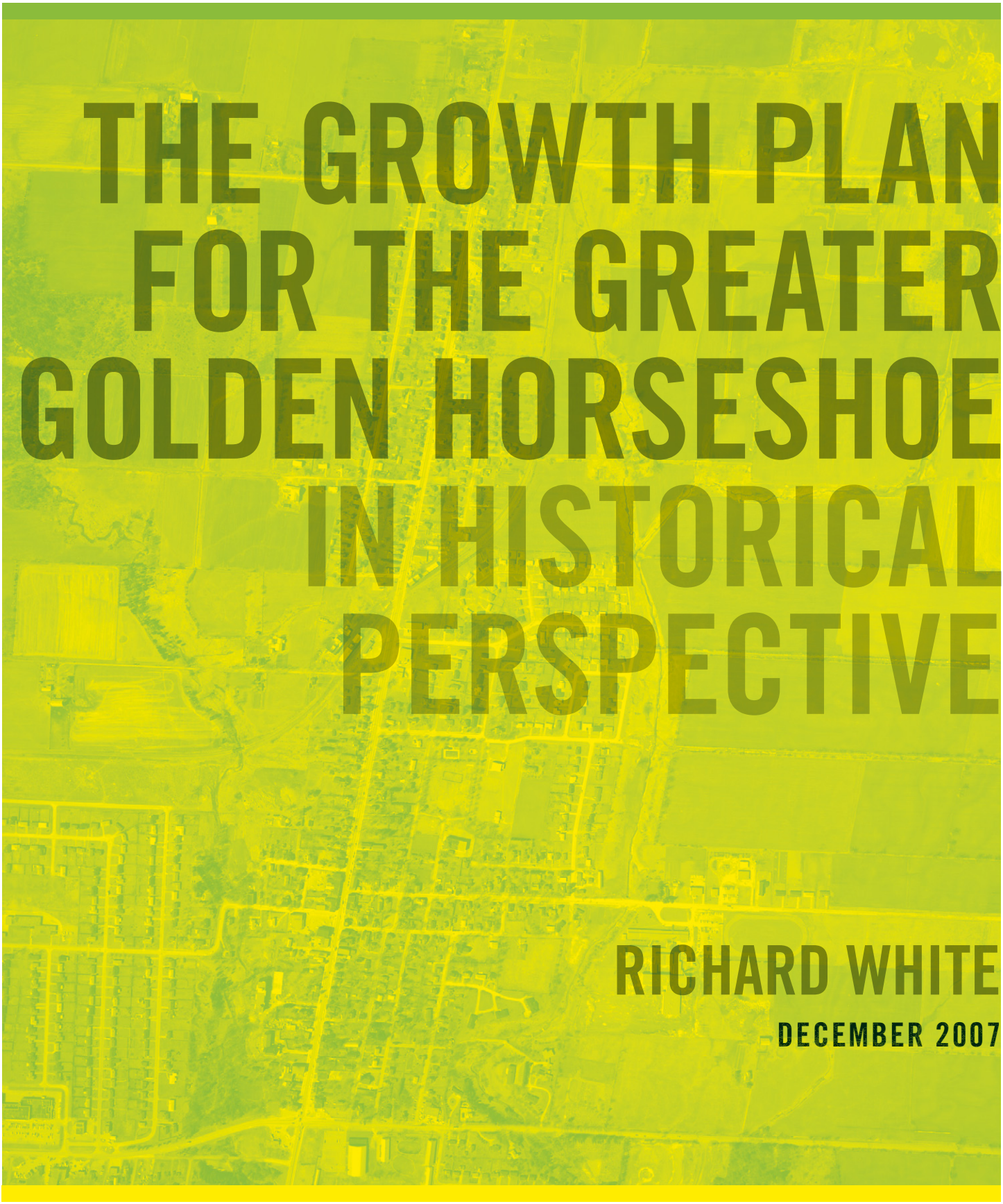

THE GROWTH PLAN FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

RICHARD WHITE

DECEMBER 2007

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THE NEPTIS FOUNDATION

The Neptis Foundation conducts and publishes nonpartisan research on the past, present and future of urban regions. An independent, privately capitalized, charitable foundation, Neptis contributes timely, reliable knowledge and analysis on regional urban development to support informed public decisions and foster understanding of regional issues.

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THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

THERE can be little doubt that the Ontario government's new regional planning initiative for the Toronto metropolitan region ("The Growth Plan for Greater Golden Horseshoe") is a grand and ambitious plan that, if fully implemented, will substantially alter the pattern of urban growth in the region. But have we not been here before? Other plans have been drawn up to shape the growth of this expanding urban region. How does this new Growth Plan compare and what does it owe to these past regional planning efforts?[1]

The Honourable David Caplan, Minister in charge of Places to Grow, acknowledged this history in his preface to an early draft, noting that "Ontario has a strong track record of planning for growth in a way that contributes to our overall quality of life." The draft goes on to list several "major exercises" of planning in the region over the years, citing programs from 1970, 1974, 1992, and 1996.[2] But what exactly were these plans, and what has become of them? Why is there an 18-year gap in the middle of that list? The region may well have a record of planning, but apparently it also has a record of *non*-planning. What is one to make of this paradox?

The following paper — a brief history of regional planning in the Toronto metropolitan region, together with comments on where the new plan fits into that history — is intended to help answer such questions. It is drawn from my ongoing research, carried out with support from the Neptis Foundation, on the history of urban and regional planning in and around Toronto since the 1940s. My full book on this subject will be completed in due course, but in order to enhance public debate on the new Growth Plan now, while the plan is new and still being shaped, the Neptis Foundation elected to support the writing and publication of a preliminary paper specifically on the region's *regional* planning history — an important but poorly understood theme in the history — and this paper is the result.

Many people — far more than can be named here — have contributed to the research on which this paper is based, but I would especially like to acknowledge the contributions of Eli Comay and the late Len Gertler, both of whom freely shared with me their thoughts and recollections about the region's planning history.

