

OSSGA Official Plan Guide for Producers



Prepared by the
OSSGA Land Use Committee

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OSSGA Official Plan Guide for Producers - Summary

The OSSGA Official Plan Guide (the OP Guide) for producers is a guidance document that has been prepared by the OSSGA Land Use Committee to assist OSSGA members participate in the development of Official Plan Policy. The development of a municipal Official Plan can be a challenging process often involving competing priorities and a wide range of stakeholder interests. The OP Guide supports OSSGA member's participation in the planning process by outlining best practices for achieving consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) through municipal Official Plan policy.

An Official Plan is a regional or local policy document which builds upon the PPS and sets out the land use policy directions for long-term growth and development in a municipality. Official Plans are the most important vehicle for implementing the PPS and achieving the provincial interest in ensuring aggregate availability. The OP Guide also explains the relationship between Provincial Plans and municipal policy implementation.

Official Plans contain policies that determine where and under what circumstances new pits and quarries may be located, provide for long-term production of aggregate sources and determine what land uses may be permitted around mineral aggregate operations. In order to obtain an Aggregate Resources Act (ARA) licence the mineral aggregate operations must be permitted by the zoning by-law and conform with the Official Plan. This underlines the importance of the Official Plan to businesses that require access to non-renewable resources.

The Planning Act establishes the process that municipalities must follow in the development of their Official Plans. The OSSGA Guide outlines the process and encourages aggregate producers to take a proactive role in this process. This includes finding out about the proposed policy amendment; assessing how the proposed policies might affect existing aggregate operations or future availability; attending public meetings and providing oral or written submissions on the proposed policies.

If a person who participated in the process disagrees with the approved policies they can make an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Decisions of the OMB are based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the relevant law, provincial policies and the principles of good planning. The OMB may approve all or part of an Official Plan or make modifications to the policies.

The Guide addresses the key components of Official Plans as they relate to identification, protection and availability of mineral aggregate resources.

Identification of mineral aggregate resources is required in order to provide information to decision makers and the general public about where pits and quarries may ultimately be located and where incompatible uses should be restricted. The OP Guide explains the purpose of identifying the resource and discusses various methods and approaches that should be considered.

Official Plans need to provide a mechanism to allow aggregate deposits to be designated, and zoned under the *Planning Act* and licensed under the ARA to permit extraction. Official Plan policies should include clear and reasonable policies such as study requirements and/or criteria to be addressed in order to establish new or expanded mineral aggregate operations.

Official Plans must protect existing mineral aggregate operations so that they are permitted to continue and be protected from development or activities that would preclude or hinder their continued use or expansion. The policies may also describe the types of permitted uses that are allowed.

Municipal Official Plans should limit and control incompatible development in rural areas on or near where mineral aggregate deposits occur. This will ensure new mineral aggregate operations can be established and access to the resource is maintained. Policies should require demonstration that a proposed development would not preclude or hinder long-term availability of the identified mineral aggregate deposits.

The interim nature of aggregate extraction as a land use should be recognized in Official Plan policy. Rehabilitation is dealt with by both Provincial legislation and municipal policy. Official Plans can provide direction for rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations in terms of preferred after uses or coordinated after-use planning.

Official Plans should permit extraction in agricultural areas as an interim use provided the site is rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition. In some cases, agricultural rehabilitation will not be feasible because of the nature of the extraction proposed and there will be additional policies to be considered in accordance with the PPS.

Planning for the availability of mineral aggregate resources includes ensuring haul routes are available so that products can be transported to markets. Official Plan policies usually include a description of municipal road networks that are designed to facilitate the movement of people and goods around and through the municipality.

In areas where the *Aggregate Resources Act* applies, municipal Official Plans should not include policies that intend to regulate any matters that are covered under the Act, licences, or site plans. The *Aggregate Resources Act* prevails and the municipal regulation is without effect if it addresses the same subject matter as the Act, a licence, or site plans.

The OSSGA Official Plan Guide for Producers has been designed to inform aggregate producers about the importance of participating in the development of municipal Official Plans. It outlines the key requirements for Official Plans and describes best practices on planning for the availability of mineral aggregate resources.

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1. Guide Introduction

This guidance document has been prepared by the OSSGA Land Use Committee to assist OSSGA members participating in the development of Official Plan Policy. OSSGA and its members are frequently involved on an ongoing basis with municipal policy development exercises across the province, often with re-occurring issues and common concerns.

This guide:

- Outlines best practices for achieving consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) through municipal Official Plan policy;
- Addresses key topics guided by the PPS and provides advice on recommended approaches, policy content and methodologies based on OSSGA's understanding of the PPS and ongoing implementation experience;
- Outlines the process for developing a municipal or regional Official Plan so that producers may effectively participate in the planning process;
- Provides realistic, practical and implementable advice in understandable layperson terms recognizing the range of circumstances and contexts that occur across the province; and,
- Supports OSSGA member's participation in the planning process.

The development of a municipal Official Plan can be a challenging process often involving competing priorities and a wide range of stakeholder interests. The best practices found in this guidance document are not a "one size fits all" solution. Alternative approaches may be welcomed and warranted to suit the wide variety of situations and circumstances that occur across the province.

This guide is based on the PPS and other mentioned legislation and related regulations effective as of the date of this document. Provincial policy including the PPS, and legislation and related regulations are subject to review and changes that may impact this guide. For a complete analysis of the current or proposed land use controls, including the PPS and Official Plan policies, that apply to a specific property or area, one should review the actual applicable or proposed planning documents (which, of course, may change from time to time), and other applicable documents and legislation that may control or regulate the manner in which the property may be used or developed. This guide should not be relied on as providing a complete analysis of the applicable or evolving land use controls that may apply to regulate the manner in which any specific property may be used or developed or as a definitive summary of the process through which these controls may change.

2. Land Use Planning for Aggregate Resources in Ontario

The PPS (2014) includes policies regarding the wise use and management of resources noting that Ontario's long-term economic 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, ensuring the protection and availability of mineral aggregate resources is a key provincial interest.

Mineral aggregates, similar to agricultural farmland and forests, are an essential resource. They are a basic element of our daily lives, touching most aspects of our housing, services and mobility. The location of mineral aggregate deposits is geographically fixed and the resource must be extracted where it naturally occurs. While some areas of the province have abundant geological deposits of aggregate resources, other areas do not. In addition, there are numerous factors that must be considered in licensing an area for extraction and it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate and acquire good quality viable aggregate deposits in the province.

There is a provincial mandate to ensure that aggregate resources are protected for long-term use. The province has declared a provincial interest in maintaining close-to-market supply in order to minimize transportation costs and social and environmental impacts including air quality, greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel consumption. Over the past four decades and following numerous background studies and policy reviews, the provincial interest in aggregate resource management has remained strong. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the development of Ontario Aggregate Resource Management Policy.

Aggregate resources are required in large quantities in economically active regions and in growth centres. Their high bulk, and low per unit cost places constraints on the distance over which they are transported. Extracting the resource close to where it is being utilized avoids increasing the impacts associated with transportation and unnecessarily transferring potential impacts from one jurisdiction to another.

3. Land Use Planning in Ontario - Overview

There are a variety of tools that the province and municipalities use to facilitate land use planning for the present and future. Land use planning in Ontario is guided by a number of legislative and policy documents as summarized below. Further information on Provincial Plans is provided in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

3.1 The Planning Act

The Planning Act (the “Act”) is provincial legislation which essentially sets out the ground rules for land use planning in Ontario. The Act sets out who controls the use of land and how land uses are controlled. The Act provides the basis for considering provincial interests, such as conserving and managing the province’s natural resources, and for the preparation of the PPS, and municipal Official Plans, to effectively guide future development in the province.

All of the particular procedures that govern planning processes are contained in the Planning Act and its regulations. This includes decision making processes, consultation and notice requirements and defining rights and responsibilities of stakeholders in the planning process.

The Act also provides the framework for landowners and other interested parties to participate in the land use planning process and to challenge policy or land use decisions that they disagree with at the OMB.

3.2 The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The PPS sets out provincial policy relating to such matters as the development of towns and cities, natural and cultural heritage and natural resource management. The PPS is issued under the *Planning Act*. It provides policy direction to decision makers on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The policies within the PPS focus on the key provincial interests related to land use planning, and all land use decisions in Ontario must be “consistent with the PPS”.

Policy directions in the PPS for mineral aggregate resources seek to protect the resources for long-term use and ensure as much of the resource as is realistically possible is made available as close-to-markets as possible, extraction is to be undertaken in a manner that minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts. As well, the PPS protects existing mineral aggregate operations, encourages resource conservation and includes policies for rehabilitation and extraction in prime agricultural areas.

As all planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS, it is important to understand the significance of PPS policy directives as they relate to planning for mineral aggregate resources and as they relate to other Provincial Plans and municipal Official Plans.

3.3 Provincial Plans

Provincial Plans are policy documents established pursuant to legislation which provide additional land use planning policy direction often related to a specific geographic area or provincial interest. *The Planning Act* requires that planning decisions either conform with, or not be in conflict with Provincial Plans. Maps of some of the provincial plan areas are contained in Appendix 3.

Provincial Plans build upon the policy foundation provided by the PPS. Provincial Plans are to be read in conjunction with the PPS and take precedence over the policies of the PPS to the extent of any conflict, except where the relevant legislation provides otherwise.

3.3.1 The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP)

The Niagara Escarpment Plan Area includes a variety of topographic features and land uses extending from Queenston on the Niagara River to the islands off Tobermory on the Bruce Peninsula. The Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP) is established by the *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act*, and serves as a framework of objectives and policies for lands within the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area. It aims at finding a balance between development, preservation and the enjoyment of the Escarpment resource. The NEP contains a Mineral Resource

Extraction Area designation which includes existing pits and quarries licensed pursuant to the *Aggregate Resources Act* and other areas where mineral resource extraction may be permitted. The general policies of the NEP related to mineral aggregate resources seek to minimize the impact of new mineral extraction operations and accessory uses on the Escarpment environment.

Municipal planning decisions, including Official Plan policies, need to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, and conform to and not conflict with the NEP (where applicable). The NEP takes precedence over the PPS to the extent of any conflict.

