

Sustainable Halton



Regional Land Analysis

May 2007



HEMSON
Consulting Ltd.

Sustainable Halton

This is a draft final background report for the Sustainable Halton planning process. As the project continues and as we receive public feedback, there may be slight adjustments made to the content of this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to provide an agreed upon base Regional land use information manual for all those involved in the Sustainable Halton process in order to ensure that all interested parties are using similar data and definitions. It will conceptually identify and account for all land uses throughout the Region, and, based upon more detailed land analysis, identify the areas that could be made available for future development.

CONTEXT AND FINDINGS

The Region has been divided into five land uses: Greenbelt Lands, Parkway Belt, Other Green Lands, Designated Urban Areas and the Primary Study Area (PSA). The PSA is the rural area of Halton located south and east of the principal Greenbelt area that is not otherwise designated Urban in the *Halton Region Official Plan*. The PSA incorporates the Region's Greenlands system and the "fingers" of the Province's Greenbelt system within the area.

A significant portion of the Region is either urbanized or is protected as environmental area. As a result, future urban development can only occur in only two areas: within designated urban areas or within the PSA. Future potential greenfield development in the Region is located entirely within the PSA.

The table below indicates that the total area of the PSA is 16,800 hectares. After removing other existing and planned land uses, including Greenbelt and Regional Greenlands, within the area the remaining rural area that comprises the potential development area is roughly 10,700 ha.

This analysis does not yet take account of the full natural heritage system that would be expected to be identified in this area. The Sustainable Halton report, *Options for a Natural Heritage System* recommends up to 30% of the land area of the PSA to be preserved for a future natural heritage system. Analysis of the implications of this recommendation on the potential development area in the PSA is addressed in the *Urban Structure: Potential Long-Term Growth Areas* report.

| Ultimate Development Potential of the Primary Study Area (in ha) | | |
|---|---------|------|
| Total Primary Study Area (ha) | 16,800 | 100% |
| Less existing NHS — including Greenbelt & Regional Greenlands | (4,120) | 25% |
| Less Parkway Belt | (470) | 3% |
| Less Roads | (530) | 3% |
| Less Infrastructure Uses (largely hydro, railway and the regional landfill) | (360) | 2% |
| Less Recreation Land Not Available for Development (assumed 50% of total) | (155) | 1% |
| Less Other Existing Uses | (370) | 2% |
| Less Proposed CN Intermodal Site | (120) | 1% |
| Potentially Developable Lands In Primary Study Area | 10,700 | 64% |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2006, the Province of Ontario released the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. The document, *Places to Grow — Better Choices, Brighter Future*, provides a framework for implementing the Provincial vision for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) to 2031. The *Growth Plan* sets out Provincial interests and directions on many issues including: the distribution of population and employment growth; where and how that growth will be accommodated; infrastructure requirements; and the protection of key heritage and natural resources.

Municipal official plans are required to conform to the *Growth Plan* within three years of its final release, as stipulated in the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*. In response, the Region of Halton has initiated *The Sustainable Halton Plan*. Building upon the updated *Regional Official Plan, Sustainable Halton* is to be Halton's long-term growth management strategy to address the forecast growth in the Region — a near-doubling of existing population and employment by 2031.

This report is one of a series that are being prepared as part of *Sustainable Halton*, in order to conform to the Provincial *Growth Plan* and *Provincial Policy Statements* and also to meet current *Regional Official Plan* directions. The purpose of this report is to provide an agreed upon information base to ensure consistency in data and definitions for those involved in Sustainable Halton. The report will conceptually separate the Region into five major land uses and identify where all future development can occur. The majority of this report provides an overview of the Primary Study Area (PSA), concluding on a potential developable land area.

The PSA is the rural area of Halton located south and east of the principal Greenbelt area that is not otherwise designated Urban in the *Halton Region Official Plan*. The PSA incorporates the Region's Greenlands system and the "fingers" of the Province's Greenbelt system within the area.

REGIONAL LAND USE ANALYSIS

This report provides an inventory of general land uses within the Region of Halton and a more detailed inventory of land uses within the PSA. For the Region, it provides an overview of what is designated for environmental purposes, what is currently designated urban and areas that could be designated urban, i.e. the PSA, if the Region of Halton so chose. A detailed breakdown for the PSA, separating each concession block into its constituent land uses, including: agricultural, institutional, industrial, residential, roads, infrastructure and multi-use, is provided in a specific technical memorandum.