Richard White

Introduction

SUMMARIZING THE OBSERVATIONS

The first point that emerges from this narrative is that the region does indeed have regional planning in its history, at least from the late 1940s until the early 1970s. During these years, however, two quite distinct regional planning programs were attempted: one in the 1950s and 1960s that succeeded rather well — in the sense that most of its planning principles were put in place — and one of a quite different sort in the late 1960s and early 1970s that largely failed in that sense. Even within this period of active planning, then, there were limits to how acceptable and how effective a regional planning program could be.

The second is that in the first few years of the 1970s, regional planning essentially disappeared under a flood of local interests. Admittedly, the *idea* of regional planning did not entirely vanish, and from time to time planning advocates did attempt to reintroduce some degree of regional planning, but no region-wide plans ever took shape. That a local neighbourhood group or a local municipal council could be told what to do by some provincial or regional authority became something close to anathema in this region in the early 1970s, and so it remained for over a generation.

Third, the longstanding opposition to regional planning was finally broken, rather surprisingly, by the Conservative government of Premier Mike Harris. Following its populist principles, it brought local governments and so-called ordinary citizens into the regional planning process, and in doing so was able to initiate a new, seemingly less centralized program of provincial planning that the current Liberal government has been able to build on.

Finally, the ambitions of the new Growth Plan are historically unprecedented. None of the earlier plans attempted to do so much. The new Growth Plan proposes not just to plan the region, but to change it: to re-direct development from the urban edge into existing urban areas, to encourage new suburbs to be built as "complete" live/work communities (not just "bedroom" communities), and to establish a multiplicity of urban centres and corridors that do not yet exist. It also calls for a significant shift away from the private automobile to public transit and for greater protection of agricultural land, among other objectives.[3] Admittedly, the Province's planning program of 1969–70 had ambitious goals, but they were not as far-reaching or as fully developed as those in the Growth Plan. Nor, one might add, was that earlier planning program accompanied by numerous other supportive provincial policies, as in the case of the Growth Plan.

LEARNING FROM HISTORY?

Whether the Growth Plan can actually accomplish its goals remains to be seen, as its implementation is only just now getting under way. There are certainly reasons to be doubtful. For one thing, the sprawling urban form the plan seeks to curtail is generated and held in place by powerful socio-cultural trends and economic forces. Rising per capita incomes, smaller household sizes, increasing car ownership and use, the dispersal of employment and retailing, and declining farm profits all play a role. So too does the region's private development industry, whose operations are fully integrated with the current pattern of urban expansion. These will not be easy forces to counter.

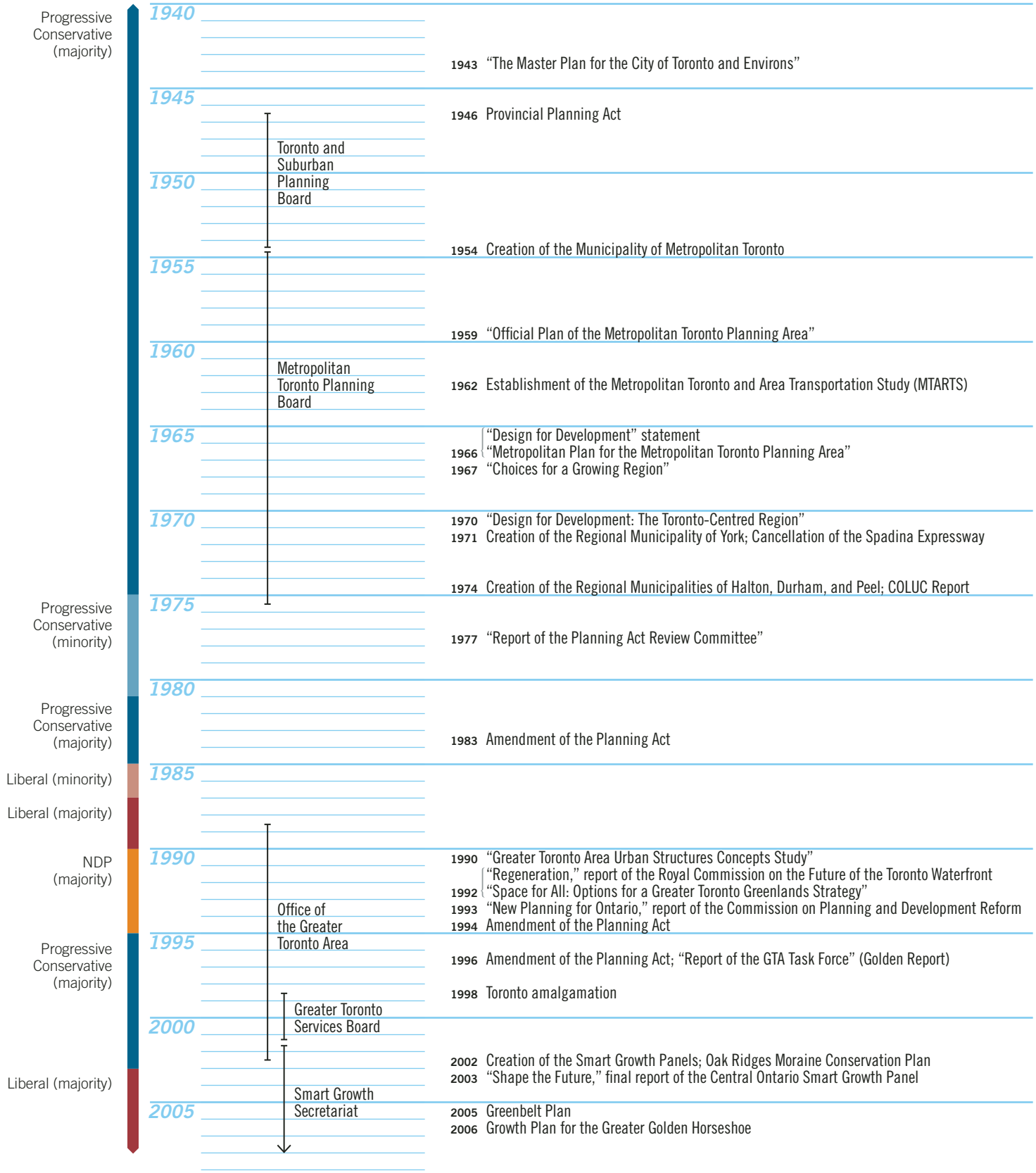
As the following pages will reveal, the region's planning history also offers reasons for doubt. The only plan that came close to the current Growth Plan in its ambitions — the 1969–70 provincial scheme — largely failed in its main objectives. The one regional plan that did achieve its goals — the metropolitan plan of the 1950s and 1960s — did so by working quite differently from, and trying to do much less than, the Growth Plan. And events since the 1970s show that belief in municipal autonomy runs so deep in this region that regional planning has been a hard sell. None of this history offers much assurance to the promoters of the Growth Plan.