3.3.2 The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP)

The Oak Ridge's Moraine is a geological landform in South Central Ontario. The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) was established by the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act*, in 2002 to protect the Moraine's unique concentration of environmental, geological and hydrological features, which are located within the Regions of York, Durham and Peel, Counties of Dufferin, Simcoe, Peterborough and Northumberland, and City of Kawartha Lakes.

Municipal planning decisions need to be consistent with the PPS and conform with this Plan (where applicable) which takes precedence over municipal Official Plans. Municipal Official Plans are required to be brought into conformity with the ORMCP and cannot be more restrictive than the policies of the plan as it relates to mineral aggregate resources. Careful review of municipal Official Plans and proposed amendments is important to ensure municipal Official Plan policies remain in conformity with the province's policy directions.

3.3.3 The Greenbelt Plan (GBP)

The Greenbelt Plan is established by the *Greenbelt Act*, 2005 which identifies where urbanization should not occur in order to provide permanent protection to the agricultural land base and the ecological features and functions occurring within the Greenbelt. While providing permanent agricultural and environmental protection, the Greenbelt also contains important natural resources and supports a wide range of recreational and tourism uses, areas and opportunities.

The GBP builds upon the existing policy framework established in the PPS and is to be implemented through municipal Official Plans. Municipal planning decisions must conform with the GBP. As with the ORMCP, municipal Official Plans are required to be brought into conformity with the Greenbelt Plan, and cannot be more restrictive as they relate to mineral aggregate resource policy. Accordingly, careful review of municipal Official Plans and proposed amendments is important to ensure municipal Official Plan policies remain in conformity with the Province's policy directions.

3.3.4 Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP)

The Lake Simcoe Protection Plan was established by the *Lake Simcoe Protection Act*, 2008 under the authority of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. The Plan generally applies to the Lake Simcoe watershed. The legislation and Plan are aimed at protecting, improving or restoring elements contributing to the ecological health of Lake Simcoe Watershed. Other types of policies relate to monitoring by public bodies and strategic actions.

The Plan includes policies that apply to applications for new mineral aggregate operations particularly where there are key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features involved.

Municipal Official Plans are required to be brought into conformity with the LSPP.

3.3.5 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was established by the *Places to Grow Act*, 2005. The Growth Plan provides a framework for implementing the Province's vision for building stronger, prosperous communities by better managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan guides decision making on a wide range of issues including transportation, infrastructure, planning, urban form, housing, natural heritage and resource protection in the interest of promoting economic prosperity.

The Growth Plan identifies aggregate resources as valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth.

Municipal Official Plans are required to be brought into conformity with the Growth Plan. Municipal planning decisions must also conform with the Growth Plan.

3.3.6 Growth Plan for Northern Ontario

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario was established by the *Places to Grow Act*, 2005 and came into effect in 2011. This Plan is a strategic framework that will guide decision making and investment planning in Northern Ontario over the next 25 years. The policies aim to promote economic prosperity, sound environmental stewardship, and strong, sustainable communities that offer a high quality of life.

Municipal Official Plans are required to be brought into conformity with this Plan. Municipal planning decisions must also conform with this Plan.

3.4 An Official Plan

An Official Plan is a regional or local policy document which builds upon the PPS and related (relevant) Provincial Plans, and sets out the land use policy directions for long-term growth and development in a municipality. It is required to be consistent with the PPS, and is prepared with input from stakeholders, landowners, and the general public in a community to ensure that current and future planning and development will meet the specific needs of the province and the community.

In a broad context Official Plans contain objectives and policies governing various land use designations, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, open space and aggregate resources. These designations are broadly established on a land use map in each Official Plan. Other policies typically relate to environmental management, transportation and community improvement.

Official Plans are the most important vehicle for implementing the PPS (and therefore achieving the provincial interest in ensuring aggregate availability). Official Plans are required to identify and address provincial interests. They can go beyond the minimum standards of the PPS so long as this does not create conflict with other PPS policies. The Implementation Section of the PPS provides specific direction on the role of Official Plans and relationship to the PPS.

Official Plans are prepared by municipal governments for municipal areas. Municipal structures vary across the province. In some areas, a single tier or level of government governs land use. In other areas there are two tiers where responsibilities are divided between upper tier county or regional government and the lower tier town, township or city. In this case, both levels may adopt Official Plans with the upper tier usually providing more general policies and directions with additional layers of detail being provided in the lower tier plan.

In some parts of Northern Ontario there are areas without municipal organization and the planning function is shared by MMAH, MNR and Planning Boards.

3.5 Importance of Proper Aggregate Policy Representation in Municipal Official Plans

Official Plans contain policies that are essentially the general rules for land uses. These policies determine where and under what circumstances new pits and quarries may be located, provide for long-term production of aggregate sources and determine what land uses may be permitted around mineral aggregate operations. In order to obtain an *Aggregate Resources Act* (ARA) licence there must be compliance with the zoning by-law (specific regulations that permit land uses). In turn, zoning by-laws must conform with the Official Plan. This underlines the importance of the Official Plan to businesses that require access to non-renewable resources.

Inherent in any Official Plan Amendment (OPA) dealing with an update to the municipal Official Plan is the requirement that an OPA shall be consistent with the PPS issued under the *Planning Act* and conform to, or not conflict, with any applicable Provincial Plans.

In this regard, participating early in a municipal OPA process and ensuring that municipal Official Plan objectives and policies properly convey provincial policy directives related to mineral aggregate resources is an important role for aggregate producers in Ontario. This document has been prepared by OSSGA to convey the importance of diligent review and participation of new OPA documents in all municipalities in Ontario by aggregate producers.

3.6 Standard Steps in an Official Plan Review Process

Official Plans are periodically reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the changing economic, legislative/policy, social and environmental needs of the municipality. The Planning requires review every five years. Reviews and subsequent amendments may be comprehensive or theme specific. Occasionally, it is necessary to amend the policies and/or designations contained in the Official Plan in order to facilitate new development or redevelopment proposals.

When introducing new policy through an OPA process, a municipality will prepare draft policies and is obligated by the *Planning Act* to convene at least one public meeting. Public notice of the meeting is given by the municipality for the public meeting (usually through the local newspaper or via Canada Post mail) and the draft policies are made available to the public for review. Any person or public body may request notice and/or provide written comments and/or speak at the public meeting about a proposed OPA. In some cases a public meeting is also held. This process provides aggregate producers an opportunity to review the policies in question and make submissions.

It is important for aggregate producers to understand the provincial interest in management and availability of aggregate resources to ensure that municipal Official Plans are consistent with aggregate resource management objectives and policies.

A producer's proactive role in this process includes:

- 1) finding out as much as possible about the proposed policy amendment(s) early in the process;
- 2) thinking about how the proposed aggregate resource policies might affect any existing aggregate operations or any areas of known mineral aggregate resource deposits and possible future operations or expansions;
- 3) attending any information sessions, including open houses and public meetings that are held to discuss the plan;
- 4) providing submission(s) (oral or written) to the municipality at the public meeting(s); and,
- 5) Identifying any site specific issues that might arise and bring them to the attention of the municipality.

As well, producers are encouraged to work directly with municipal staff to resolve any concerns or apparent inconsistencies in policies with provincial policy directives, where necessary.

It is important to understand that making oral or written submissions at the public meeting or written submissions any time before the plan is adopted is necessary in order to qualify a person or public body for the right to appeal to the OMB (if necessary). If a producer has any concerns, it is important that the municipality be made aware of such concerns early in the process. This allows the municipality to have time to think about the concerns and make any necessary revisions before the plan is adopted or amended.

Early involvement and participation in an OPA process has two benefits:

- 1) it protects a person or organization's (i.e. producer or OSSGA) right to appeal to the OMB, if necessary; and,
- 2) it gives the municipality the opportunity to understand / incorporate proper representation of aggregate resource policies into an OPA document, thereby assisting in avoiding the need for an appeal by the aggregate industry in this regard.

There are no specific legal requirements on what constitutes a valid submission. Typically, a written (or oral) submission to a municipality should provide a full mailing address and contact information. It should explain a

producer's interest in the municipality (e.g. brief description of the business activity and objectives). Comments can be broad or general but are usually more likely to be considered if there are specific examples and suggestions provided. Where possible, submissions should reference the PPS provisions that give foundation or basis to the comments provided.

A municipality may choose to consult with agencies, departments, specific industries, the province or other authorities before making a decision on an OPA. Once all submissions and comments are provided and any necessary revisions are completed to the draft document by the municipality, an OPA will be considered by the municipality's Council or Planning Authority. The opportunity to reiterate public submissions (including comments and concerns) is typically provided at Council Meetings, as well, if they have not been addressed through revisions to the document.

Once an Official Plan is adopted by a municipal or regional council there can be a further approval process depending on the location specific delegation of approval authority. In some cases, the municipality developing the plan is the approval authority. In rural jurisdictions, the more typical circumstance is that the Province or upper tier municipality is the approval authority. In all cases, the approval authority reviews the plan for consistency with the PPS and can conduct further consultations as they see fit.

When an approval authority makes a decision to approve or modify an Official Plan, notice must be given. If an aggregate producer (or other stakeholder) disagrees with the approval authority decision the producer can appeal the Official Plan or a portion of the Official Plan to the OMB. This appeal must be made within twenty (20) days of the notice of the approval authority's decision. It is important to note that only people who provided oral comments at the public meeting or written comment prior to adoption of the plan have the right to appeal the decision of an approval authority.

The OMB hears applications and appeals in relation to a broad range of municipal planning, and land matters including Official Plans, zoning by-laws and aggregate resources assigned to the Board by numerous Ontario statutes including the *Planning Act* and the *Aggregate Resources Act*. Decisions of the OMB are based on the evidence presented at the hearing, the relevant law, provincial policies and the principles of good planning. On an appeal, the OMB may approve all or part of an Official Plan, make modifications to all or part of an Official Plan, or refuse to approve an Official Plan.

3.7 Zoning By-Laws

Zoning is the municipal control on land use and zoning must conform to the municipal Official Plan. The *Planning Act* provides mechanisms to amend zoning by-laws in order to permit change in land use; however, a zoning by-law cannot be amended if it ultimately would not conform to the municipal Official Plan. Before a site can be licensed under the *Aggregate Resources Act*, the site's zoning must be in place to permit the mineral aggregate operation and hence, the Official Plan must permit the pit or quarry as well.

