

faculty of environmental studies

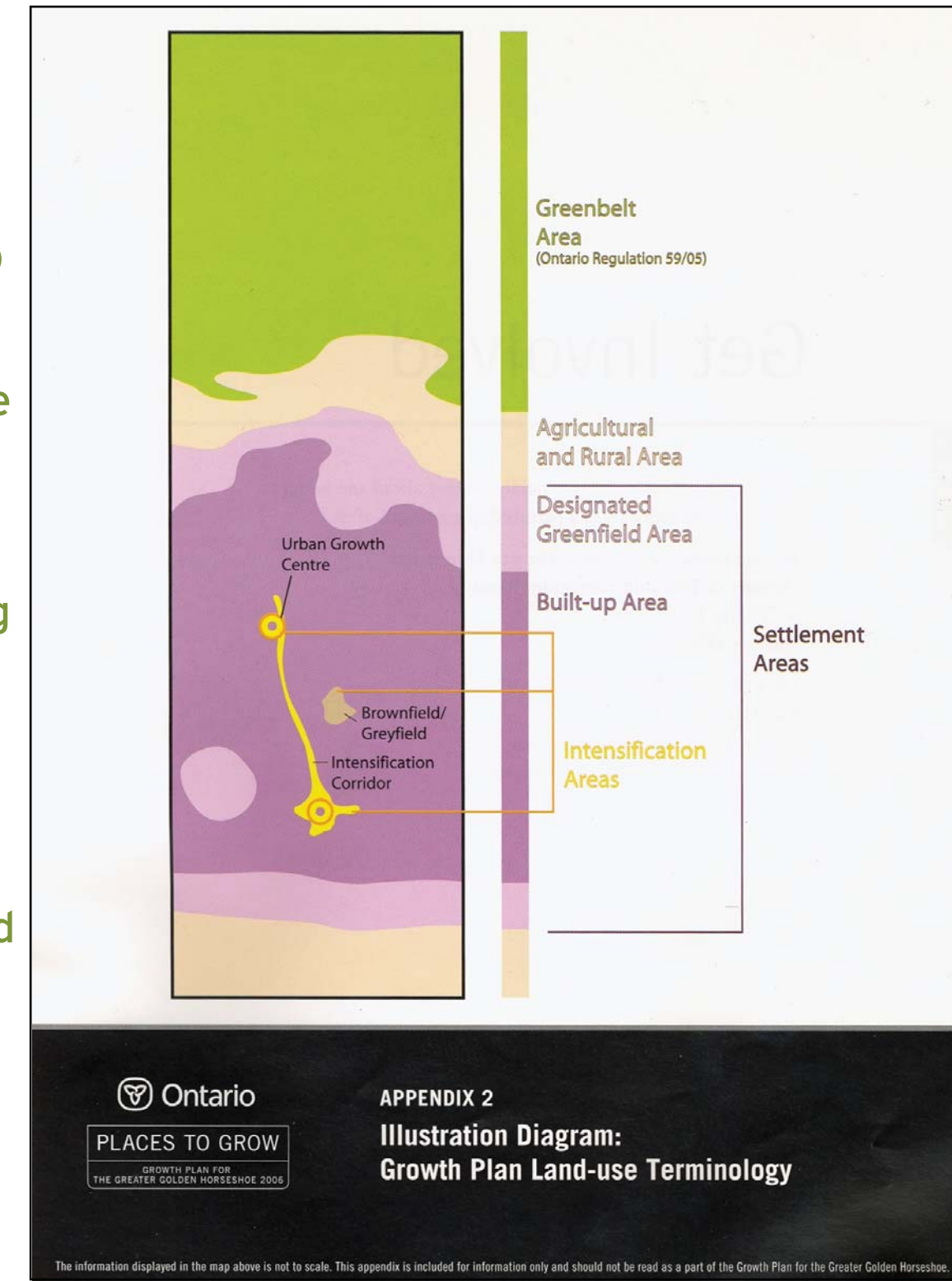
Graduate Students in Regional Planning| Studies of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt Plan

Contemporary regional planning issues include: governance, growth management, transportation, food security, social justice, marketing and ecological values.

The dominant frame for discourse in creating the Greenbelt is growth management: containment and preservation. Growth management discourse is associated with curbing urban sprawl and enforcing environmental protection.

Do we manage growth or control growth?

Growth management regulates the amount, timing, location and character of development (Levy, 2009). In contrast, growth control is a method of deliberately slowing or stopping development (Downs, 2004). Growth management and control are used for enforcing environmental protection, ensuring a liveable future, preserving an existing lifestyle and maintaining fiscal sustainability.