But history shows us only what has and has not worked, not what *will* work. And present-day circumstances are sufficiently different from those of the past that one cannot, or should not, draw straight historical parallels. The scale and scope of urban sprawl have reached unprecedented levels in the region, and so has public concern about the phenomenon. Awareness of the environmental problems caused by car dependence is growing. And the true size of the region's massive "infrastructure deficit" — along with questions about how to remedy it and how to avoid its happening again —— is dawning on more and more people. These trends may have made the public more open to and more willing to accept regional planning, along with the constraints on growth that it will require. As well, the decentralized mode of planning called for in the Growth Plan differs enough from past methods that past planning failures might not be relevant.

So, although the region's planning history reveals that nothing like the new Growth Plan has ever succeeded before, this finding should not be interpreted to mean that nothing like it can be made to succeed now. This point is being borne out as this paper is being written, for the plan's implementation has already gone further than any previous provincially directed regional plan.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

TIMELINE OF DOCUMENTS AND EVENTS



The Birth of Regional Planning

PLANNING AND THE WAR

Regional planning first appeared in the Toronto metropolitan region during the Second World War, as a direct outcome of wartime attitudes and circumstances. That is not to say regional *thinking* began at this time. The City of Toronto's many connections to its hinterland had been obvious for years. Even before the First World War, Toronto City Council had considered setting up a political structure that reflected these connections. In the 1920s the matter gained more attention, as the urbanization of land outside Toronto's boundaries — and Toronto's refusal to incorporate these areas into the city — was raising new problems and questions. Several times in the interwar years the provincial government explored the possibility of introducing some sort of metropolitan coordination or revenue-sharing to make the delivery of public services in the region fairer and more efficient, but for various reasons it never took action.[4] The problem of metropolitan or regional governance, in other words, had been a concern for several decades.

But it was the war that brought *planning* — that hard-to-define, somewhat utopian, activity of devising government policies and regulations to shape the future for the betterment of all — to the fore in the Toronto metropolitan region. There appear to be two reasons for this, one specific to the Toronto area, and one more widely applicable.

First, the economic expansion brought on by the war made planning a necessity. By the early 1940s, large wartime industries had emerged throughout the metropolitan area. There was Canada Small Arms at Lakeview, Victory Aircraft at Malton, Research Enterprises in Leaside, General Engineering in Scarborough, as well as munitions and electronics factories downtown on the waterfront. All these facilities brought in raw materials and shipped out products, and most employed thousands of workers, many of whom wished to live near their place of employment. The need for some sort of metropolitan coordination of physical infrastructure, land use, and housing was more urgent than ever.

At the same time, the war was making Canadians more accepting of government. Government was everywhere during the war, setting prices, rationing and allotting resources, controlling labour markets — not to mention providing unemployment insurance (in 1940) and family allowances (in 1944) — and it was not doing such a bad job of it all. The success of this intervention brought on the well-known "left turn" in Canadian politics during the war and the sharp rise in the popularity of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). In Ontario, the CCF very nearly won the election of 1943, prompting Ontario Conservative premier George Drew to announce, in 1944, his government's commitment to "planning" — an activity that, on the broad scale Drew was referring to, had been associated until then mostly with the radical left.

THE 1943 MASTER PLAN

It was at this time, 1943, that Toronto's first regional plan appeared, the product of a group of consultants working under the auspices of the Toronto City Planning Board. The coincidence of this 1943 plan with the growing appeal of planning and the leftward drift in Ontario politics is, however, a bit misleading. The full impact of the new wartime circumstances was just starting to be felt in 1942, when the planning board was established and the plan commissioned.[5] And although the plan has a metropolitan scope, its focus

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

⬆ Map from the 1943 "Master Plan for the City of Toronto and Environs", as reproduced in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, *Journal*, June 1944. The numbers in the yellow areas are residential population projections.

is clearly on the City of Toronto, which had its own problems to worry about, not all of which were directly connected to the war. Not until the end of the war, and even more in the immediate postwar years, did the new spirit of planning fully manifest itself.

Nevertheless, the 1943 "Master Plan for the City of Toronto and Environs" is a reasonable place to start. Quite apart from whether or not it was spawned by the war, nothing on such a metropolitan scale had ever been done in Toronto before. It was an impressive piece of work.[6]

The plan is generally understood to have been the work of Eugene Faludi, an Italian-trained architect who had arrived in Toronto just after the war broke out. Faludi had been working in the leading architectural circles of Europe in the 1930s, but as a Jew had been compelled to flee Italy in the years before the war, first to England and then Toronto. On the strength of his credentials and up-to-date knowledge, he was welcomed by the City's architectural and planning community, and he was soon put in charge of the Planning Board's program (though several other experienced planners and engineers were involved).

Much of the plan was concerned with improving the City itself — modernizing the downtown, adding parks and open space, and renewing the city's declining areas — but it also touched on several important regional matters. It foresaw a substantial expansion of the suburban areas around the city and proposed to keep that growth within a contiguous, fairly compact area in which the new "neighbourhood" style of residential development, with curved streets and plentiful open space, would be employed. It called for a network of superhighways and rapid transit lines in both the existing city and the new suburbs. It also proposed inner and outer greenbelts — we now know the latter as the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Though this 1943 Master Plan nicely illustrates the arrival in Toronto of certain international planning ideas, such as the modern "neighbourhood unit" and the expressway network, and for this reason deserves a place in the region's planning history, its direct effect on the region's development was not as great as one might think. The Toronto City Planning Board was a citizen planning board, not a government body, and it did not have either the authority or the budget to put its recommendations in place. Only the municipal council could do that, and Toronto City Council was decidedly cool towards this plan. In fact, the Council soon put city staff on the job of making another, more practical, plan.