A Holding ("H") provision is a tool placed on zoning for a site that is sometimes used by municipalities to restrict future uses on a site until conditions for removing the "H" are met. This "H" provision can provide municipalities with the time required to evaluate the impact of a proposed change in land use before development takes place. Municipalities may use this "H" provision tool in zoning a site to permit a mineral aggregate operation subject to meeting specific conditions prior to removal of the "H", and some municipalities may place a "H" provision on the zoning for potential deposit areas and outline conditions to meet before the "H" is lifted and the use may proceed. It is important to note that a municipality must have approved Official Plan policies in place to set up this holding provision tool.

3.8 Summary of Producers Role

In summary, it is important for Ontario's aggregate producers to take a proactive role in the review of regional and municipal OPs, to ensure that new municipal Official Plan policies related to mineral aggregate resources remain consistent with provincial policy directions.

The key roles and responsibilities of an aggregate producer are to:

- Be aware of upcoming Official Plan reviews by liaising with municipal planning departments;
- Review draft amendments;
- Make written submissions and participate in open houses, workshops and committee or council meetings;
- Ask questions, provide solutions, and work with municipal staff;
- Advise fellow producers and OSSGA of significant issues or areas of concern; and,
- Liaise with MNR and MMAH staff responsible for commenting on Official Plan reviews.

4. Identification of Aggregate Resources (Required in order to protect and make available)

An essential component of a municipal Official Plan is the identification of mineral aggregate resources. This is required in order to achieve consistency with the PPS and achieve the provincial interest in the protection and availability of mineral aggregate resources. Identification is a necessary component of protection: Official Plan policies protecting the resource will relate to areas identified in Official Plan mapping.

The inclusion of a good map in an Official Plan identifying potential deposit areas is necessary in order to provide information to decision makers and the general public about where pits and quarries may ultimately be located and where incompatible uses should be restricted. Providing this information in an Official Plan for public review and understanding in advance of planning and real-estate or property investment decisions is an effective way of reducing potential for social impacts and land use incompatibility.

Lack of good identification or inadequate identification (i.e. identifying smaller or fewer potential deposit areas than what might otherwise satisfy reasonable policy tests) is not consistent with the PPS or good planning principles. If there is potential for future resource extraction, the viable deposit areas should be protected and stakeholders should be given relevant information that can be taken into account in all types of planning decisions and exercises.

These basic and longstanding principles are recognized in the 2014 PPS: deposits of mineral aggregate resources shall be identified (PPS 2.5.1).

Aggregate resources occur in limited locations based on the geology of the area. Suitable aggregates cannot be found everywhere. Specific bedrock formations are suitable for production of aggregate and particular glacial landforms provide sand and gravel for the production of other types of aggregate products. Material must not be too deeply buried beneath overburden. Physical and chemical characteristics of both bedrock and sand and gravel deposits have a bearing on the suitability of the deposit to produce products that can meet increasingly demanding provincial specifications.

In much of Southern Ontario mineral aggregate resources are mapped and classified by the Ontario Geological Survey and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Published Aggregate Resources Inventory Papers (ARIP) are available and often used as the basis for Official Plan mapping.

ARIP reports indicate the general location of resources and are the standard reference source for deposit mapping that is included in Official Plans. These reports are usually the best available information and provide regional scale mapping based on geological references, multiple information sources and field investigation. They are a good indication of potential resource areas but are not definitive. Site specific planning exercises may need to be supported by further more detailed investigations to confirm resource availability. The ARIP information should be carefully assessed and there are many considerations and factors that must be taken into account before a resource area is considered proven and available. A common misunderstanding is that all the identified resources have equal potential. Gross areas and volumes depicted in ARIP reports are not a reliable indication of potential supply given the numerous planning considerations and constraints that affect actual availability. (SAROS Paper 2 provides additional discussion of constraints affecting availability.)

4.1 Mapping Sand and Gravel Resources

Potential sand and gravel resources are classified as deposits of primary, secondary or tertiary significance. The evaluation of these classifications is determined based on two (2) sets of criteria:

- Characteristics of individual deposits (deposit size, setting, location, and aggregate quality); and,
- The assessment of local aggregate resources in relation to quality, quantity and distribution of the resource.

Primary Deposits

- Represent areas in which a major resource is known to exist
- Generally contain sand and gravel that can be crushed and processed

Secondary Deposits

- Believed to contain significant amounts of sand and gravel
- Not considered to be the best resources

Tertiary Deposits

- Possible difficulties in extraction
- May be useful for local needs, but are unlikely to support large-scale development

Many licensed properties are located in areas of primary or secondary significance. In some areas of the province that are lacking aggregate deposits of primary significance, secondary or tertiary deposits may become more important. As better quality resources are depleted, aggregate producers continue to develop methods of blending or otherwise processing lower quality deposits in order to meet construction specifications. The higher cost of processing can be offset against the alternative of trucking in materials from more distant sources.

4.2 Mapping Bedrock Resources

Potential bedrock resources are mapped in ARIP reports as “selected bedrock resources”. These usually include suitable limestone and dolostone deposits providing a range of crushed stone, building stone and chemical stone products, shale for the production of brick, tile and clay sewer pipes, and sandstones suitable for unique building applications.

Bedrock resources are broken down into areas:

- with less than 1 m of overburden covering the bedrock;
- with between 1 and 8 m of overburden covering the bedrock; and,
- with between 8 to 15 m of overburden covering the bedrock.

As noted above, depth of the overburden can impact the suitability of the formation for extraction of the aggregate resource.

4.3 Mapping Mineral Aggregates in Municipal Official Plans

The development of mineral aggregate mapping for a municipal Official Plan involves several considerations. How much of the total mineral aggregate resource area is to be identified is a fundamental decision that has to be made. In addition, the method of identifying licensed and unlicensed (potential deposit) resource areas and how these are presented in different types of Official Plan schedules needs to be determined. Context in terms of the municipal structure (e.g. single tier vs. upper and lower tier Official Plan) and level of detail and format of the Official Plan itself will have a bearing on the mapping decisions that will have to be made. The following discussion presents some of the factors and considerations that go into the development of appropriate Official Plan mapping identifying the mineral aggregate resource areas and licensed operations.

How much?

Maps identifying aggregate deposits are usually derived from the ARIP or comparable study where an ARIP is not available. The portion or extent of the resource to be identified is a key consideration in the development of mapping to be included in the Official Plan.

As noted above, ARIPs are geological reports that only account for minimal constraints. The development of Official Plan mapping sometimes includes a broader constraint exercise which reduces the mapped mineral aggregate resource when other planning considerations and land uses that would constrain the future availability of the mineral aggregate resource are taken into account.

There are varying degrees of constraints that affect the area of mineral aggregate resource that is to be protected for possible future use. Examples of prohibitive or exclusionary constraints might include existing development, settlement areas or, Provincial Plan designations that preclude consideration of extraction. At the other end of the spectrum, lesser constraints such as individual rural residences or local (i.e. not provincially significant) environmental features may not preclude extraction and could be more properly dealt with through site specific design and the application review process.

The provincial interest in identifying, protecting and making available mineral aggregate resource reflects a hierarchy that should guide constraint mapping exercises. Where there is a potential or perceived conflict between a provincial, regional and/or local interest, the provincial policy prevails.

Deciding how far to go with a constraint mapping exercise can be challenging. On the one hand, mapping minimal to no constraints will identify and protect more aggregate deposit areas and will have the effect of imposing a more onerous land use review process for non-aggregate development proposals within those identified and protected areas. On the other hand, going too far with a constraint mapping exercise would not be consistent with the PPS direction to make available “as much as realistically possible”. Further, there could be significant negative consequences if viable resource areas are excluded from identification and protection and the inherent benefits of protection and notice are lost. When any constraint mapping exercise is undertaken, stakeholders and landowners should work very closely with the Planning Authority to ensure that proper justification is provided when any potential deposit areas are excluded from the aggregate identification mapping, considering the provincial interest in protection and availability of mineral aggregate resources.

Resource quality can also be a constraint to extraction. In some cases, there may be justification for omission of lower quality tertiary sand and gravel or unusable bedrock formations. The relative abundance of better quality resources in the planning area is a factor to consider and if there are abundant better quality resources available then the lower quality deposits may not warrant identification in the Official Plan.

The identified mineral aggregate resource area should not be reduced based on perceived need or lack thereof. This would be contrary to the PPS. Aggregate resources are non-renewable and planning for their availability is not limited by planning horizons including the intended planning horizon of an Official Plan. The overly aggressive mapping of constraints and arbitrary reductions in the identified area can result in unjustified sterilization of resource areas and omission of notice contributing to increased conflict and the potential for incompatible land uses in the future.

Mapping Methods (Options)

A typical Official Plan includes a land use schedule and other mapping depicting a variety of geographic based land use and resource information. The land use schedule is often the primary means of designating land uses and depicting areas where certain uses may be permitted. Other schedules provide supplemental information and identify areas where certain policies of the Official Plan are in effect.

Mineral aggregate resources can be identified on either the land use schedule or a supplemental schedule or appendix provided it is part of the Official Plan. A key requirement is a good map identifies the full extent of potentially unconstrained or viable resource areas so that notice is provided and protection policies applied. Referral to maps, appendices, studies or reports that are not part of the Official Plan is an ineffective method of identifying resource areas that are not consistent with the PPS.

Designating mineral aggregate resources on the land use schedule is a clear and effective method for identifying and protecting mineral aggregate resource areas. Designation of mineral aggregate resources on the land use schedule is usually accompanied by policy that permits mineral aggregate operations subject to rezoning and licensing. In these situations, an OPA is normally not required to establish a new or expanded mineral aggregate operation¹. In some Official Plans there is a distinction made between licensed operations and unlicensed reserve areas in which case an OPA may be required in order to establish a new or expanded mineral aggregate operation².

1 City of Ottawa Official Plan – designates Bedrock Resource Areas and Sand & Gravel Resource Areas where amendments are not required to establish a new pit or quarry.

2 United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Official Plan – designates Extractive Resource Lands with a distinction between Reserve and Licensed Pit & Quarry.

