

## Greenbelt Plan Comments

Policy Reference	Issue Identified	Possible Solution	Rationale
3.1.4 Rural Area Policies	Policy is weak on what uses are permitted within the rural area and the function of these uses and the community they serve.	Reword this policy to be more explicit about uses serving the rural community.	In near urban areas there is a tendency for certain uses such as churches, schools that serve the urban area to locate in the rural area.
	The recognition of existing uses only in certain circumstances is too narrow.  <i>(Recommendation 21 in the staff report)</i>	Allow the municipality to have flexibility in determining the range of permitted uses that could be retained, in cases where these lands have been historically used for uses not permitted by the Greenbelt Plan.	There are highway commercial areas and former dry industrial parks that will never revert to agriculture yet through the Zoning By-law. The only use that can be legally recognized are existing legal and legal no conforming uses. Should these uses cease in the future these sites have no opportunities for redevelopment other than agricultural or agricultural supportive uses.
3.2 Natural System	Natural heritage policies not consistent with NEC policies	Harmonization of NHS between plans	
3.2.4.2 Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features Policies	Emphasis on Key Hydrologic Features  Within the Greenbelt Plan, there appears to be an emphasis on the protection of key hydrologic features within the Protected Countryside. For example, Policy 3.2.4.2 states “beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside (as shown of Schedule 4), key hydrologic features are defined by and subject to the	The policy framework for key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features outside the natural heritage system should be the same.	There is more protection afforded to hydrological features rather than key natural heritage features. There are important natural heritage features that exist.

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	natural features policies of section 3.2.4” while Policy 3.2.4.3 states “beyond the Natural Heritage System within the Protected Countryside (as shown on Schedule 4), key natural heritage features are not subject to the natural features policies of section 3.2.4 of this Plan but are to be defined pursuant to, and subject to the policies of, the PPS.		
3.2.4.4 Key Natural Heritage Features and Key Hydrologic Features Policies	Vegetation Protection Zones (VPZ)  Policy 3.2.4.4 states “in the case of wetlands, seepage areas and springs, fish habitat, permanent and intermittent streams, lakes and significant woodlands, the minimum vegetation protection zone shall be a minimum of 30 metres wide measured from the outside boundary of the key natural heritage feature or key hydrologic feature”.  <i>(Recommendation 23 in the staff report)</i>	VPZ’s could be varied once an Environmental Impact statement, or other scientific studies are undertaken to provide an alternative VPZ.	VPZs; are important; however based on field investigations, it may not be realistic to provide a 30-metre VPZ for intermittent streams. More flexibility should be provided to municipalities to determine the appropriateness of the 30-metre VPZ on intermittent streams
3.4.3.2 Hamlet Policies	Rounding out of Rural settlement Area boundaries can only occur at the time of Greenbelt Plan conformity.	Allow for minor rounding out at the time of the five year OP review.	The Rural Settlement Area boundaries were set in 2006. Over the last 9 years some changes are required to these boundaries but the Plan does not allow it.
4.4 Cultural Heritage Resources	Weak cultural heritage policies	Strengthen cultural heritage policies – severance for <u>designated</u> properties	
	Significant cultural heritage resources shall be conserved	Consider as new section (possibly bullet 4 of Section 4.4) to be consistent with PPS	

