

**Excerpt from Report PED15078(a) - Coordinated Provincial Plan Review
(Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan Boundary Review) - City of
Hamilton Comments**

"3.5 Option 5: Grow the Greenbelt"

The last option is to add all areas identified for potential addition to the Greenbelt Plan into the Greenbelt Plan Boundary (i.e. Book Road, Nebo Road and Urban River Valley Areas). During the open house events, many participants expressed that all areas identified for potential addition into the Greenbelt Plan should be included due to the significant agricultural lands within the Nebo Road and Book Road areas that would benefit from protection and enhancement through Greenbelt policy. Many other participants expressed opposition to the addition of the Book Road and Nebo Road areas due to financial investment and development interests.

Option 5 would include the addition of urban river valleys. City staff identified the potential addition of the Red Hill Creek Valley as part of the consultation process. Additional suggestions provided by the public at the open house sessions included adding the following areas:

- Lower Spencer Creek / Spencer Gorge;
- Chedoke Creek;
- Ancaster Crescent Valley;
- Stoney Creek and Battlefield Creek;
- Grindstone Creek Valley; and,
- Tributaries through Dundas and Ancaster.

In 2011, the Province added a new policy framework called urban river valleys:

"Key river valleys in urban areas adjacent to the Greenbelt provide opportunities for additional connections to help expand and integrate the Greenbelt and its systems into the broader Southern Ontario landscape. The Urban River Valley designation provides direction to those areas where the Greenbelt occupies river valleys in an urban context. These urban river valleys may be the setting for a network of uses and facilities including recreational, cultural and tourist amenities and infrastructure, which are needed to support urban areas.

The Urban River Valley designation as shown on Schedule 1 applies to publicly owned lands within the main corridors of river valleys connecting the rest of the Greenbelt to the Great Lakes and inland lakes. The lands

in this designation comprise river valleys and associated lands and are generally characterized by being:

- *Lands containing natural and hydrologic features; and/or,*
- *Lands designated in municipal official plans for uses such as parks, open space, recreation, conservation and environmental protection.*

The lands are governed by the applicable municipal official plan policies provided they have regard to the objectives of the Greenbelt Plan.

All existing, expanded or new infrastructure which is subject to and approved under the Environmental Assessment Act, or which receives a similar approval, is permitted provided it supports the needs of adjacent urban areas or serves the significant growth and economic development expected in southern Ontario and supports the goals and objectives of the Greenbelt Plan."

When considering this option, it should be noted that adding lands to the Greenbelt Plan can be undertaken outside of the ten year review provided the six criteria are met as described in the Province's *Growing the Greenbelt* document (page 4, Appendix "I").

Adding the Red Hill Valley and other creeks / streams to the Greenbelt Plan at this point in time is not being recommended for the following reasons:

Red Hill Valley

- 1) Any revision to policy within the Red Hill Valley requires consultation with Joint Stewardship Board. In 2002, the City of Hamilton and the Six Nations community signed a number of agreements intended to preserve the Haudenosaunee interest in the Red Hill Valley with the onset of the construction for the Red Hill Valley parkway. The intent of the agreements was to foster long-term relationships and to create a plan for the Valley. The Joint Stewardship Board, comprised of equal representation from the City of Hamilton and the Haudenosaunee, has a responsibility to ensure cooperation and successful continuation of the environmental management plans for the Red Hill Valley. Therefore any consideration of adding the Red Hill Valley to the Greenbelt Plan will require consultation with the Board prior to any decisions made.
- 2) Any potential revisions to the approved Environmental Assessment would require an evaluation as to how the infrastructure 'supports the needs of adjacent urban areas or serves the significant growth and economic development expected in Southern Ontario' according to the policies contained within the Greenbelt Plan, specifically Section 6.0 Urban River Valley Policies.

- 3) The City owns most of the Red Hill Valley lands in the Greenbelt Plan, but some lands are privately owned which may impact the application of the Urban River Valley designation to the Valley lands (i.e. only publicly owned lands can be designated "Urban River Valley" in the Greenbelt Plan).
- 4) The lands are designated Open Space on Schedule 'E-1' – Urban Land Use Designations and identified as a core area of the Natural Heritage System within the Urban Hamilton Official Plan. Additional provincial policy does not create a greater level of environmental protection. Additional planning policy layers undermine the goals of the Coordinated Provincial Plan Review (i.e. remove policy layers).

Other Creeks / Streams

- 5) Some of the creeks are already within the NEP Area and protected through regulations of the governing Conservation Authorities (e.g. Grindstone Creek Valley, tributaries through Dundas, etc.) and additional provincial direction is unnecessary.
- 6) The City has protected all these areas through the Official Plan, the Zoning By-law and public acquisition (where applicable). Additional planning layers do not increase the protection for these areas.