One of the results of outright designation for mineral aggregate resource areas is the exclusion of other potential land uses or recognition of overlapping resource priorities. For example, there could be equal merit in designating an agricultural resource that occurs in the same area as the aggregate resource. In these circumstances, and particularly where large portions of the municipality have viable aggregate deposits, the option of an overlay (dual) designation or identification on a separate schedule may have additional merit.

The overlay or dual designation option uses a cross hatch or outline of the mineral aggregate resource layered over another land use designation creating two designations on the same area³. This has the advantage of clear identification of the mineral aggregate resource area on the land use schedule without the excluding other interests. It should be noted that the amount and distribution of the resource to be identified may limit the practical effectiveness of this option simply due to graphical or visual complexities of presenting overlapping information.

Identification on a separate schedule can be an effective means of mapping mineral aggregate resources where there is no primary land use schedule (sometimes the case in upper tier OP) or where large areas of mineral aggregate deposits overlap with other resources or land uses and up front pre designation is not desired⁴.

It is good practice to clearly identify properties that are licensed mineral aggregate operations and distinguish these from unlicensed mineral aggregate resource areas that have potential for future licensing. This provides best available information to the public and allows application of specific policies to protect licensed operations and provide for appropriate permitted uses. Identification of licensed operations is best accomplished through inclusion on the land use schedule although consistency with the PPS may also be achieved through inclusion on a separate schedule. OPAs may be required to add a new operation or, the policies may provide that licensed sites can be removed and added as licences are issued or surrendered as an administrative matter without formal OPA.

The development of an approach to identifying mineral aggregate resources in an Official Plan is interrelated with decisions on whether or not OPAs would be required for new or expanded mineral aggregate operations and under what circumstances. There are a variety of approaches that can be employed ranging from:

- Requiring an OPA for all new or expanded operations regardless of current identification;
- Requiring an OPA for only unidentified areas; or,
- Not requiring an OPA for any new or expanded operation.

Some municipalities have decided to have different requirements for pits than they have for quarries or for Class A vs. Class B licences.

The comprehensiveness of the review is not necessarily increased by requiring an OPA for all new or expanded operations. Specifically, Official Plan policies related to zoning considerations in combination with the ARA licensing process ensure that appropriate planning considerations are fully vetted. However, the requirement for an OPA initiates a different review process and sometimes requires an approval from a different approval authority. Requiring an OPA for a new or expanding operation also adds time and cost to the review process.

In addition, in order to recognize the often generalized “desktop” information base used for planning purposes, it is important that Official Plans provide flexible mechanisms that do not preclude applications for extraction outside identified resource areas where better site specific information is available and appropriate planning rationale provided. Applications outside identified areas should require proper justification but must not be unreasonably disadvantaged or discouraged.

An additional consideration is requiring identification of mineral aggregate resources in the zoning bylaw. This has been endorsed as a recommended practice providing a higher standard of notice (more people are likely to look at zoning than an Official Plan). There is usually a distinction made between licensed and unlicensed sites so that a rezoning is required in order to establish a new or expanded operation.

3 Oxford County Official Plan and Peterborough County Official Plan – both plans include dual designations identifying resource areas and underlying land use designations.

4 Region of Peel Official Plan and Region of Waterloo Official Plan – both plans identify resource areas on separate schedules (OPA not required).

Municipal Zoning Examples

City of Ottawa

In conjunction with designating mineral aggregate deposits on the main land use schedule, the City zones unlicensed lands which contemplate future extraction uses. Lands that are within a designated resource area and that are along an existing haul route are zoned 'Mineral Extraction' with a holding provision. The conditions for removing the holding provision include a requirement for a complete ARA application and the completion of an EIS to the City's satisfaction. The process for removing a holding provision is less onerous and extensive than a standard zoning by-law amendment.

Lands that are within a designated resource area but are not located along an existing haul route are zoned 'Mineral Aggregate Reserve'. A zoning by-law amendment is required to permit a new pit or quarry within this zone.

Permitted uses within each zone are restricted to those that will not preclude or hinder access to the resource area (e.g. limited dwellings, agricultural uses, etc.).

Township of North Grenville

The township's zoning by-law identifies aggregate preservation zones along with zones for licensed pits and quarries. The aggregate preservation zone is based on the Mineral Aggregate designation in the township's Official Plan which identifies potential resource areas. Similar to the City of Ottawa's approach, the aggregate preservation zone permits limited, interim uses so that access to the resource will not be precluded or hindered.

A zoning by-law amendment is required to establish a new pit or quarry within the aggregate preservation zone. An OPA is generally not required.

Township of Oro-Medonte

The township's zoning by-law identifies Mineral Aggregate Resource 1 & 2 Zones. The Resource 1 Zone applies to licensed pits and the Resource 2 Zone applies to lands that have been identified in the Township's Official Plan as having potential use for aggregate extraction. A rezoning is required to establish a new pit within the Resource 2 Zone.

In an OMB decision in the former Township of Oro⁵, the OMB found there was a need for more compelling notification of resource areas through a clear display on the zoning by-law schedule. Identifying potential resource areas in the zoning by-law is a starting point in preventing future land use conflicts and providing notice to landowners of potential future aggregate extraction areas.

The findings from this decision have been reflected in the township's current Zoning By-law.

5 Oro 7th Line Producers, 1993 (Board File No. Z 900257)

5. Specific Aggregate Policy Directive from the PPS

5.1 Protection and Availability of Long-Term Supply (PPS 2.5.2, 2.5.2.1 and 2.5.2.2)

Make Available- PPS Excerpts

2.5 MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES

2.5.1 Mineral aggregate resources shall be protected for long-term use and, where provincial information is available, deposits of mineral aggregate resources shall be identified.

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, economic and environmental impacts.

Official Plan policies should include clear and reasonable policies that permit the establishment of new and expanded pit and quarry operations in order to be consistent with the PPS policies that state that mineral aggregate resources will be made available.

These PPS policies provide strong mandatory (“shall be protected” and “shall be made available”) direction to achieve the provincial interest in aggregate availability. In order to be consistent with this directive to make mineral aggregate resources “available” Official Plans need to provide a mechanism to allow aggregate deposits to be designated, and zoned under the *Planning Act* and licensed under the ARA to permit extraction.

Consistency with the PPS requires that as much of the mineral aggregate resource as is realistically possible be made available as close-to-market as possible. This policy recognizes the provincial interest in ensuring an abundant supply of mineral aggregate for a full range of products from competitive holdings. The policy also recognizes that not all mineral aggregate resources can be made available taking into account other planning considerations and resources.

The close-to-market component of the policy reflects the provincial interest in minimizing social, environmental and economic impacts attributable to aggregate haulage. Costs and impacts of long distance haulage are minimized by accessing those aggregate resources that are nearest the areas where aggregates are consumed. The cost of transporting aggregate is estimated to be approximately 60% of the delivered price. Therefore, the societal value and significance of an aggregate deposit is based not only on the quality and quantity of the deposit but how close the deposit is to its intended market. Reducing the kilometres travelled by trucks delivering aggregate to market also reduces social impacts on land uses located along transportation corridors and reduces the need for additional transportation infrastructure and facilities required to transport aggregate.

Policies in an Official Plan cannot include the requirements to demonstrate need for the aggregate resource. Mineral aggregate resources are essential to the Province’s economy and infrastructure. The societal value and need for mineral aggregates is well documented by Provincial background research and published studies. Need for mineral aggregate resource is established by the PPS and does not have to be proven by an application for a new or expanded pit or quarry. Nor is need, or perceived lack of, justification for limiting deposit areas to be identified, protected and made available. The amount of mineral aggregate resource to be made available is “as much as realistically possible” (PPS 2.5.2.1). This does not preclude considering the importance and significance of a resource when assessing impacts and deciding an appropriateness of any specific proposal.

The mechanisms by which new or expanded pits and quarries are permitted should be clearly identified. This usually includes the requirement for an amendment to the local municipal zoning by-law and oftentimes requires an amendment to the Official Plan.

In order to make mineral aggregate resources available Official Plans often include considerations, study requirements and/or criteria to be addressed in order to achieve Official Plan and/or zoning by-law amendments necessary to establish new or expanded mineral aggregate operations. Such policies are one way that the provincial interest in extracting in a manner which minimizes social, environmental and economic impacts can be achieved.

These policies are, in effect, the rules under which new applications are evaluated. They should lead to predictable outcomes by being clear, objective, reasonable and attainable. The measure of acceptability should be based on applicable provincial standards, regulations, guidelines and policies.

Generally, the standard embodied in the PPS and the ARA is the requirement to minimize social, environmental and economic impact. This acknowledges that some impact is inevitable but recognizes that appropriate siting, study, design, mitigation and rehabilitation can be applied to reduce undesirable effects or impacts.

Where such policies include lists of study requirements there should be accompanying policies that allow the municipality to waive or scope study requirements to suit specific sites and types of applications. This is often accomplished through a pre-application consultation process mandated by the Official Plan policies.

5.1.2 Existing Mineral Aggregate Operations (PPS 2.5.2.3 and 2.5.2.4)

Protection of Existing Operations – PPS Excerpts

2.5.2.3 Mineral aggregate resource conservation shall be undertaken, including through the use of accessory aggregate recycling facilities within operations, 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 OPA, rezoning or development permit under the Planning Act. When a licence for extraction or operation ceases to exist, policy 2.5.2.5 continues to apply.

“Mineral aggregate operations” is a defined term in the PPS. In addition to the licensed pit or quarry, a mineral aggregate operation as defined includes associated facilities used in extraction, transport, beneficiation, processing or recycling of mineral aggregate resources and derived products such as asphalt and concrete, or the production of secondary related products. Official Plan policies should list the uses permitted in a mineral aggregate operation (or include the PPS definition which includes the associated facilities listed above).

Where Official Plans designate mineral aggregate operations, the policies are generally expected to include pits and quarries or mineral aggregate operations as permitted uses as those terms are defined in the PPS and *Aggregate Resources Act*. Accessory uses or associated facilities essential to the extractive operation should also be permitted and the OP policies may include specific examples of permitted accessory uses such as crushing, screening, washing, stockpiling, recycling, outdoor storage, weigh scales, maintenance, fuel storage, parking and office facilities.