Information for this land use analysis was provided by the Region of Halton Planning and Transportation Services. Through the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), designated land uses in the *Regional Official Plan* were used to arrive at the general land uses for the Region, and were then combined with regional property code information to arrive at specific land uses for every parcel within the PSA.

The rest of the chapter provides an overview of regional land use and a detailed analysis of the PSA, separating the land uses between those that are developable and those that are not. Ultimately, conclusions are reached on the total amount of developable land that could be available for urbanisation.

A. A Significant Portion of the Regional Land Base is Protected as Environmental Area

The Region of Halton's recently-updated *Regional Official Plan* includes four major land use designations: Greenlands, Urban, Rural and Other. For the purpose of Sustainable Halton that land base has been further divided into five areas: Greenbelt Lands (which are not yet identified in the *Regional Official Plan*), Parkway Belt, Other Greenlands, Designated Urban Areas, and PSA. These are briefly described on the following page and summarized in Table 1, as well as shown on Figure 1:

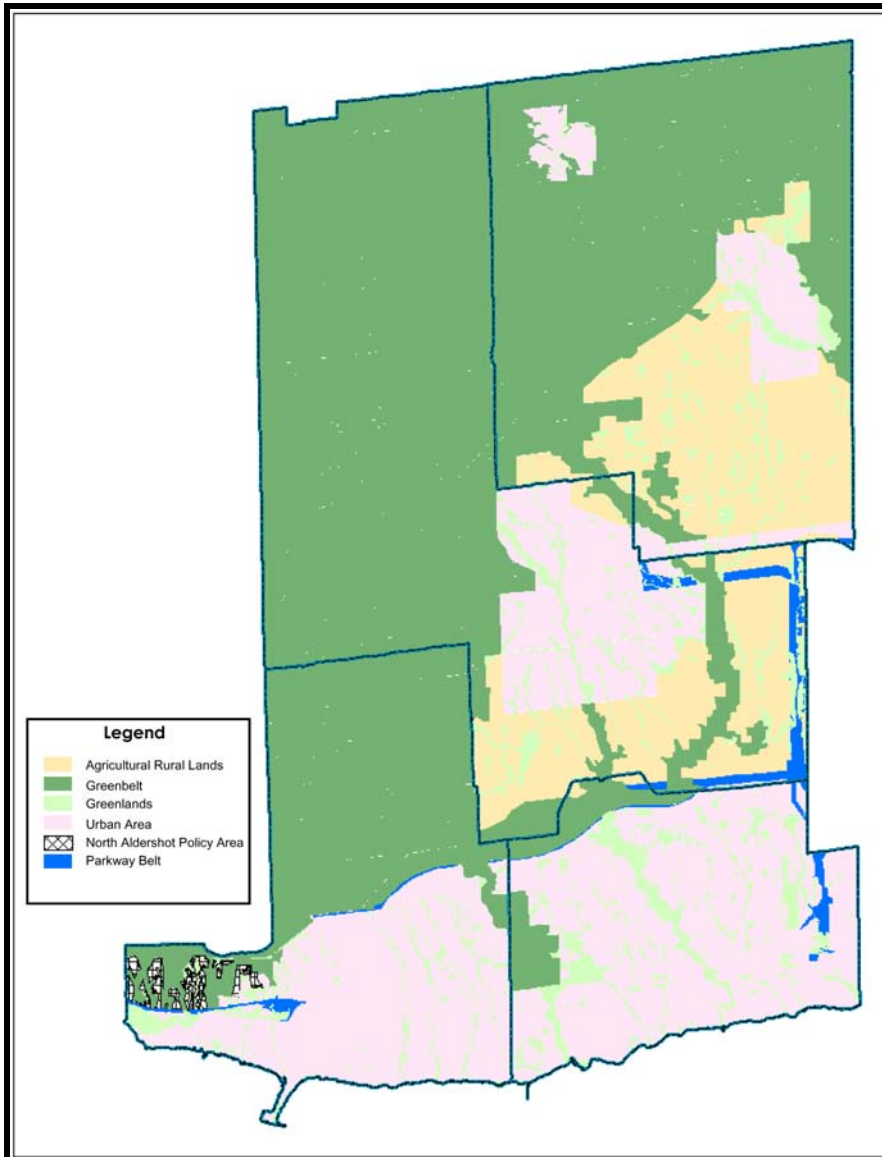
- The Greenbelt is a broad band of permanently protected land set aside by the Provincial *Greenbelt Act, 2005* and the associated *Greenbelt Plan*. Within the Region of Halton it is comprised of the Niagara Escarpment Plan Area and Protected Country Side. It encompasses roughly 44% of the Region of Halton and is located mostly in the west of the Region, fully encompassing the community of Acton.
- The Parkway Belt, implemented in 1978, is a multi-purpose utility corridor, urban separator and link open space system. Much of the land in the original Parkway Belt has been removed from the *Parkway Belt Plan* over the past 25 years and much of the remaining Parkway Belt area in Halton Region is now part of the Greenbelt.
- Other Green Lands include all natural areas of regional significance not included within the Greenbelt or Parkway Belt, as designated in the *Regional Official Plan*, such as Regional Waterfront Parks and the Provincial Bronte Creek Park. For the purpose of this analysis, the North Aldershot Policy Area is counted as Other Green Lands since much of the land within the area is environmental. However, some limited future urban development may occur.
- The designated Urban Areas are all land uses included within designated urban boundaries, excluding Greenbelt, Parkway Belt or Other Green Lands. This includes a number of land uses including residential, employment, commercial, and institutional. There are six urban areas in the Region of Halton: Oakville, Burlington, Milton, Acton, Georgetown, and the Halton Hills 401 Corridor employment area.
- The PSA, which is the subject of the majority of this report, is comprised of approximately 16,800 hectares of land and is designated primarily as rural within the *Regional Official Plan*. It is located south and east of the principle Greenbelt area that is not otherwise designated Urban in the *Halton Official Plan*. It is almost entirely located in the Towns of Milton and Halton Hills and incorporates the Region's Greenlands system and the "fingers" of the Province's Greenbelt system within the area. Once current urban areas are built out, the PSA is the only location where future greenfield residential and employment development could be accommodated in Halton.