The Board continued working for a few more years, but Council paid less and less attention to it. Some of the plan's ideas did find their way into later plans, a point that confirms its longer-term significance, but the Master Plan itself quietly disappeared. This episode was the last gasp of the regime in which plans were developed in civil society, under the auspices of citizen-business groups, rather than by the state.

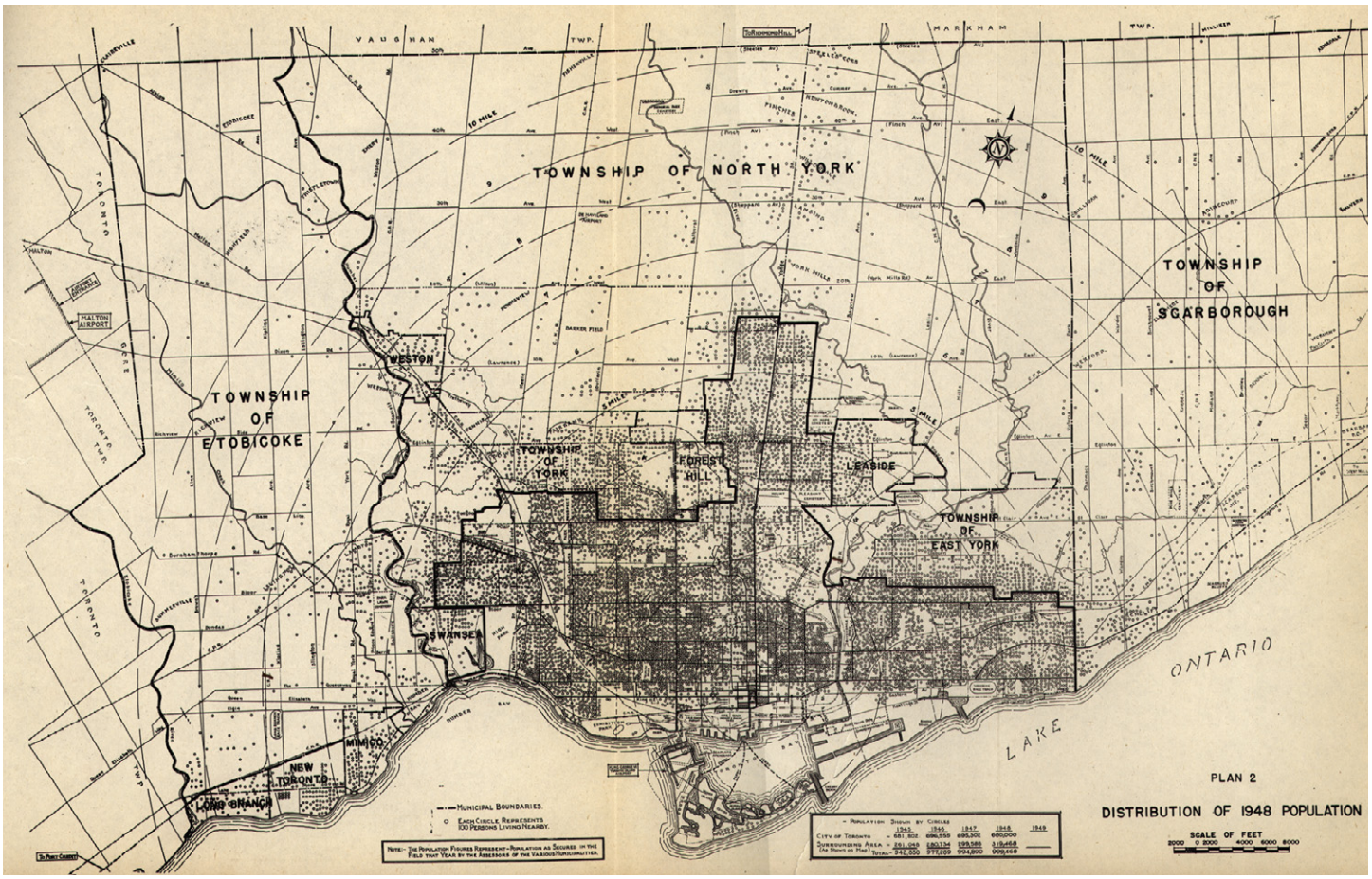
PROVINCIAL ACTIONS

The more direct roots of Toronto's regional planning lie elsewhere, with provincial initiatives, rather than with the City of Toronto which, it is probably fair to say, has seldom had a productive relationship with its surrounding jurisdictions when it comes to regional planning or cooperating on the establishment of regional services.

In 1946, the Province of Ontario enacted a new *Planning Act*, which gave municipalities the power to create formal, binding official plans for their jurisdictions.[7] This provincial Act — as clear a manifestation of the postwar planning spirit as one will find — is perhaps the most important single event in the region's planning history. Several municipalities in the Toronto metropolitan area (including Toronto itself) immediately drew up and passed official plans. The most fully developed of them was a plan for the Township of Etobicoke, west of Toronto — drawn up in 1946 by none other than Eugene Faludi, who was by this time working as a private planning consultant.[8]

The *Planning Act* also allowed for the creation of joint planning boards involving more than one municipal jurisdiction. Under this provision, only a few months after the provincial act was passed, a group of professionals and concerned citizens, most of them from Toronto, created a Toronto and Suburban Planning Board (renamed Toronto and *York* the following year), with planning responsibility for the City of Toronto and 12 surrounding towns, villages, and townships.[9]

