

# PART 9: CONCLUSIONS

## Framework

The overall goal of this study was to identify how future population and land development might be managed in a way that improves the quality of life for all residents of the Region, ensures continued economic prosperity and protects the natural environment. The study explores the elements of a strategy to achieve this goal based on a framework which:

- Identifies how population and employment growth in South Central Ontario can be managed and accommodated;
- Protects natural areas (Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment, Wetlands, Shorelines etc) and protects valuable farmland to the greatest extent possible;
- Minimizes habitat, air and water quality impacts;
- Identifies ways to invest in transit at a level that responds to the future transit needs of the Region;
- Promotes land use patterns along arterial corridors and in a few strong “City Centres” that are transit supportive and pedestrian friendly;
- Ensures the adequate supply of high quality drinking water and the treatment and safe disposal of wastewater;
- Encourages reinvestment in cities and existing urban areas according to a sustainable financial formula; and
- Identifies opportunities for forging alliances between Toronto and the other cities in South Central Ontario that share the goal of pursuing initiatives resulting in “an urban renaissance”.

## Recent Changes in the Region

Throughout this report we have presented information on the current and future prospects for growth across the GTA and South Central Ontario. In some ways the story is positive: densities have been increasing, both overall and for residential communities, and even though growth has been happening on a somewhat unprecedented scale, somehow the Region has been able to meet the housing, infrastructure and social service needs of the new and existing population.



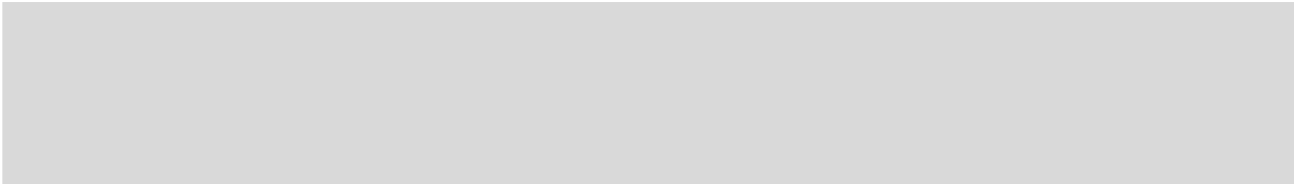
Source: City of Toronto



Source: Urban Development Services, City of Toronto



Source: Urban Development Services, City of Toronto



## The Need for a Growth Management Strategy

But at the same time there are serious signs of strain: roads are congested, air quality has been getting worse, natural areas are threatened and people's quality of life is at risk. Looking into the future shows that if these trends continue, the negative impacts on the natural environment, the economy and quality of life will be significant. And although increased densities represent an important achievement, this on its own will not produce better environments. In fact, focussing on any one particular solution will not, on its own, turn things around. The solution will need to integrate a number of initiatives ranging from creating a better transit system across the GTA, to creating transit supportive environments, to building liveable, walkable mixed use communities, and to protecting agricultural land. To turn things around will also require an unprecedented level of cooperation amongst the Regions and municipalities in the GTA and beyond. The first and most urgent need will be to prepare an integrated growth management strategy that provides a framework for directing growth into more sustainable forms both within the existing urbanized areas and in the newly developing areas.

## Implementation Through Redevelopment Authorities

The second important initiative will be to establish effective implementation vehicles to carry out the strategy. Some of these, such as redevelopment or renewal authorities have been discussed in this report. Others may emerge from further discussions. In any case, the urgency in moving forward should not be underestimated.

## The Need for Regional Collaboration

The Toronto Region is well positioned to take advantage of the many positive examples of innovative and successful initiatives at creating good urban environments taking place within its boundaries. The challenge will be to make these much more universal and to shift the focus of growth management more towards renewal of existing areas, both city and suburban, while protecting as much as possible natural and viable agricultural areas. There appears to be consensus on this from municipal officials across the Region. So the stage is set for a collaborative approach. The next act will determine how the drama unfolds.