| Table 1 Total Regional Land Base By Major Land-Use Category | | |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|
| Land-Use | Area (ha) | Percentage of Total |
| GreenBelt | 42,330 | 44% |
| Parkway Belt | 620 | 1% |
| Other Green Lands | 12,320 | 13% |
| Urban | 25,220 | 26% |
| Primary Study Area | 16,800 | 17% |
| Total | 97,280 | 100% |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: For the purpose of this analysis, the two hamlets in the Georgetown area, Stewarttown and Glen Williams, are counted within the urban land area as they are largely developed. It is recognized that they are designated as rural in the Halton Region Official Plan.

MAP 1



B. Almost Two-Thirds of the Primary Study Area Could Potentially be Developed for Urban Uses

This section provides an estimate of total developable land that could be available within the PSA. In order to arrive at an estimate of total future potential development land within the PSA and to provide information in a format that could be easily referenced and understood, two steps were undertaken: the first was to determine the total area of the PSA and divide it into various land uses; and the second step was to determine what portion of the PSA could actually be developed if the area were urbanised.

1. There are 16,800 Hectares of Land within the Primary Study Area, Split Between Milton and Halton Hills

The first step was to determine the total area of the PSA and divide the land into various land uses. It was determined that the best unit of analysis for the PSA was Regional concession blocks (the historic 1,000 acre blocks of the original land survey of Halton County). All Regional concession blocks that were comprised either entirely or partially of the PSA were identified. This amounted to 52 concession blocks. The land area not included within the designated boundary of the PSA within each of the concession blocks was removed to arrive at a total area of the PSA. Environmental lands, including greenbelt “fingers”, the Parkway belt and Other Greenlands, located within the boundaries of the PSA are considered part of the total PSA area.