Why are the boundaries drawn where they are?

The Greenbelt Task Force proposed a modified “systems approach” for the process of including land in the Greenbelt, based on both ecological and cultural rationale. Land would include a “natural heritage system, a water resources system, and a landform conservation system”. These systems were to be linked by a network of open spaces, to counter the fragmentation of these natural and cultural systems from suburban encroachment. However, land already slated for future development in a municipality’s official plan would not be included.

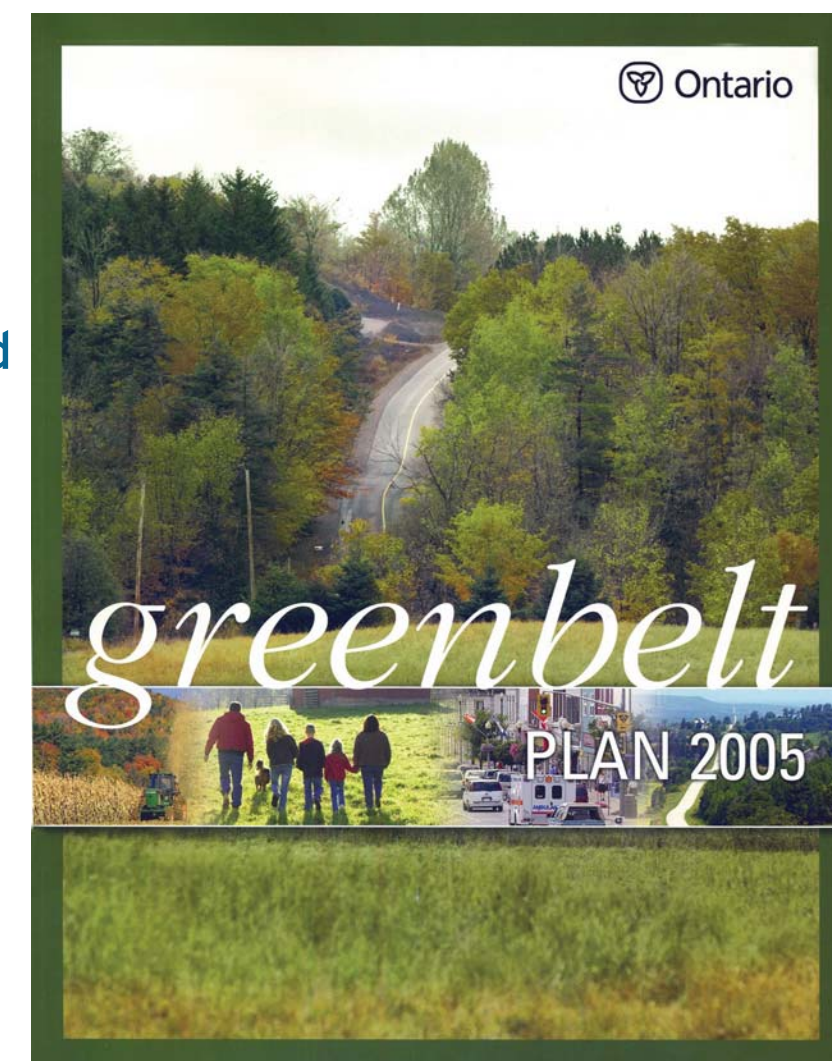
Where does the Greenbelt Plan start and the Growth Plan start?

Taken together, the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan provide policies for regional land management. These policies will shape the future of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Together, they provide a guide for municipalities and their designation of development boundaries.