The 2014 PPS requires conservation of mineral aggregate resources including recycling. The inclusion of recycling as a permitted accessory activity on a licensed site accords with sustainability best practises and achieves consistency with the PPS. Recycling activities within mineral aggregate operations are controlled under the *Aggregate Resources Act* site plans which may include specific regulation of amounts, types of materials, location and setbacks from water bodies.

In addition, some uses and facilities associated with mineral aggregate operations may be listed as permitted in the Official Plan but would be subject to site specific permissions through the implementing zoning bylaw. Examples would include concrete or asphalt batching plants or aggregate manufacturing (e.g. concrete pipe or blocks).

Outside of mineral aggregate operations there is also a need for standalone recycling facilities. These should also be

planned for and accommodated in and around urban areas where infrastructure projects are generating recyclable materials.

In order to be consistent with the PPS, Official Plans must protect existing mineral aggregate operations (i.e. those licensed under the ARA) so that they are permitted to continue and be protected from development or activities that would preclude or hinder their continued use or expansion.

To protect a mineral aggregate operation best practises and consistency with the PPS is achieved by identifying and recognizing the pits and quarries on the Official Plan's land use schedule and in the zoning by-law. This provides information and notice so that planning and real-estate decisions can be made taking into account the existence of licensed mineral aggregate operations.

Official Plan policies should recognize that licensed mineral aggregate extraction operations are permitted uses of land and allowed to continue without further Planning Act approvals. Official Plan policies should also direct that licensed operations be zoned to permit their continued use.

Protection of mineral aggregate operations requires policies addressing circumstances where new development or other activities are being considered adjacent to a mineral aggregate operation. In these circumstances, the proponent of the development must demonstrate and ensure that the proposed development or activity does not preclude or hinder continued use or expansion of the mineral aggregate operation. Approval of incompatible development or development that hinders continued use or expansion, for example due to additional objectors or mitigation requirements, would not be consistent with the PPS and should not be permitted. Satisfying these requirements often may require the proponent to complete impact assessment studies in order to demonstrate that applicable standards and guidelines can be satisfied.

5.1.3 Protection of Known Deposits (PPS 2.5.2.5)

Protection for Known Deposits – PPS Excerpts

2.5.2.5 In known deposits of mineral aggregate resources and on adjacent lands, 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.

The expectation for municipal Official Plans is to limit and control incompatible development in rural areas on or near where mineral aggregate deposits occur. This will ensure new mineral aggregate operations can be established and access to the resource is maintained. This protection is accomplished by restricting permitted uses and requiring proponents of OPAs or rezoning applications to demonstrate that a proposed development would not preclude or hinder long-term availability of the identified mineral aggregate deposits.

In order to determine that the resource is not feasible - the development proponent and reviewing authority would be required to demonstrate that there are quantity or quality limitations or un-resolvable constraints on the deposit. Site specific investigation, testing and analysis is usually required.

There may also be circumstances where the proposed land use or development serves a greater long-term public interest than protection of the mineral aggregate deposit. Circumstances may arise where there is no reasonable alternative location for a development that meets a high level of public need. Public works and infrastructure projects may qualify. Every attempt should be made to locate the development in areas away from viable mineral aggregate deposits. In all cases, issues with public health, public safety and environmental impacts must be addressed.

5.2 Rehabilitation (PPS 2.5.3)

Rehabilitation – PPS Excerpts

2.5.3.1 Progressive and final rehabilitation shall be required to accommodate subsequent land uses, to promote land use compatibility, to recognize the interim nature of extraction, and to mitigate negative impacts to the extent possible. Final rehabilitation shall take surrounding land use and approved land use designations into consideration.

2.5.3.2. Comprehensive rehabilitation planning is encouraged where there is a concentration of mineral aggregate operations.

2.5.3.3 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.

The interim nature of aggregate extraction as a land use should be recognized in Official Plan policy and planning for availability of mineral aggregate resources. Official Plan policy takes into account the requirement for rehabilitation to accommodate subsequent land use and mitigate negative impacts.

Rehabilitation is a PPS subject that is dealt with by both Provincial legislation and municipal OP policy. In designated areas of the Province the legal requirement for progressive and final rehabilitation is covered by the ARA and the site specific obligations are regulated by individual site plans.

Official Plans can provide direction for rehabilitation of mineral aggregate operations in terms of preferred after uses. Land where extraction has occurred must be rehabilitated to a condition and use that is compatible with surrounding land uses. In many cases, this will involve returning the land to its pre-extraction use. In other cases, this may not be possible or ideal and new land use opportunities may present themselves. Provincial Plans also have after use requirements that must be conformed with.

Agricultural rehabilitation is very common and is a strong requirement of the PPS where extraction has occurred on prime agricultural land. The PPS also recognizes circumstances where complete agricultural rehabilitation may not be possible and outlines specific criteria that have to be satisfied. Generally, these exceptions relate to the quantity of the resource, the depth of the planned extraction, the consideration of alternative locations and the ability to maximize agricultural rehabilitation in remaining areas. These exceptions will be reviewed in section 5.3.

Natural Heritage features are often a compatible and suitable after-use in areas where aggregate extraction occurs. There are considerable opportunities for rehabilitation that adds value to local and regional ecosystem values. The 2010 Natural Heritage resource Manual provides valuable additional guidance on the role and opportunity for rehabilitation to be taken into account when assessing negative impact on natural heritage features over the long-term. Rehabilitation has a role in mitigating negative impact and providing a net gain of ecological health upon final rehabilitation of a site. The impact of a proposed extractive operation on natural features should recognize the rehabilitated after-use to promote a long-term approach to the protection of natural features and functions.

In places where extraction has occurred within settlement areas, urban forms of development are often appropriate. The process for development and approval of these forms of development have to be integrated with the rehabilitation and licence surrender process under the ARA.

Recreational after uses are also quite common and thousands of hectares of publically accessible green space have been created in close-to-market rehabilitated pits and quarries.

Where there are concentrations of mineral aggregate operations comprehensive rehabilitation planning can be an effective way to coordinate rehabilitation, achieve common or compatible landforms and facilitate transition to productive after uses. This is an exercise that is encouraged, to the extent possible, and, requires cooperation of landowners and involvement of municipal and provincial stakeholders. The obligation should not be directed to any individual producer or applicant.

5.3 Extraction in Prime Agricultural Areas (PPS 2.5.4)

Extraction in Prime Agricultural Areas – PPS Excerpts

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 the site will be rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition.

Complete rehabilitation to an agricultural condition is not required if:

- a) Outside of a specialty crop area, 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) In a specialty crop area, there is a substantial quantity of high quality mineral aggregate resources below the water table warranting extraction, and the depth of planned extraction makes restoration of pre-extraction agricultural capability unfeasible;
- c) 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 through 7 lands, 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 Class 1, 2 and 3 lands; and
- d) Agricultural rehabilitation in remaining areas is maximized.

There is a strong and long standing provincial interest in both the long-term protection of agricultural resources and in the long-term protection and availability of mineral aggregates. Through the late 1970's -1990's the agricultural and aggregate policies evolved to deal with circumstances where these high quality resources overlap.

The policy was developed as research and practice demonstrated that prudent soil management and rehabilitation would ensure that pre-extraction soil capability and agricultural yields could be maintained following extraction. It was also realized that there were limited circumstances where there would be irreconcilable conflict (extraction below water or deep quarries on prime farmland).

Official Plans should not prohibit extraction in agricultural areas. This would not be consistent with the PPS. The PPS permits mineral aggregate extraction as an interim use provided the site is rehabilitated back to an agricultural condition. The definitions in the PPS include requirements for return of micro climate, area and soil capability. Aggregate extraction, as an interim use of land, does not conflict with or result in the loss of agricultural land in this circumstance.

It is also recognized that in some cases, agricultural rehabilitation will not be feasible because of the nature of the extraction proposed (e.g., below water or deep quarrying). In this situation, a decision must be made on which resource use would take priority. Complete agricultural rehabilitation is not required (and aggregate extraction is permitted) if: there is a substantial quantity of aggregate material available (high quality in the case of considering extraction on specialty crop lands); alternatives are considered by the applicant and found unsuitable; and, agricultural rehabilitation in remaining areas is maximized. Official Plans often include these policies in a manner that closely mirrors the PPS language and definitions.

It is important that such policies only apply in prime agricultural areas where there is prime agricultural land. These are defined terms in the PPS and usually mapped in other sections of the Official Plan.

5.4 Aggregates and Natural Heritage Resources (Integration and reading the PPS in its entirety)

Mineral aggregate deposits are found where nature has placed them. They are often associated with landforms like moraines, kames, eskers, floodplains, limestone plains and escarpments where there is less developed agriculture. There is inevitable overlap between aggregate deposits and other natural features, including wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitat, valleys, Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), and other natural heritage features with varying degrees of size and significance. As a result, the implications of these policies in an Official Plan have to be considered relative to other provincial interests including mineral aggregate availability.

The PPS recognizes the relationship between the protection of natural heritage values and long-term prosperity, environmental health and social well-being. The policies in Section 2.1 protect natural features and areas for the long-term. Development and site alteration are not permitted in certain significant wetlands. For other features such as significant woodlands, valley lands, wildlife habitat and ANSIs development is not permitted unless there are no negative impacts. Development is prohibited in fish habitat and habitat of endangered and threatened species except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements. Development is also prohibited on lands adjacent to these natural features unless it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts. (See PPS 2.1 and associated definitions for more detail.) Provincial significance is afforded to those features that are considered uniquely important due to their size, ecological importance, historic value or other criteria the Ministry of Natural Resources uses to evaluate features of provincial significance. These criteria are further described in the Natural Heritage reference Manual NHRM (2010).

Natural Heritage Systems are areas with connected concentrations of natural heritage features. They are to be identified in Official Plans but are not subject to the same degree of protection as the component features. This recognizes that the system will include lower quality features and other lands that have potential to be restored to improve connectivity and ecosystem value.

The PPS is to be read in its entirety and the relevant policies are to be applied to each situation. Since the PPS provides for the protection of mineral aggregate resources and natural heritage features, provincial interests must be balanced and the policies applied in an integrated and comprehensive manner, giving consideration to the relative significance of each resource.