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



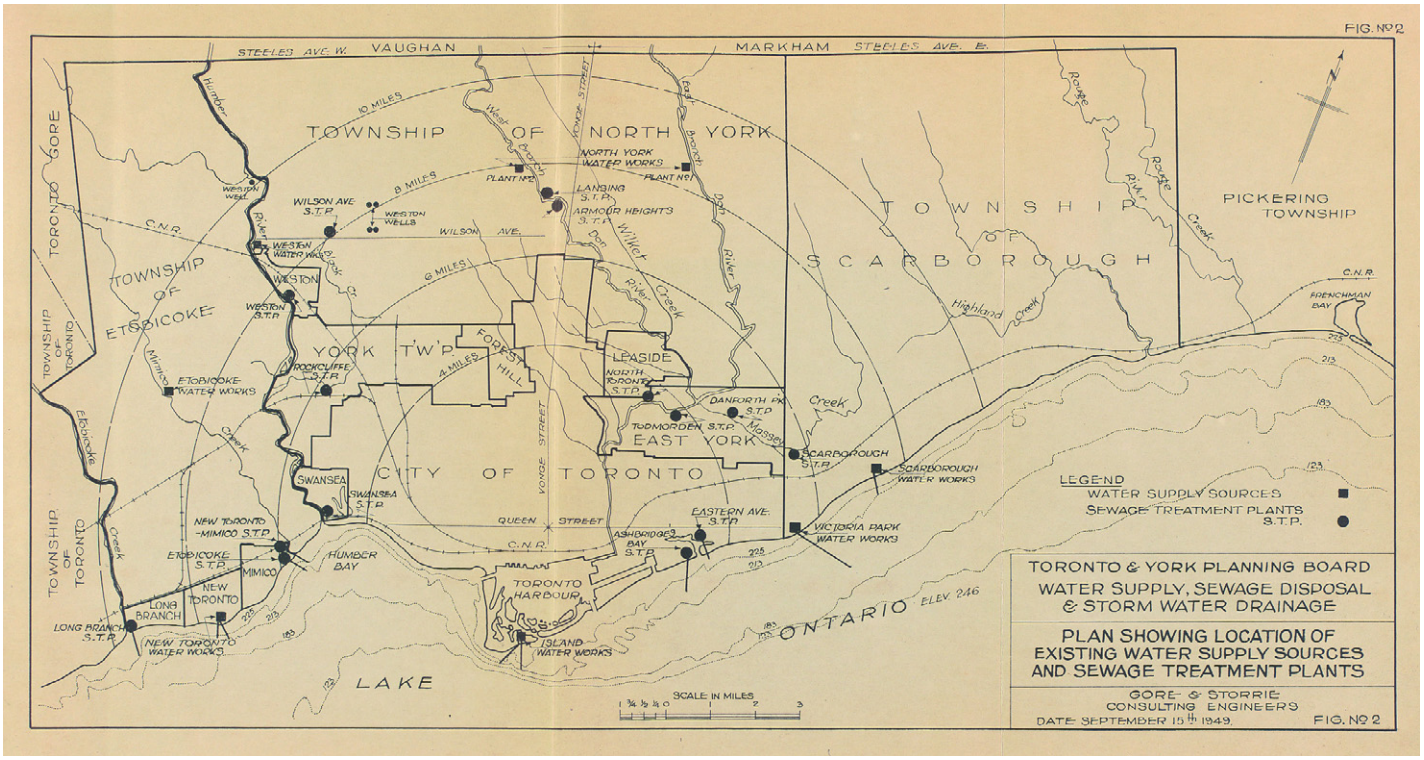
Population distribution in the Toronto Metropolitan Area, 1948, from the report of the Toronto and York Planning Board. Most of the population was still within municipal boundaries, but the three surrounding rural townships were all expecting and preparing for rapid urban growth.

THE FIRST REGIONAL PLANS

The Toronto and York Planning Board is not well known, even by those who concern themselves with such things, mostly because after a few years it was superseded by the more effectual Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, and because it did not accomplish much that anyone now can see. It did not devise a regional plan, implement any land use restrictions, or carry out any infrastructure investments. But it was important nonetheless.

For one thing, it was unmistakably a *regional* planning body, not a city planning body looking somewhat proprietarily at how growth might be managed in its hinterland. In this respect, it stands as clear evidence that municipalities in the Toronto metropolitan area and — perhaps more importantly — the Province of Ontario had awoken to the need to plan regionally for urban growth.

It also commissioned several studies that would end up shaping future plans and investments in the region. Probably the best known is the 1949 metropolitan water and sewer study by the engineering firm Gore & Storrie, which laid the foundation for Metropolitan Toronto's massive piped infrastructure expansion in the 1950s. Also important were engineer Norman D. Wilson's sweeping 1948 transportation plan, as well as some smaller studies on population distribution and projected growth.



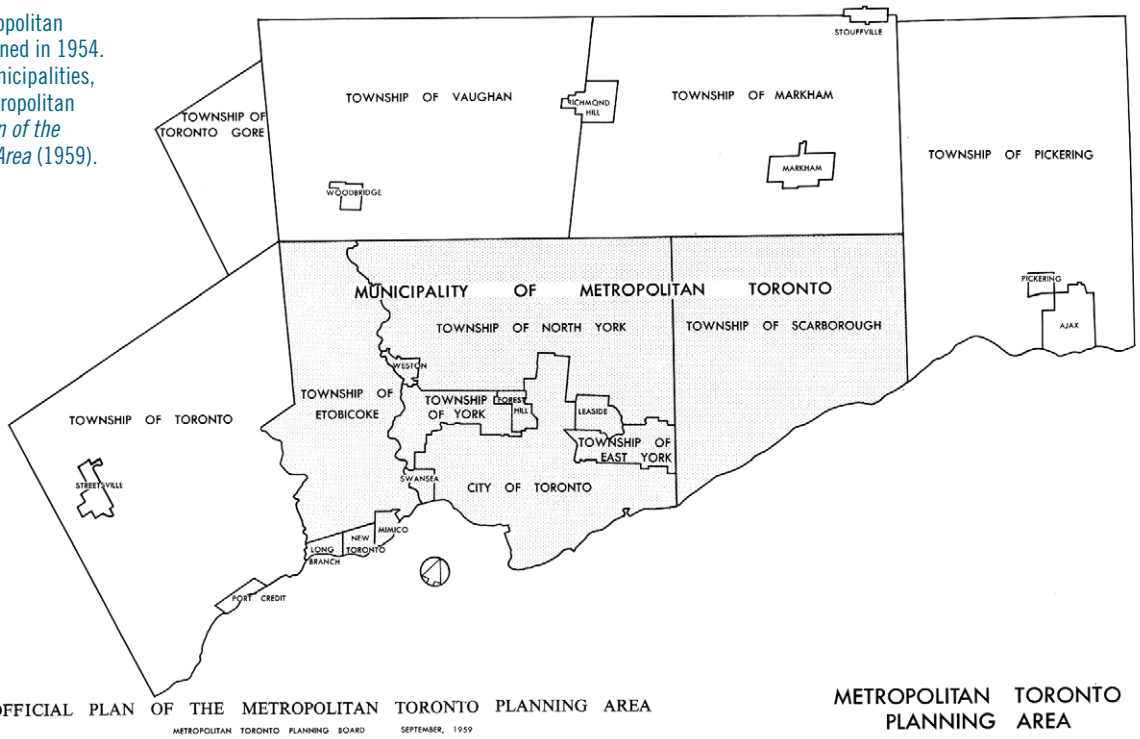
↑ Existing water and sewer services, 1949, in the area that would later become Metropolitan Toronto, from the report prepared for the Toronto and York Planning Board by consulting engineers Gore & Storrie.