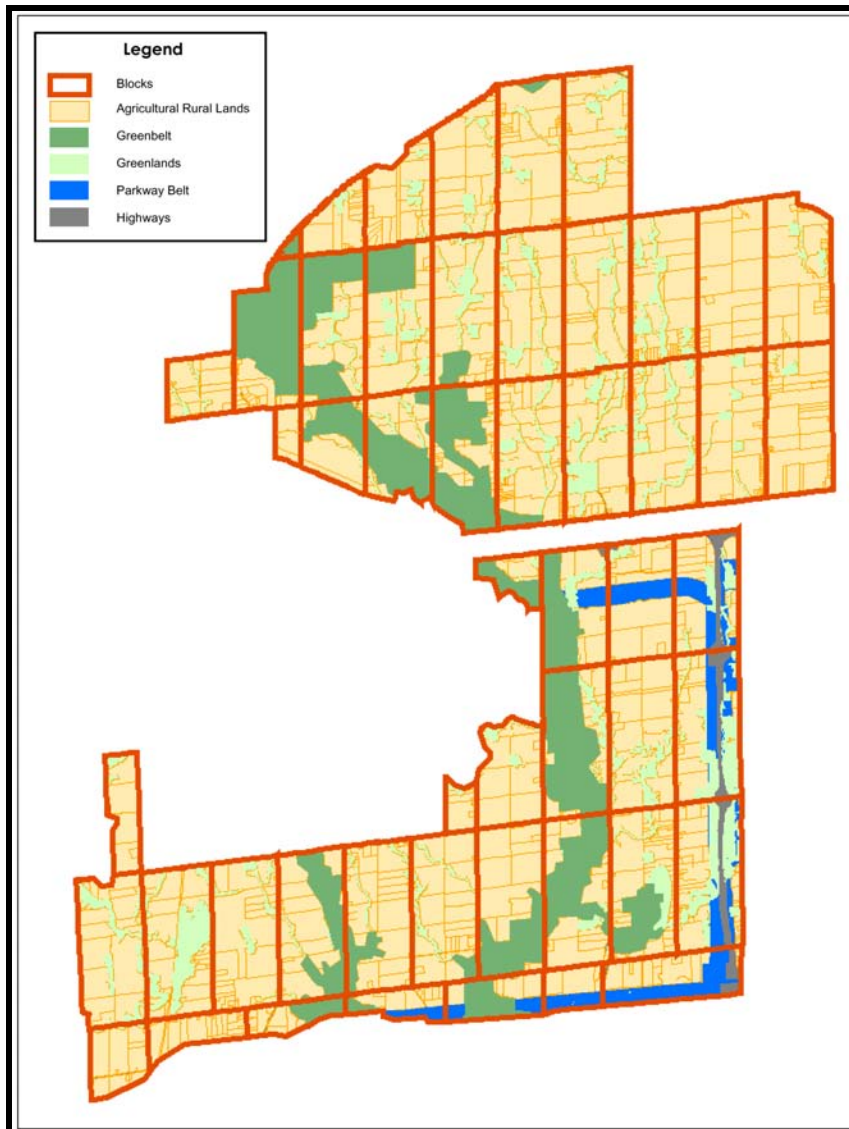
The total land area of the PSA, split into each concession block, was then split into a wide range of current land use categories, including:

- **Greenbelt** – as designated under the *Greenbelt Act, 2005*.
- **Parkway Belt** – multi-purpose utility corridor, urban separator and link open space system.
- **Other Greenlands** – all other natural areas identified under Regional policy.
- **Urban** – all land uses within designated urban boundaries.
- **Agricultural Lands** – includes animal production, crop production and forestry.
- **Arts & Recreation** – refers almost entirely to golf courses, sports complexes and local parks.
- **Multi-Use** – is any property that has two or more uses located on it, usually referring to residential–commercial uses.
- **Institutional** – hospitals, schools, municipal services and buildings and religious buildings.
- **Infrastructure** – local roads, rail, and all utilities.
- **Industrial** – manufacturing and distribution.

- **Commercial** – retail, office, services and accommodation.
- **Residential (Small)** – residential properties less than 0.8 hectares.
- **Residential (Large)** – residential properties greater than 0.8 hectares.
- **Vacant** – undeveloped residential and non-residential lands.
- **Roads** – includes existing roads and rights-of-way for all Regional roads.

The map on the following page outlines the major land uses within the Region as well as the outline of the 52 concession blocks that were analysed. For each of the 52 concession blocks a land use summary has been completed and is available in an associated Technical Memorandum. Table 2 provides a summary of the 52 concession blocks.

MAP 2



| Table 2 Land Uses Within the Primary Study Area | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Use | Number of Lots | Area (ha) | % of Total |
| Total Primary Study Area | 1,600 | 16,800 | 100% |
| Current Land Uses within Primary Study Area | | | |
| Roads | N/A | 530 | 3% |
| Greenbelt | N/A | 2,500 | 15% |
| Parkway Belt | N/A | 470 | 3% |
| Other Greenlands | N/A | 1,610 | 10% |
| Arts and Recreation | 13 | 310 | 2% |
| Agricultural and Forestry | 566 | 9,230 | 55% |
| Commercial | 14 | 20 | 0% |
| Industrial | 6 | 40 | 0% |
| Infrastructure | 21 | 410 | 2% |
| Institutional | 13 | 30 | 0% |
| Multi-Use Lands | 24 | 20 | 0% |
| Large Residential (>0.8 ha) | 123 | 200 | 1% |
| Small Residential (<0.8 ha) | 686 | 270 | 2% |
| Vacant Lands | <u>134</u> | <u>1,170</u> | <u>7%</u> |
| Total | 1,600 | 16,800 | 100% |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

The table indicates that, Agricultural and Forestry¹ land is by far the largest land use within the PSA. It accounts for 55% of the total land area, the majority of which is located in Halton Hills. The lands that currently comprise the existing natural heritage system in the PSA are the second largest land uses. The Greenbelt, and Other Greenlands in the PSA comprise 25% of the land area, the majority of which are located in the Town of Milton.