Since aggregate extraction is an interim land use, Official Plans should recognize that some natural features lost during extraction can be replaced through rehabilitation. As is the case with agricultural resources, one of the conflict resolution opportunities is rehabilitation that can replace or restore natural heritage values over the long-term. The PPS recognizes that the rehabilitation required under the *Aggregate Resources Act* is a means to mitigate negative impacts (PPS 2.5.3.1). The 2010 Natural Heritage Reference Manual provides some guidance and provides examples of how rehabilitation can be taken into account in dealing with multiple resource interest and assessment of negative impacts. Similarly, the 2007 *Endangered Species Act* allows the Minister to issue permits that allow the removal of species habitat where there is an overall benefit to the species, or the activity will result in significant social or economic benefit to the people of Ontario.

There should be a distinction in the level of protection afforded to provincially significant features as compared to locally significant features, while Official Plans can go beyond minimum PPS standards, this is not permitted where it creates conflict with other provincial interests including the availability of mineral aggregate resources. Local natural heritage features should not be treated the same as provincially significant features in terms of policy and development criteria.

5.5. Transportation and Infrastructure Corridors Policies (PPS 1.6.8)

Transportation and Infrastructure Corridors –PPS Excerpts

1.6.8.1. Planning authorities shall plan for and protect corridors and rights-of-way for infrastructure, including transportation, transit and electricity generation facilities and transmission systems to meet current and projected needs.

1.6.8.2 Major goods movement facilities and corridors shall be protected for the long term.

1.6.8.3 Planning authorities shall not permit development in planned corridors that could preclude or negatively affect the use of the corridor for the purpose(s) for which it was identified.

New development proposed on adjacent lands to existing or planned corridors and transportation facilities should be compatible with, and supportive of, the long-term purposes of the corridor and should be designed to avoid, mitigate or minimize negative impacts on and from the corridor and transportation facilities.

1.6.8.5 When planning for corridors and rights-of-way for significant transportation, electricity transmission, and infrastructure facilities, consideration will be given to the significant resources in Section 2: Wise Use and Management of Resources.

Planning for the availability of mineral aggregate resources includes ensuring haul routes are available so that products can be transported to markets. Official Plan policies usually include a description of municipal road networks that are designed to facilitate the movement of people and goods around and through the municipality. Aggregate providers should review these policies and maps to ensure that there are not any unreasonable restrictions on haulage routes that would impede the availability of aggregate resources. Official Plan policies that clearly identify arterial roads and truck routes can help reduce social impacts by providing notice to the public that higher volumes of traffic including trucks are likely to occur. Haul routes can be better protected by policies that restrict incompatible development such as additional residential severances.

In addition, some Official Plans may include policies that prescribe or obligate applicants for new or expanded pits and quarries to pay for road upgrades. While this may be appropriate in some circumstances there are many variables and Official Plan policy should include sufficient flexibility to allow for negotiated solutions.

6. Regulatory Jurisdiction (The ARA and OP policy, Zoning, Municipal Site Plan Control)

ARA Section 66

66. (1) This Act, the regulations and the provisions of licences and site plans apply despite any municipal by-law, official plan or development agreement and, to the extent that a municipal by-law, official plan or development agreement deals with the same subject-matter as this Act, the regulations or the provisions of a licence or site plan, the by-law, official plan or development agreement is inoperative. 1999, c. 12, Sched. N, s. 1 (4).

The ARA applies to govern extraction activities on all crown land throughout the province. Municipalities have no jurisdiction to regulate activities on crown land, through either their Official Plans or zoning by-laws.

The ARA also governs extraction activities on privately owned land, but only in those areas of the province where the government has passed a regulation designating them as being subject to the ARA.

In areas where the ARA applies, municipal Official Plans should not include policies that intend to regulate any matters that are covered under the ARA, licences, or site plans. Similarly, municipal by-laws, including zoning by-laws, and municipal site plan control should not apply or be proposed to regulate any matters covered by the ARA. For example, extraction and building setbacks, depth of extraction, operating hours, and annual tonnage limits are regulated by ARA site plans. In contrast, municipalities continue to retain authority to control and regulate the entrances to and from regional highways.

Section 66 of the ARA provides that the ARA will prevail and the municipal policies and by-laws are without effect if they address the same subject matter as the ARA, a licence, or site plans. This provision provides for consistent and fair province-wide regulation of mineral aggregate operations in designated areas. Best practice is for municipal planning to avoid regulation of matters covered under the ARA. For example, Official Plan policies that authorize site plan control or the entering of development agreements should exclude mineral aggregate operations.

Additionally, the ARA is complemented by many other provincial statutes that address water taking, water discharge and potential adverse effects of pit and quarry operations. Official Plan policies should recognize and respect the provincial jurisdictions and not duplicate the province's regulatory roles.

In areas of the province where the ARA does not apply to extraction activity on private land, the Municipal Act, 2001 provides authority to regulate pits and quarries within a municipality's jurisdiction, and zoning by-laws also apply in these areas to permit or prohibit the operation of a pit or quarry on any individual site. Prior to land being zoned for extraction, municipalities may also prohibit or regulate activities related to site preparation such as tree cutting / removal and the alteration of grade including soil removal or fill placement. However, municipalities do not have the authority to require a business licence in order to operate a pit or quarry, nor the authority to collect fees related to the extraction and transportation of natural resources. In areas where the ARA does not apply to private land, section 66 of the ARA is also not applicable.

7. Summary

Municipal Official Plans are important tools affecting the management and availability of mineral aggregate resources across Ontario. Ontario operates in a provincial policy led system whereby Official Plans must be consistent with the PPS. Official Plans are developed through a public process in order to reflect community input and considerations. It is important that aggregate producers participate in the development of municipal Official Plans in order to help ensure consistency with the PPS and appropriate management of mineral aggregate resources.

The following are some of the key considerations when participating in the development of municipal Official Plan Policy.

- Does the Official Plan clearly identify mineral aggregate resources on a map that is part of the plan?
- Are the best quality unconstrained resources identified?
- Does the map identify both sand and gravel and bedrock resources?
- Does the Official Plan include objectives relating to ensuring the availability of mineral aggregate resources?
- Does the Official Plan include a reasonable mechanism that allows aggregate deposits to be designated, zoned and licensed to permit extraction?
- Official Plan policies should not include any requirement to demonstrate need for the aggregate resource.
- Are mineral aggregate operations protected from incompatible development and activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use?
- Are unlicensed known deposits and adjacent lands protected from development and activities that would preclude or hinder establishment of new operations or access to the resource?
- Does the Official Plan recognize the interim nature of extraction and provide appropriate direction for rehabilitation with pits and quarries?
- Extraction on prime agricultural lands should be permitted as an interim use with limited exceptions in accordance with the PPS.
- How does the plan deal with overlapping aggregate and natural heritage resources?
- Are wayside pits and portable plants permitted without the need for Official Plan amendments or rezoning?
- Do the policies go beyond the PPS in their protection of local natural heritage resources (in terms of features covered and/or degree of protection)? If so, it is likely that such policies are not consistent with the PPS.
- Does the Official Plan describe and protect a road network to facilitate delivery of aggregate?
- Is the provincial jurisdiction for regulation of pits and quarries respected?

Appendix 1

1.5 The Development of Aggregate Resource Management Policy

The evolution of aggregate resource policies in Ontario has been evident over the past 40 years. The Province, through policy development and implementation, has demonstrated the management of aggregate resources as a matter of provincial interest.

In 1969, the Minister of Mines established a technical committee for the purposes of considering the designation of lands for pit and quarry use and introducing legislation that would regulate aggregate operations. The *Pits and Quarries Control Act* was subsequently enacted in 1971. It applied only in selected municipal jurisdictions, with extraction only permitted under Provincial licence in accordance with approved operations and rehabilitation site plans.

In 1974, an Inter-ministerial Committee on Mineral Aggregate Policy was established and responsible for recommending alternative mineral aggregate policy options.

In 1975, Cabinet directed that a senior Inter-ministerial group be established to formulate and implement a mineral aggregate policy for Ontario based upon consideration of the following:

- a. Provincial intervention to ensure continued availability of mineral aggregates.
- b. Whether the cost of aggregate should include some form of remuneration to the municipalities to compensate them for costs imposed by the industry.
- c. Examination of the longer run aggregate supply situation with specific reference to alternate sources, underground mining, substitutes, etc.
- d. A continued emphasis on the responsibility which the industry itself must bear to become more acceptable to municipalities and the general public.

A Working Party was then appointed by the Province consisting of municipal, public and industry representatives. It issued the 1976 Report of the Ontario Mineral Aggregate Working Party to the Minister of Natural Resources. The Working Party recommendations had an important bearing on the subsequent development of policy and legislations in the 1980s and 1990s. Several of the points addressed by the Working Party 30 years ago continue to be debated in current policy discussions.

In 1978, the *Mineral Aggregate Policy for Official Plans* (Ten Point Policy for Aggregates) was approved by Cabinet as one of the first Provincial statements regarding planning for availability of aggregate resources. It became an important statement for the Province in the contested 1979 Ontario Municipal Board hearing on the first Durham Region Official Plan. The purpose of the Ten Point Policy was to provide direction for municipalities on Official Plan aggregate resource policies.

Some of the general themes included a shared responsibility for supply, identifying high potential mineral resource areas, protecting resource areas from incompatible land uses and a requirement to make aggregates available at a reasonable cost including environmental, transportation and energy costs.

In December 1982, the *Mineral Aggregate Resources Planning Policy* (MARPP) was approved by Cabinet and replaced the Ten Point Policy. MARPP was a formal declaration of Provincial policy on planning for mineral aggregate resources. The MARPP stated that municipalities should identify and protect as much as of its aggregate resources as is practicable.

In May 1986, the *Mineral Aggregate Resources Policy Statement* (MARPS) was approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. It superseded MARPP although it was very similar in its terms. MARPS was the first policy statement issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and it contemplated improvements to the *Pits and Quarries Control Act* in terms of operating standards, rehabilitation and evaluation / approval procedures for creating new operations.