Metropolitan Planning

THE METROPOLITAN TORONTO PLANNING BOARD

These regional planning initiatives were all superseded in 1954 by the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, the only true regional planning body the region has ever had. This Board's creation was part of the much larger provincial action that created the federated municipality of Metropolitan Toronto that same year, a bold move taken by the provincial government, after several years of study and debate, to address pressing problems associated with growth in the metropolitan area. So the Board was a provincial, not a local, creation — a noteworthy point — whose mandate and powers were set out in the provincial *Metropolitan Toronto Act*.

In the custom of the times, and following the requirements of the 1946 *Planning Act*, the Board was appointed by the council to which it reported — in this case the new Metropolitan Toronto Council — and its members were all to be "citizens." No elected representatives of any sort were permitted to have full membership on the Board, although some did serve *ex officio*. The guiding principle was that this prohibition would keep "politics" out of planning. The actual planning work, of course, was done by a professional and technical staff, of which there were maybe one or two dozen by the time work was fully under way in the late 1950s. Among the most influential were the German-born planner and author Hans Blumenfeld and the Detroit-raised and Harvard-trained American Eli Comay.



➡ The jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, as defined in 1954. It included the ring of rural municipalities, towns, and villages beyond Metropolitan Toronto itself. From *Official Plan of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area* (1959).

The Board was responsible for all aspects of physical planning — broad land use designations, transportation (highways and public transit), water and sewer infrastructure, parks and open spaces — throughout the entire "metropolitan planning area," a legally defined area that included not just the 13 municipalities making up Metropolitan Toronto, but also the 13 villages and rural municipalities that ringed it.

The metropolitan planning system had, like Metropolitan Toronto itself, a "two-tier" structure. Local planning authorities still existed, as did the local municipalities they reported to. Their planning scope was limited by the broad planning principles of the metropolitan board, but local planning boards could, and most did, make official plans for their local planning areas. (Several had even drawn up official plans before the MTPB was created.) Two-tiered planning sometimes led to compromises that neither tier was entirely happy about, but the system survived and is considered, by most accounts, to have worked. Both tiers evidently felt their priorities were heeded often enough.[10]

SUBDIVISION CONTROL — THE BOARD AND THE PROVINCE

The MTPB was not the final planning authority within its planning area. At first, some thought the Province had intended to make it so, particularly concerning the approval of new subdivisions, and the idea was discussed, but within a year it had been dropped. The provincial government, in the person of the Minister of Planning and Development, held this authority throughout Ontario and had no intention of giving it up in this area. MTPB staff would review proposals for the subdivision of land within its jurisdiction and make a recommendation to the Minister, but final approval was in the hands of the Minister and his provincial staff.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

⬆ One of the few isolated satellite towns permitted in the region was Bramalea, the start of which is shown here in 1963, north of the CNR mainlain (diagonal in lower part of image) and west of Bramalea Road. The MTPB tried hard to delay its development, because it was outside the serviced area and thus considered "premature," but as it lay beyond the boundaries of the Board's planning area, and had received both local and provincial approvals, the Board could do nothing to stop it.

This meant that, under the two-tiered system, local councils or local planning boards that objected to an MTPB position on a matter within their jurisdiction could make a contrary argument to the provincial Minister. They did so, repeatedly, through the 1950s and 1960s, and in some cases they succeeded, or at least altered an outcome. But in most cases they did not succeed. The Board may not have had the last word, but it could be persuasive, and its recommendations to the Province, especially concerning major proposals, usually prevailed.

THE OFFICIAL PLAN

One of the chief purposes of the MTPB was to draw up an official plan for its planning area. Setting out planning principles and regulations in advance of development, in a formally approved document, was at the heart of the "rational comprehensive" style of planning that became popular after the Second World War. In this task, however, the Board never succeeded.

This failure was not through lack of effort. In the first few years, the Board's staff members spent much of their time preparing what they thought would be the official plan, carrying out extensive research, projecting various growth trends into the future, and compiling and assessing plans made by the local municipalities within the Board's jurisdiction. Ultimately, in 1959, the Board produced a comprehensive draft Official Plan, consisting of about 300 pages of text and maps.[11]

Metro Toronto Council, however, which was formally in charge of the Board, balked at making the plan official. Its main objection was that the document itself was too complex and too laden with hypothetical projections to be formally approved. So the draft went back to the Board to be distilled and rethought — a process that took several more years — and not until 1965 did a complete new draft emerge, in the form of two slim volumes of principles that were thought to be more approvable.[12]

