to uses compatible with agriculture, rural or open space.

In addition to aggregates, the Region has limited petroleum resources, which are considered in the policies of this Plan.

▶ **Objective: To protect mineral resources for possible future extraction and to ensure rehabilitation of extraction areas.**

### **It is the policy of Council:**

**6.5.1** To protect remaining primary and secondary Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas as shown on Map 9.

**6.5.2** To recognize and provide for the continued operation of currently licensed pits and quarries and to encourage the extraction of mineral aggregate from locations within Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas, subject to the policies of this Plan and local official plans and by-laws.

**6.5.3** To protect Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas from land uses and activities incompatible with extractive operations. New uses, other than extractive uses may be considered within these areas only if it can be shown through detailed studies that:

- a. the proposed land use would not significantly preclude future extraction of mineral aggregate resources;



- b. the proposed land use would serve the long term interest of the public better than would aggregate extraction; and,
- c. aggregate extraction would not be economically, socially or environmentally feasible.

**6.5.4** That local official plans shall identify Mineral Aggregate Resource Areas and existing licensed Aggregate extraction uses and provide policies for the location, expansion, operation and rehabilitation of pits and quarries.

**6.5.5** To consult with the Province and local municipalities regarding new licences to establish or expand pits or quarries.

**6.5.6** To encourage local municipalities to enact by-laws that:

- a. regulate truck traffic to minimize adverse impacts on surrounding residents; and,
- b. regulate the removal of topsoil.

**6.5.7** That local municipalities may protect additional areas for extraction.

**6.5.8** To ensure that all extraction and processing activities are conducted in a manner that minimizes negative environmental and social impacts, in accordance with all government legislation, standards and policies.

**6.5.9** To permit portable asphalt plants, wayside pits and quarries on a temporary basis, in consultation with local municipalities, without requiring an official plan amendment or zoning by-law amendment, except within the Regional Greenlands System as identified in policy 2.1.23 of this Plan. A zoning by-law amendment shall be required to permit such facilities in areas of existing development.

**6.5.10** To minimize the adverse effects of wayside pits and quarries in accordance with all government legislation, standards and policies.

**6.5.11** To encourage the use of alternative materials to sand and gravel and the reuse of construction materials where possible to ensure conservation of existing aggregate supply.

**6.5.12** To require the rehabilitation of abandoned pits and quarries and the progressive rehabilitation of operating pits and quarries in a manner that is in conformity with other policies of this Plan.

**6.5.13** That mineral aggregate extraction may occur in the Agricultural Area on an interim basis provided rehabilitation of the site will be carried out so that substantially the same areas and same average soils quality for agriculture is restored. In the following cases, complete agricultural rehabilitation is not required:

- a. where there is a substantial quantity of aggregate below the water table such that the depth of the extraction makes restoration to pre-extraction levels unfeasible; or,
- b. where other alternatives have been considered by the applicant and found unfeasible in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement.

**6.5.14** That within the Greenbelt Plan Area, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area, existing and new mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits shall comply with the provisions of the applicable Provincial Plan.



**6.5.15** That outside of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt, but within the *Lake Simcoe watershed*, applications for new mineral aggregate operations and wayside pits and quarries shall comply with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.

**6.5.16** To protect petroleum resources for long term use. Exploration and production of petroleum resources is a permitted activity in all land use designations except the Urban Area, Towns and Villages, the Natural Core Area of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, *wetlands*, and *significant habitat of endangered and threatened species*.

**6.5.17** That development on, abutting, or adjacent to lands affected by oil, gas and salt hazards or petroleum resource operations, may be permitted only if rehabilitation measures to address and mitigate known or suspected hazards are underway or have been completed. Buildings may not be constructed within 75 metres of an active or unplugged petroleum well.

**6.5.18** That rehabilitation of petroleum wells must be conducted according to the applicable legislation and its regulations and standards and all activities adjacent to a petroleum well shall be conducted in accordance with a well licence from the Province. Mapping of these resources may be obtained from the Province.