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4.4.1 Cultural Heritage Resources	Existing Policy  Cultural heritage resources are defined as man-made or natural features, including structures, objects, neighbourhoods, landscapes and archaeological sites, that have been identified as <i>significant</i> by the local municipality or the province for being meaningful components of a community’s cultural heritage or identity.	Definition (expressed as a policy in Section 4.4.1) should be consistent with definition in PPS, so that cultural heritage policies in all provincial legislation are applied to the same types of properties.	Consider removing this policy and adding “Cultural Heritage Resources as a definition within the Definitions section of the Greenbelt Plan
4.4.2 Cultural Heritage Resources	Existing Policy  Greenbelt municipalities should work with aboriginal groups and other stakeholders to identify and protect cultural heritage resources and plan toward maintaining, developing and using these resources in a manner that will benefit the local community and be compatible with the Greenbelt’s vision and goals.	Proposed Policy  Greenbelt municipalities <i>shall consider the interests of Aboriginal communities</i> to identify and protect cultural heritage resources and plan toward maintaining, developing and using these resources in a manner that will benefit the local community and be compatible with the Greenbelt’s vision and goals.	Changes to PPS strengthens language and should be reflected in the Greenbelt Plan (PPS policy 2.6.5 – shall consider interests of Aboriginal communities)
4.4.3 Cultural Heritage Resources	Current policy:  Municipalities should build cultural components into their municipal plans and planning processes, including creating inventories of cultural heritage resources and planning for their ongoing protection and appropriate use. Municipal cultural plans should draw from and promote an integrated vision of local cultural development that emphasizes connections across the full range of arts, heritage, cultural industries, libraries, archives and other cultural activity.	Proposed Policy:  Municipalities should build cultural components into their municipal plans and planning processes, including creating <b>Register</b> of cultural heritage resources and planning for their ongoing protection and appropriate use. Municipal cultural plans should draw from and promote an integrated vision of local cultural development that emphasizes connections across the full range of arts, heritage, cultural industries, libraries, archives and other cultural activity.	This proposed policy change is to reflect changes made to the <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> that allow municipalities to list properties on a Municipal Heritage Register to offer interim protection against demolition  Include reference to development of Archaeological Management Plans, as encouraged by the PPS policy 2.6.4

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4.5 Existing Uses	Consider a policy in Section 4.5 – Existing Uses (bullet 6) that speaks to permitting the expansion of existing uses if it is demonstrated that significant cultural heritage resources will be conserved	Consistent with PPS 2.6.2 and 2.6.3	
	Bullet Point #3 b) policy is confusing and may prevent improvement of NHS areas. Expansions can provide benefits to NHS through improvements in property (better plantings / buffers / septic requirements, etc.)	Clarification required	
4.6 Lot Creation	Severance consideration for designated heritage properties/structures  Severance permissions for designated heritage buildings should be considered in Plan.  <i>(Recommendation 25 in the staff report)</i>	consider adding a policy to section 4.6 (as bullet 4) allowing a designated heritage property to be eligible for severance similarly to a surplus farm dwelling; given it meets specific criteria.	No severances for cultural heritage resources is a problem and could result in loss of cultural heritage resources
	Removal of severance for farm help lots is positive - severance policies are positive	n/a	Allows prime farmland to be kept for agricultural purposes
4.6.3 a) Lot Creation	Lots sizes for Prime Agricultural Areas too large in a near urban municipality. The Greenbelt Plan permits severances for agricultural uses provided the lot area is 40 ha (100 ac) in size. In near urban areas, such as Hamilton, there are few lots 40 ha in size. Most of these lands are used for cash cropping.  <i>(Recommendation 19 in the staff report)</i>	The lot sizes for prime agricultural areas should be reduced to 20 ha in size, in line with the Specialty Crop policies of the Greenbelt Plan.  In the alternative, allow the municipality to identify specific geographic areas where smaller lot sizes maybe permitted based on a series of criteria.	Agricultural production has evolved and continues to evolve as farmers are able to produce higher yield crops, such as vegetables, fruits, herbs, on smaller farmer parcels. The existing severance policies do not allow farmers the opportunity to purchase lands and then subdivide based on their farming needs.

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5.5.2 Boundaries, Schedules and Appendices	<p>Natural Heritage System Boundary Delineation and Mapping</p> <p>Policy 5.5.2 indicates that “boundaries of the Natural Heritage System may be refined at the time of municipal conformity in accordance with 3.2.2.6”.</p> <p><i>(Recommendation 22 in the staff report)</i></p>	<p>To ensure that all features have been included within the mapping and that the mapping better reflects the boundaries of on-ground situations, greater flexibility should be provided to municipalities to make minor refinements to the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System outside of the municipal conformity review. These refinements could be based on information from Watershed and Subwatershed Studies or other appropriate studies accepted by a municipality.</p> <p>For example, in Hamilton portions of the Upper Twenty Mile Creek Provincially Significant Wetland east of Upper James Street (north of Dickenson Road East) have been excluded from the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System (see map below). In addition, in some cases, the boundaries of the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System are un-natural (angular).</p>	<p>Traditionally, the protection of the natural environment took an approach where the focus was on particular features. The province, through the Greenbelt Plan and Provincial Policy Statement has shifted to a systems approach, which looks at the feature and how it functions across the landscape. The systems approach uses landscape ecology principles (features and functions as well as connections that maintain the features and functions) as its backbone and requires a more comprehensive approach to land use planning.</p>
Definitions	<p>Intermittent Streams</p> <p>The Plan should provide more guidance to municipalities on how to identify intermittent streams. The current definition of intermittent streams is so broad that it can include non-vegetated ditches in cultivated agricultural fields.</p> <p><i>(Recommendation 24 in the staff report)</i></p>	<p>Staff recommends that the Province provide a clearer definition of intermittent streams, or technical guidance on how to interpret policy requirements for intermittent streams (such as the VPZ requirements discussed previously in the chart).</p>	