A basic premise of MARPS was that it did not supersede or take priority over other policy statements or other policy for specific areas of the Province. MARPS included specific policies to ensure regard to the importance of mineral aggregates was taken into account in any related planning action. Its background statement included:

Mineral aggregates are vital to Ontario's economy. In 1980, for example, approximately 120 million tonnes or more than fourteen tonnes of mineral aggregate per capita were used in Ontario (approximately 167 million tonnes or 13 tonnes per capita were used in 2008).

Although potential reserves exist in many parts of the Province, a reduction in the availability of mineral aggregates is occurring as a result of:

- ***depletion of near market supplies;***
- ***effective elimination of some valuable mineral aggregate sources by other development, for example housing, occurring over or adjacent to the deposits; and,***
- ***restrictive controls which make the establishment and operation of pits and quarries difficult.***

A scarcity of mineral aggregates is occurring within certain parts of Ontario. This results in increased mineral aggregate costs whether through hauling the material from distant sources; through using more expensive substitute materials; or through using more expensive processing techniques to upgrade lower quality materials. Such increased costs are ultimately transferred to the consumer. Therefore, it is important that sufficient mineral aggregate resources are available to meet the future needs of Ontario residents.

This policy statement established mineral aggregates resources as a matter of provincial interest and concern. It included specific policies to ensure that regard was paid to the importance of mineral aggregate and that the overall provincial interest is taken into account in any related planning action.

In 1995, MARPS was rolled into the Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements (CSPS), which was issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*.

In 1996, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) came into effect and was revised February 1, 1997. The PPS was issued pursuant to Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and as such was a policy which all decision makers were required "to have regard to" in making decisions on applications to which the provisions of the PPS are relevant. The wording of the aggregate resource policies was similar to the original intent of MARPS but in an abbreviated form. The 1997 PPS was replaced by the 2005 PPS and the implementing *Planning Act* language "to have regard to" was changed to "be consistent with".

The *Aggregate Resources Act* (ARA) was enacted in 1990 and updated in 1997. It replaced the *Pits and Quarries Control Act* and established a more comprehensive licensing regime for pits and quarries, in terms of approvals, operations and rehabilitation as well as an annual licence fee per tonne for the Province and municipalities. The fee was increased from 6 cents to 11.5 cents per tonne in 2007. Seven and a half cents is distributed to the upper and lower tier municipality, 0.5 cents to the rehabilitation fund and 3.5 cents to the MNR program which includes funding for enforcement and other administrative matters.

A review of past reports suggests the historic issues regarding the public interest in supply continue today. Prior to 1971, aggregate supply, approval and regulation were primarily matters of local interest. The 1971 *Pits and Quarries Control Act* and subsequent policy positions elevated aggregate supply, approval and regulation to matters of provincial interest.

These actions, in legislation and policy, were intended to ensure this basic resource continued to be available to meet a societal need for aggregate from close-to-market locations while minimizing the environmental, social and economic costs associated with its extraction and transportation.

Legislation and regulations under other environmental statutes were established to set standards for nuisance emissions such as dust and noise. Scientific analysis and conditions were required to minimize adverse impacts on the physical environment. Detailed plans were required to govern progressive rehabilitation such that the rural sites were returned either to an agricultural use (agricultural policies in the PPS) or to a natural heritage use (Greenbelt Plan and PPS).

The result of some 40 years of study and legislation is that mineral aggregate extraction in Ontario is highly regulated and is designed to minimize social and environmental impacts during and after the extraction.

Aggregate Legislation and Policies Timeline

	Legislation	Policies	Studies / Guidelines / Other
1970s	Niagara Escarpment Protection Act 1970		
	PITS AND QUARRIES CONTROL ACT (PQCA) 1971 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation revisions to increase designated areas 1970s-2000s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foodland Guidelines 1978 MINERAL AGGREGATE POLICY FOR OFFICIAL PLANS (10-POINT POLICY) 1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mineral Aggregate Studies & Geological Inventories 1974-1977 Mineral Aggregate Working Party Report 1977
1980s	PQCA Amendments Escarpment Setback 1978 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bill 127 Aggregates Act 1st, 2nd Reading 1979 		
	Bill 127 Aggregates Act Standing Committee 1980	MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES PLANNING POLICY (MARPP) 1982 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foodland Guidelines Revisions 1983 Niagara Escarpment Plan 1985 MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES POLICY STATEMENT (MARPS) 1986	Mineral Aggregate Transportation Study Final Report 1980
1990s	Rehabilitation Security Deposit Increase 1982		
	New Planning Act 1986		PQCA Administration Manual 1985 PQCA Applicants Guide 1986 MARPS Implementation Guidelines 1986
1990s	Bill 153 PQCA Amendments - Licence Transfer 1988	Affordable Housing Policy Statement 1987 Flood Plain Planning Policy Statement 1988	
	Bill 170 (ARA) Standing Committee 1989		
1990s	AGGREGATE RESOURCES ACT (ARA) 1990 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulations limit wayside permits in Caledon and Halton Hills 1990 	Wetlands Policy Statement 1992	ARA Policy Manual 1991 A State of the Resource Study 1992
	BILL 52 AND PROVINCIAL STANDARDS 1997	COMPREHENSIVE SET OF POLICY STATEMENTS (CSPS) 1995	Non-Renewable Resources Training Manual 1997
1990s	Strengthening of Section 66 1998	PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 1997	Aggregate Resources Working Group 1998
2000s	New Municipal Act 2001 (ARA jurisdiction is protected – municipalities cannot licence or collect fees)	Approval of Various Provincial Plans (ORMCP, GBP, GP, LSPP) 2001 - 2009	
	Licence Fee Increased and Continued Expansion of Designated Areas 2007	PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 2005	ARA Policy and Procedures Manual 2006
2010s	Standing Committee Report on ARA Review 2012-2013		State of the Aggregate Resources in Ontario Study 2009-2010
	Bill 56 Aggregate Recycling Promotion Act 1 st , 2 nd Reading 2013	PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 2014	Melancthon EA and Flamborough Zoning Order Cornerstone (SERA, AFO) TAPMO Risk Based Compliance Handbook for Aggregate Inspectors 2012
	Government Response to Report on ARA Review 2014		

Appendix 2

Provincial Plans and Aggregate Availability

PROVINCIAL PLAN	RELATIONSHIP WITH OFFICIAL PLAN	GENERAL NATURE OF AGGREGATE POLICIES
Niagara Escarpment Plan (NEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official Plans must be in conformity with NEP development criteria. No municipality with jurisdiction in the NEPA (and no ministry), shall pass any by-law or undertake any improvement of a structural nature within the NEPA if it is in conflict with the NEP [13(1) of NEPDA]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective to permit new aggregate operations within Escarpment Rural Areas with approval of an amendment to the NEP. Escarpment Protection Areas and Escarpment Natural Areas are not available for large extraction projects. General policy direction related to making aggregate available, minimizing impacts, ensuring compatible after-uses included in Section 1.9. Development criteria [2.11] speak to protection of sensitive features (ecological, geological, water-related), minimizing impacts, and rehabilitation.
Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ORMCP takes precedence over municipal Official Plans, which are to be brought into conformity with the ORMCP. Official Plans shall not contain provisions that are more restrictive with respect to aggregates [33(1)]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mineral aggregate operations permitted within natural linkage areas and countryside areas. No new operations permitted within natural core areas. Special policies set out for extraction within Natural Linkage areas (e.g. above-water extraction, quick rehabilitation). Aggregate-related policies [35(1)] require protection of quantity and quality of groundwater, key natural heritage features, ANSIs, and maximizing rehabilitation.
Greenbelt Plan (GBP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal decisions must conform to the GBP, and Official Plans must conform to the GBP [5.3]. Official Plans and zoning by-laws shall not contain provisions that are more restrictive than the GBP with respect to aggregate resources [5.3]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New operations permitted within protected countryside (subject to all other applicable legislation, regulations and official plan policies and by-laws), and specific policies are set out for consideration of operations within the NHS [4.3.2]. Aggregate policies [4.3.2] address criteria for consideration of new operations (features to protect, etc.), contain direction related to rehabilitation of operations, and set out specific criteria for operations within specialty crop lands.

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSPP to work in concert with and allow for completion of Growth Plan conformity exercise [pg. 11]. • Municipalities required to bring Official Plans into conformity with LSPP ‘designated policies’ at their 5-year Official Plan review [pg. 12]. • Decision makers allowed to adopt policies more restrictive than the LSPP, unless doing so would conflict with any of the policies or objectives of the LSPP [pg. 13]. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies provide general direction about studying impacts of aggregate operations on Lake Simcoe (particularly related to runoff and phosphorus loading), possibly implementing standards related to aggregate operations, and encouraging best practices [see 4.17-SA to 4.19-SA]. • Sections 6.41-DP to 6.44-DP provide specific policies related to aggregate extraction, and echo those contained in the GBP and ORMCP regarding extraction within certain features and rehabilitation.
Places to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities required to bring Official Plans into conformity with the Growth Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan supports a balanced approach to wise use and management of all resources (including aggregates) [see Section 4.1]. • Significant aggregate resources to be identified through sub-area assessments, as well as a long-term strategy for wise use, management, and rehabilitation [4.2.3].
Places to Grow – Growth Plan for Northern Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions to conform to Growth Plan, and Official Plans are to be amended in conformity with the Growth Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific policies related to aggregates, but policies related to mining speak to expanding the sector and creating new opportunities.