Photo credit: Garrett Walker

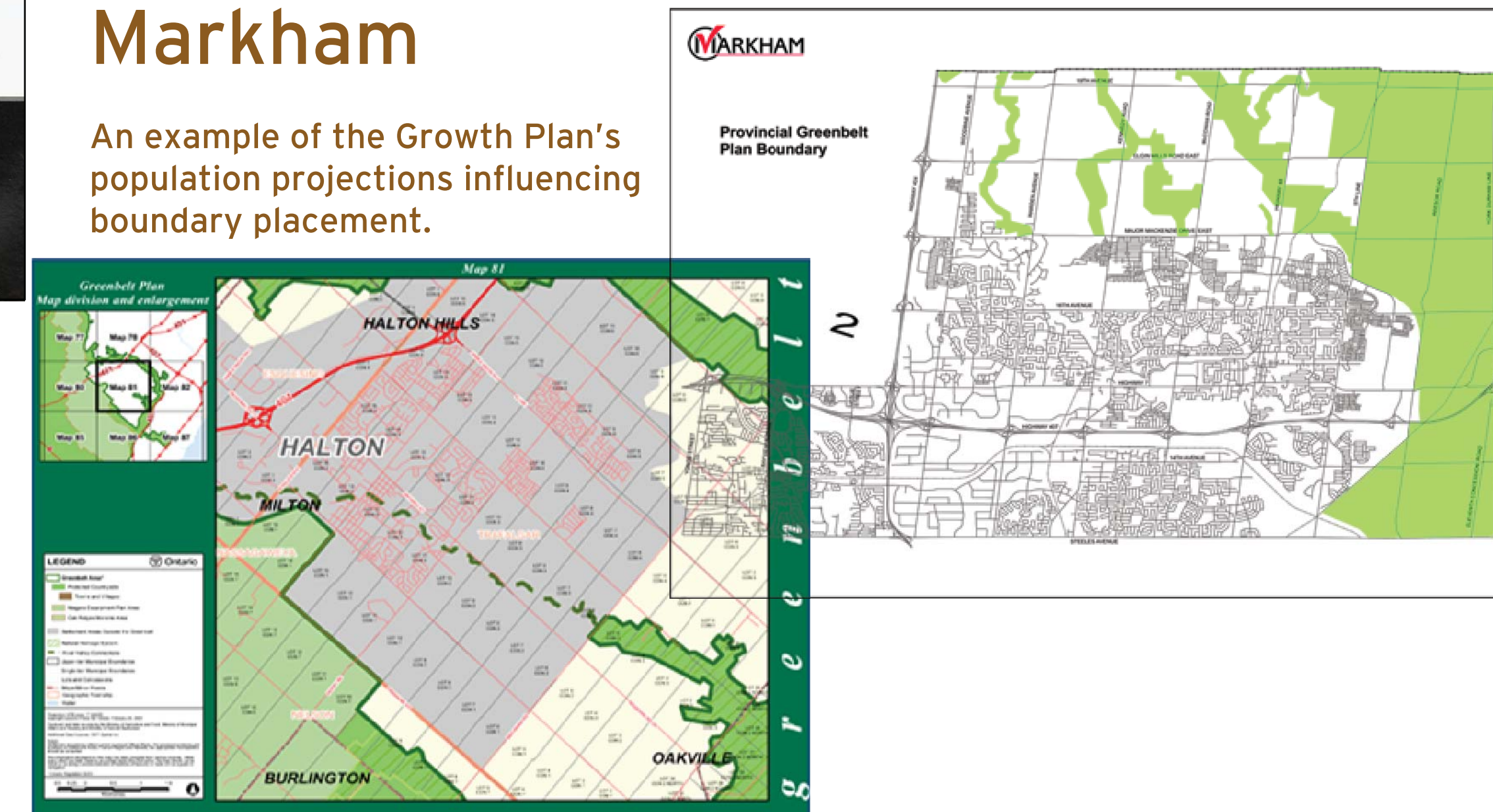
The Greenbelt acts a growth management tool for the Greater Golden Horseshoe region. The designation of Greenbelt areas has provided a boundary for future urban expansion. The Greenbelt Plan outlines key agricultural and natural land that shall be protected from development. In contrast, the Growth Plan establishes an economically and future oriented method for shaping an urban region that can withstand over 8 million residents by 2031 (Growth Plan, 2006). The boundary for development will be a key tool in creating sustainable urban region and depends on the efficient planning of Ontario municipalities.



References:
 Downs, Anthony (2004). Introduction. In Anthony Downs (Ed.) Growth Management and Affordable Housing: Do They Conflict? (pp.1 -19). Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press.
 Levy, John M. (2009). Contemporary Urban Planning (8th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
 Macpherson, K. (2010). Ontario's Greenbelt. Featured Powerpoint Presentation in September for ENV5 6124. Research and Policy Director. Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation

Mapping Case Studies: Milton and Markham

An example of the Growth Plan's population projections influencing boundary placement.



What about the larger areas of “white belt”? Should the Greenbelt grow?

What will the future of urban planning look like if we develop Greenbelt properties? The concept of a greenbelt may be leading the way in sustainable urban planning, a means of incorporating protected green space within the urban fabric. The Greenbelt Plan 2.0 is already taking effect – Toronto Environmental Alliance is an organization that hopes to extend the Greenbelt into city ravines (Macpherson, 2010).

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