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	<p>Agriculture-related use</p> <p>The current definition is vague. The Plan should provide more guidance on what is considered agriculture-related uses.</p> <p><i>(Recommendation 20 in the staff report)</i></p>	Revise the definition to reflect the PPS definition of agriculture-related use.	Definition should be clarified in accordance with the PPS definition which has been broadened to recognize certain uses that add value to raw farm products. Examples include washing, packaging, and processing.
Schedules 1 and 2	Although it appears, there is sufficient Whitebelt land to accommodate future growth, the land is encumbered by noise contours from the John C. Munroe International Airport, natural heritage features as well as isolated pockets.	Refine the boundary to add lands that are appropriate for long agricultural and natural heritage protection (i.e. lands west of Fiddler’s Green Road). Remove lands that are better suited to establish a more compact urban community (i.e. lands in Lower and Upper Stoney Creek, adjacent to the existing/future urban area)	
Schedule 4: Natural Heritage System	Area without a key natural heritage feature, hydrologic feature or are not part of the natural heritage system.	Revise natural heritage boundaries to add, delete and refine specific areas.	Hamilton has more detailed mapping which more accurately reflects features and the system.
General Comments			
Appeals	Unlike the Niagara escarpment plan there is no mechanism to change or alter the designations within the Plan, except at a 10 year review.	Establish a mechanism to allow for refinements to the designations and natural heritage system overlay. Could use the current system the Province identified for adding lands to the Plan or allow for appeals to the Plan.	There are areas of the Plan that could be refined either to add or delete that would provide for a better overall land use planning framework to implement both the Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan.

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Emerging Issues	It is important that the Greenbelt Plan Review consider new science and emerging issues in ecology.	Municipalities would appreciate guidance from the Province on how to identify important habitat for grassland species and pollinators. This should be considered through the Greenbelt (and Niagara Escarpment) Plan review.	Since the Greenbelt Plan was approved in 2005, there have been declines in grassland birds and concerns about the loss of insects and pollinators. While some habitat for these species may be protected through the Endangered Species Act (2007), a more proactive approach may be required.
Consistent with Other Plans	<p>Terminology</p> <p>Within the Greenbelt Plan, natural features have either been identified as key hydrological features and key natural heritage features; however this terminology is not explicitly used in other Plans (i.e. Niagara Escarpment Plan, Provincial Policy Statement). In addition, wording linked to other Plans has become outdated.</p> <p>Natural Heritage Feature Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>Additional guidance on technical definitions and criteria for Natural Heritage Features in the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System has been provided through a Technical Paper. Within this Technical Paper, guidance has been provided for criteria to identify a Significant Woodland. This appears to be different than guidance provided within the Natural Heritage Reference Manual, Second Edition (2010).</p>	<p>Terminology</p> <p>To ensure that the intent of the Plans are being achieved, the defined terms within all provincial plans should be consistent.</p> <p>Natural Heritage Feature Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>A consistent approach in delineation should be undertaken.</p>	<p>Terminology</p> <p>For example, key natural features identified within the Greenbelt Plan includes significant habitat of endangered species, threatened species. Changes have occurred within the Provincial Policy Statement that has removed the word “Significant” and provided a new definition for habitat.</p> <p>Natural Heritage Feature Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>These features are important in the overall function of the Natural Heritage System. To ensure that they are treated the same.</p>

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Rural Community Vision	Rural community vision does not exist in the Plan	Provide a vision for rural communities	Although rural area has less population, there is a strong sense of place and community in those areas. Therefore policy required to recognize this phenomena.