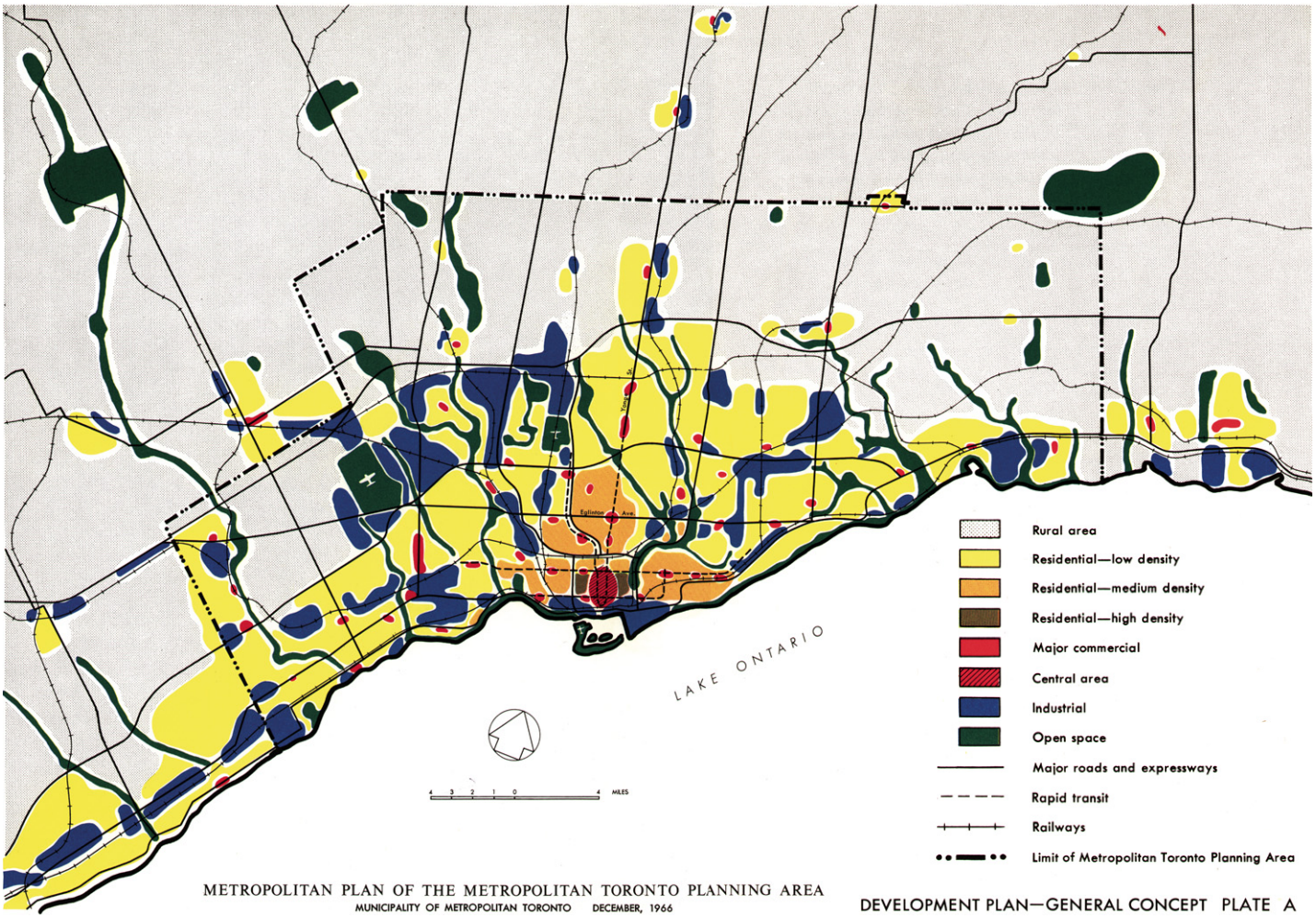
Still, Metro Council again chose not to make the plan official. Planning in the region had by this time become much more complex. Growth was under way in several new parts of the region and most local jurisdictions had their own planning staff or consultants. Metro Council — which consisted of representatives from the individual municipalities — knew that formalizing this overarching plan under the two-tiered planning system would further restrict local actions and lead to endless disputes. It opted instead, in December 1966, to leave it as a non-official "Metropolitan Plan."

This rather ambiguous status remained until the plan was superseded in the early 1970s. The two-tier planning system, which worked fairly well on a case-by-case basis, turned out to be not fully compatible with the legally binding official plan system.

THE MTPB'S PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Interestingly enough, most of the principles in the Board's 1959 plan were implemented anyway, for several reasons. First, a substantial consensus prevailed around the idea that the metropolitan area could and should expand; second, the Board deliberately opted to work with existing patterns and development trends rather than try to reshape the region; and third, the detailed, potentially more controversial, land use planning was done at the local planning level.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



⬆ General Regional Land Use Concept of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board's 1959 plan, showing a mostly contiguous urban area and widely dispersed industrial employment zones. From "Metropolitan Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Area" (1966).

The cardinal planning principle of the MTPB was urban contiguity. The region would have a defined urban area — primarily Metropolitan Toronto itself, plus lakeshore areas to the east and west — where development would be welcomed, but outside that designated urban area, development would be tightly controlled. There would be no (in the parlance of the day) "leapfrog" development beyond the urban boundary. This principle also meant there would be no satellite "new towns" to accommodate the region's growth.

In taking this position, the plan ran contrary to a widely accepted convention of the postwar years — found in the influential 1944 Greater London plan, for example, as well as in plans for several other Canadian cities — that establishing satellite towns well away from the existing central urban area was the best way to accommodate new growth.[13]

This choice of urban form followed from another of the plan's key principles: the entire urban area should be serviced by a centrally managed network of trunk water and sewer lines connected to large lakeshore processing plants. All local water and sewer services were to be phased out. This principle had been first proposed in 1949 in the Gore & Storrie report for the Toronto and York Planning Board, but Metropolitan Toronto and the MTPB had readily adopted it.

The legal foundation for the principle was the 1946 *Planning Act*, which effectively prohibited urban development served by septic tanks,[14] a prohibition the MTPB fully intended to uphold. But since the MTPB accepted that growth could and should occur, it had to provide alternative servicing throughout the defined metropolitan urban area. The lake-based system was deemed the safest and most efficient way to do this. The link between this key engineering principle and the chosen regional form was direct and explicitly stated: if the region was to be serviced by a centralized lake-based system, the most appropriate regional form was a large, single urbanized area. Piping water out to, and sewage back from, satellite towns far from the lake would be unnecessarily expensive. The Board's overall "vision" of the region was thus as much a product of engineering as planning.