Vacant land is the third largest land use in the PSA and accounts for 7% of the total land area. The majority of this land is located in the Town of Milton, east of the urban area, south of Highway 401. The next largest land uses are roads, which account for 3%, and both types of residential development, which are relatively evenly split between large and small lots, and combined also account for 3% of the total land area. The Parkway Belt also accounts for 3% of the PSA land area. Commercial, industrial and institutional combined account for less than 1% of the total PSA land area.

Tables 3 and 4 provide the information identical to Table 2, but divided between the lands located in the Town of Milton and for those located in the Town of Halton Hills.

¹Agriculture and Forestry is a defined class of land for property assessment. Virtually all of these lands in the PSA area of Halton are agriculture.

| Table 3 Land Uses Within the Town of Milton Portion of the Primary Study Area | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Use | Number of Lots | Area (ha) | % of Total |
| Total Primary Study Area | 662 | 8,590 | 100% |
| Current Land Uses within Primary Study Area | | | |
| Roads | N/A | 360 | 4% |
| Greenbelt | N/A | 1,470 | 17% |
| Parkway Belt | N/A | 470 | 5% |
| Other Green Lands | N/A | 850 | 10% |
| Arts and Recreation | 11 | 220 | 3% |
| Agricultural and Forestry | 289 | 3,760 | 44% |
| Commercial | 3 | 5 | 0% |
| Industrial | 3 | 20 | 0% |
| Infrastructure | 15 | 290 | 3% |
| Institutional | 4 | 0 | 0% |
| Multi-Use Lands | 10 | 10 | 0% |
| Large Residential (>0.8 ha) | 42 | 60 | 1% |
| Small Residential (<0.8 ha) | 190 | 100 | 1% |
| Vacant Lands | <u>95</u> | <u>980</u> | <u>11%</u> |
| Total | 662 | 8,590 | 100% |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

| Table 4 Land Uses Within the Town of Halton Hills Portion of the Primary Study Area | | | |
|--|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Use | Number of Lots | Area (ha) | % of Total |
| Total Primary Study Area | 938 | 8,220 | 100% |
| Current Land Uses within Primary Study Area | | | |
| Roads | N/A | 170 | 2% |
| Greenbelt | N/A | 1,030 | 13% |
| Parkway Belt | N/A | 0 | 0% |
| Other Green Lands | N/A | 760 | 9% |
| Arts and Recreation | 2 | 90 | 1% |
| Agricultural and Forestry | 277 | 5,470 | 67% |
| Commercial | 11 | 10 | 0% |
| Industrial | 3 | 20 | 0% |
| Infrastructure | 6 | 120 | 2% |
| Institutional | 9 | 30 | 0% |
| Multi-Use Lands | 14 | 10 | 0% |
| Large Residential (>0.8 ha) | 81 | 140 | 2% |
| Small Residential (<0.8 ha) | 496 | 170 | 2% |
| Vacant Lands | <u>39</u> | <u>190</u> | <u>2%</u> |
| Total | 938 | 8,220 | 100% |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

2. 10,700 Hectares of Land Within the Primary Study Area Are Undeveloped and Potentially Developable

Of the total land area of 16,800 hectares, it is estimated that about 10,700 ha are potentially developable. Three principle calculations were made to estimate the total developable land area in the PSA. The estimate is prepared as follows:

- Subtracting lands within the PSA that are already designated as part of the Region's Natural Heritage System. This includes lands designated as part of the Provincial Greenbelt and Other Greenlands.
- All lands that are within the PSA that are currently developed or in use and would be unlikely to redevelop quickly if the area were urbanised, such as small residential properties, roads and mixed-use, commercial and institutional properties, were subtracted from the total potentially developable land. The Parkway belt is also considered undevelopable in accordance with this current designation (although it should be noted that there is a possibility that some of these lands could become developable in the longer term).
- It is assumed that all lands designated as Agricultural and Forestry or Vacant are potentially developable (recognising that a portion of the future NHS lands would be currently within the Agriculture and Forestry category). Large residential parcels were considered likely to redevelop under urbanisation if the units were stand alone (i.e. large lot rural subdivisions were assumed to remain intact). It was also assumed that 50% of Arts & Recreation lands were developable, that is, about half of these lands, primarily golf courses, would redevelop if an area were urbanized and half would not. Finally, one commercial site and two infrastructure sites were considered developable if the area were urbanized due to current under-utilization.
- Finally, the proposed CN intermodal site in southern Milton was removed as potential development land on the supposition that CN will hold the lands on a long-term basis until required for the intermodal terminal, even if CN does not pursue intermodal development in the near term. The land removed from consideration for potential development is only the intermodal site itself and not CN's significant additional surrounding land holdings.

Tables 5, 6 and 7 provide a summary of these calculations and the total potentially developable land area within the PSA as split between the Town of Milton and the Town of Halton Hills. There is a total of 10,700 developable ha in the PSA, as the following tables outline, a larger portion of the developable land is located within the Town of Halton Hills.

| Table 5 Ultimate Development Potential of the Primary Study Area (in ha) | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| Total Primary Study Area (ha) | 16,800 | 100% |
| Less existing NHS – including Greenbelt, & Other Greenlands | (4,120) | 25% |
| Less Parkway Belt | (470) | 3% |
| Less Roads | (530) | 3% |
| Less Infrastructure Uses (largely hydro, railway and the regional landfill) | (360) | 2% |
| | (155) | 1% |
| Less Recreation Land Not Available for Development (assumed 50% of total) | (370) | 2% |
| | <u>(120)</u> | <u>1%</u> |
| Less Other Existing Uses | | |
| Less Proposed CN Intermodal Site | 10,700 | 64% |
| Potentially Developable Lands In Primary Study Area | | |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

| Table 6 Ultimate Development Potential of the Primary Study Area Within the Town of Milton (in ha) | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|
| Total Primary Study Area - Town of Milton (ha) | 8,590 | 100% |
| Less existing NHS – including Greenbelt & Other Greenlands | (2,320) | 27% |
| Less Parkway Belt | (470) | 5% |
| Less Roads | (360) | 4% |
| Less Infrastructure Uses (largely hydro, railway and the regional landfill) | (290) | 3% |
| | (110) | 1% |
| Less Recreation Land Not Available for Development (assumed 50% of total) | (130) | 2% |
| | <u>(120)</u> | <u>1%</u> |
| Less Other Existing Uses | | |
| Less Proposed CN Intermodal Site | 4,800 | 56% |
| Potentially Developable Lands In Primary Study Area | | |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

| Table 7 Ultimate Development Potential of the Primary Study Area Within the Town of Halton Hills (in ha) | | |
|---|--------------|-----------|
| Total Primary Study Area - Town of Halton Hills (ha) | 8,220 | 100% |
| Less existing NHS — including Greenbelt, Parkway Belt & Other Green Lands | (1,790) | 22% |
| Less Roads | (170) | 2% |
| Less Infrastructure Uses (largely hydro, railway and the regional landfill) | (70) | 1% |
| Less Recreation Land Not Available for Development (assumed 50% of total) | (45) | 1% |
| Less Other Existing Uses | <u>(240)</u> | <u>3%</u> |
| Potentially Developable Lands In Primary Study Area | 5,900 | 72% |

Source: Hemson Consulting Ltd. and Region of Halton

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding.

The Town of Halton Hills has 5,900 hectares of potentially developable land, while the Town of Milton has 4,800 hectares of potentially developable land.

CONCLUSION

The PSA is the rural area of Halton located south and east of the principal Greenbelt area that is not otherwise designated Urban in the *Halton Region Official Plan*. The PSA is located almost entirely in the Towns of Milton and Halton Hills and incorporates the Region's Greenlands system and the "fingers" of the Province's Greenbelt system within the area. The PSA is comprised of roughly 16,800 ha. Once current urban areas are built out, the PSA is the only location where future urban development could be accommodated in Halton. Of the total area of the PSA, roughly 10,700 hectares are potentially developable.

This analysis does not yet take account of the full natural heritage system that would be expected to be identified in this area. The Sustainable Halton report, *Options for a Natural Heritage System* recommends up to 30% of the land area of the PSA to be preserved for a future natural heritage system. Analysis of the implications of this recommendation on the potential development area in the PSA is addressed in the *Urban Structure: Potential Long-Term Growth Areas* report.