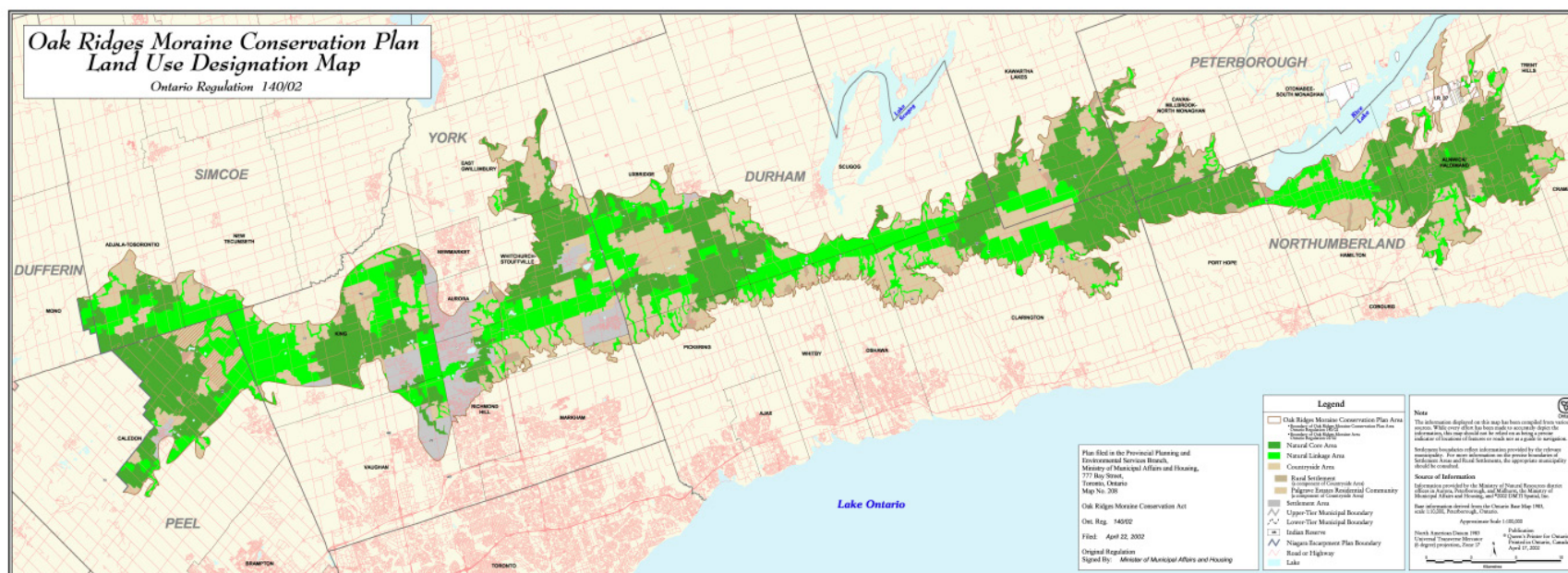
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Appendix 3

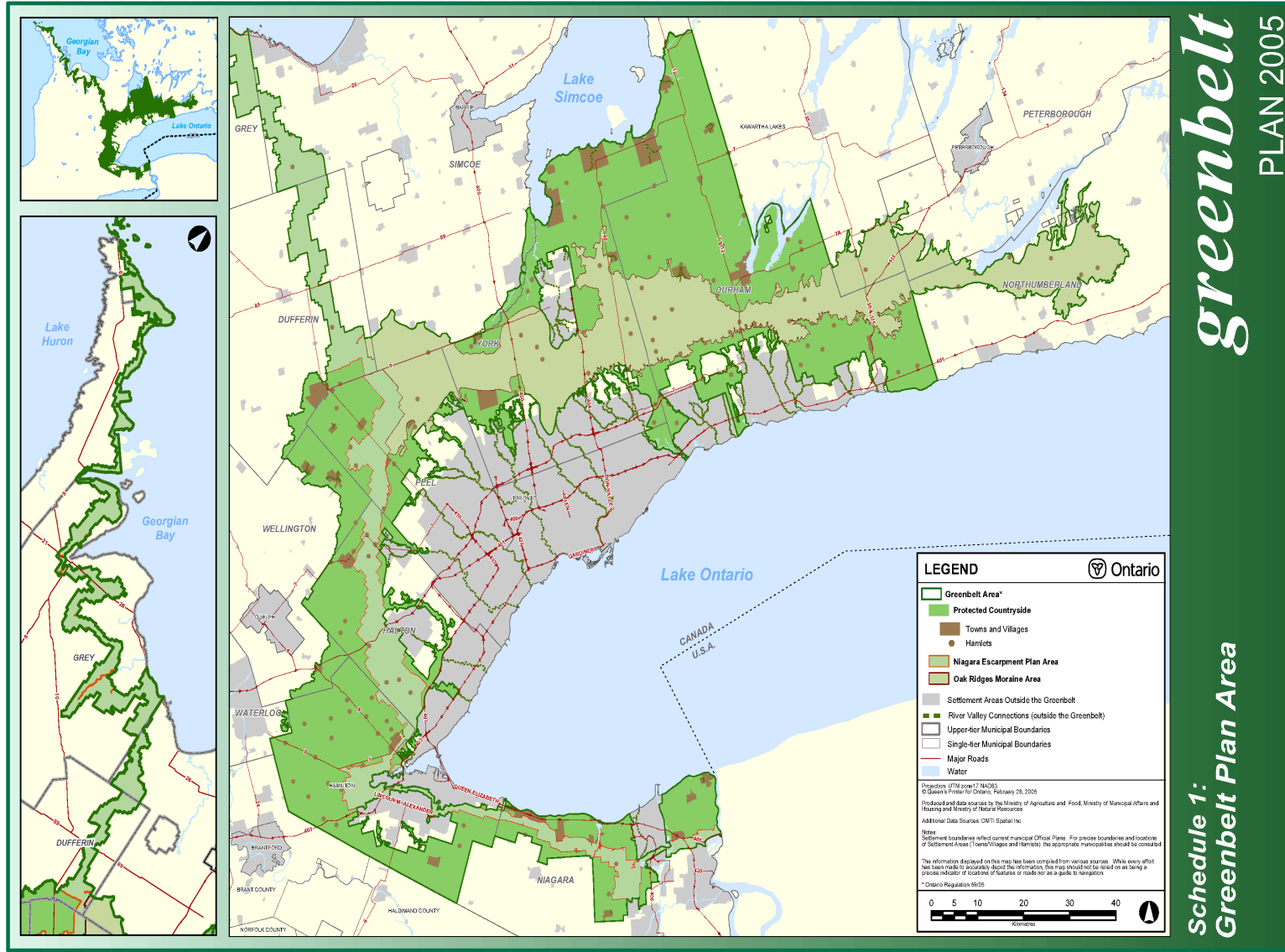
Niagara Escarpment Plan Area



Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area



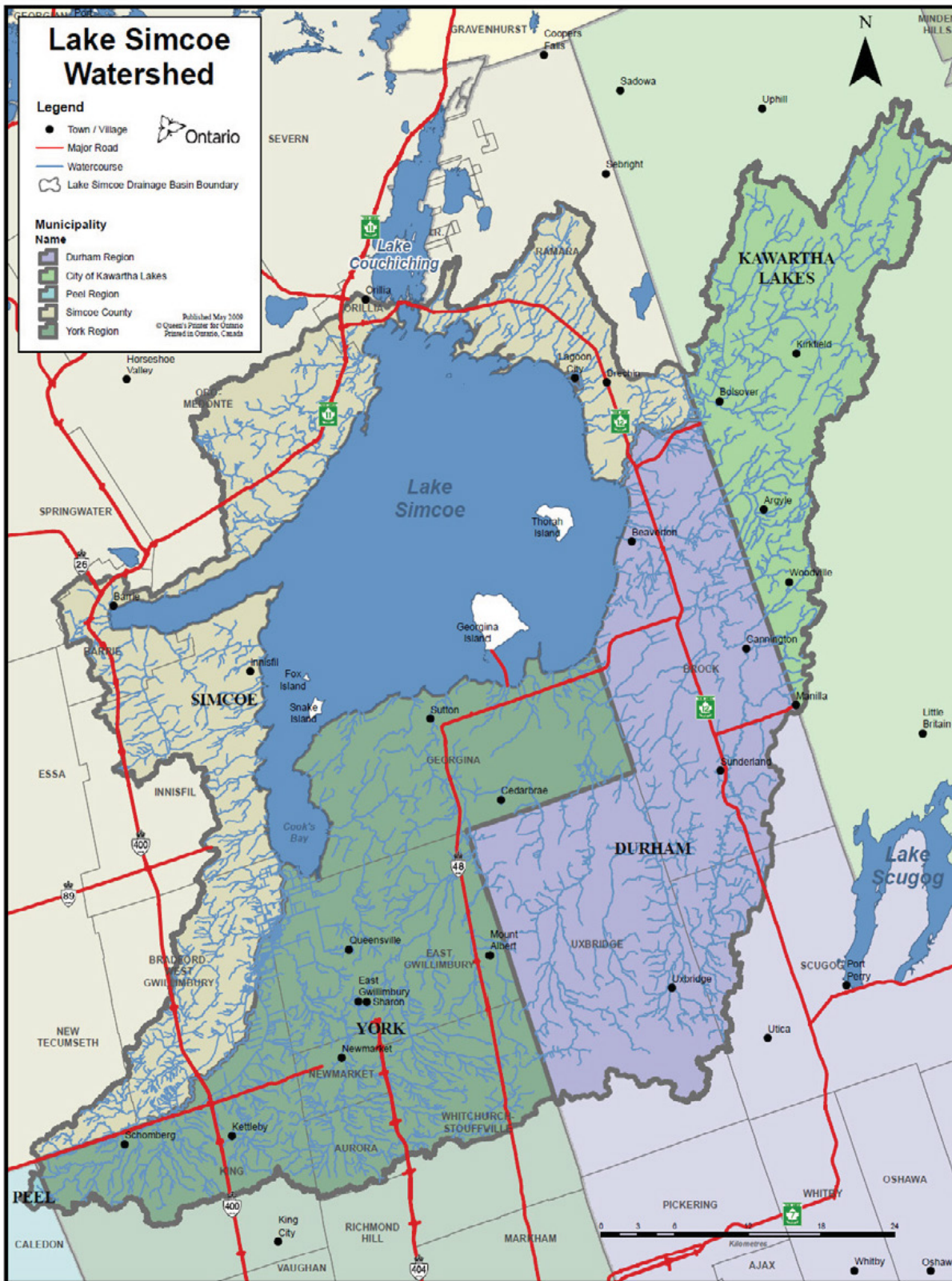
Greenbelt Plan Area



greenbelt
PLAN 2005

**Schedule 1:
Greenbelt Plan Area**

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan Area



Acknowledgments

OSSGA would like to acknowledge the work of the Land Use Committee in preparing this Guide. This group of dedicated volunteers have come together to create a document that will help aggregate producers better understand the Official Plan process and participate in the development of Official Plan policies in municipalities across Ontario.

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