Other more specific planning principles were equally important. The region's transportation system was to include both high-volume roadways — expressways and arterial roads — and public rapid transit. (The capital budget for transportation was to be divided 35% for rapid transit, 40% for expressways, and 25% for new arterial roads.)[15] In keeping with the notion of a compact urban area, residential densities were to be raised throughout the metropolitan area; even the inner core, known to be emptying out in many North American cities, was to maintain its population. Density was to be increased primarily by the addition of rental apartments, not just downtown but in the inner suburbs as well. In an effort to control transportation demand, industrial employment was to be distributed throughout the metropolitan area.

Another important strategy, which affected the overall management of the metropolis, was to freely employ deficit financing for the construction of public infrastructure. This technique permitted the required infrastructure to be built along with or even in advance of development.

It is also worth noting a final important principle or, perhaps more correctly, a premise, of the MTPB. The plan explicitly stated that current patterns of development would be accepted. Growth and suburbanization were under way, and the MTPB saw its job as shaping and servicing that growth, not resisting or fundamentally rearranging it.[16]

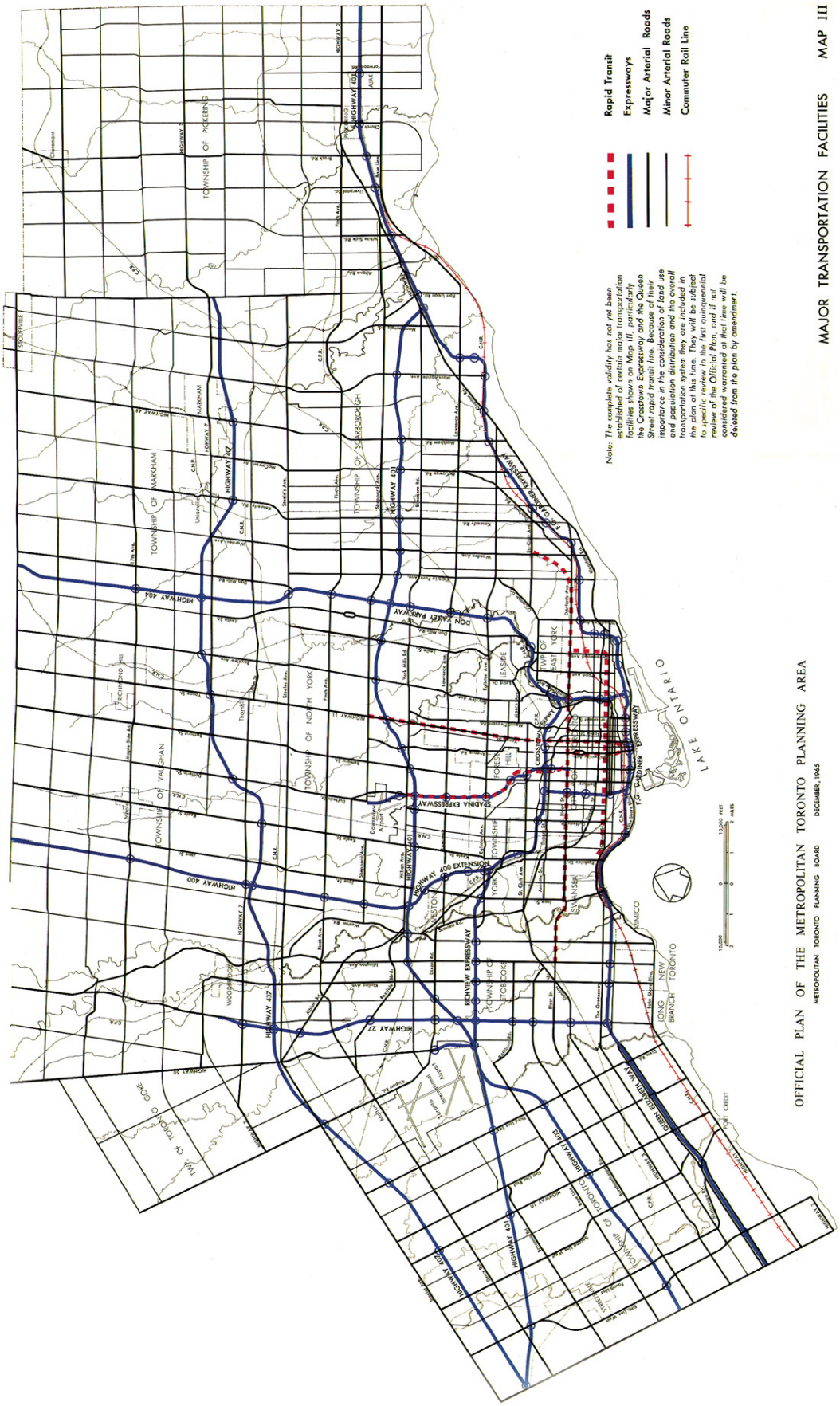
THE LEGACY OF THE MTPB

One need only spend a day travelling about present-day Toronto and its region to see that most of these ideas have been implemented. Lake-based piped infrastructure still serves almost the entire urbanized area, and the principle of urban contiguity has been maintained (although the limits of urban land use are now far beyond the 1960s boundaries of Metropolitan Toronto). Apartments and industrial employment areas are scattered throughout the metropolitan area. Residential densities are high enough to make public transit, although far from ideal, at least reasonably cost-effective in most parts of the city. The proposed expressway network was never fully implemented — the Board's most celebrated failure — but the suburban arterial roads were, providing a large-scale grid on which a fairly dense urban fabric has been woven.

Of course the MTPB and its planners were not fully responsible for all of these outcomes. In many cases, such as high inner-city densities, the trends were already under way and the Board's policies merely reinforced them. Other public agencies, such as the Toronto Transit Commission and the Metropolitan Toronto Conservations Authority, also had an influence. And it was governments and their officials, not the MTPB, that ultimately had the infrastructure built and approved new developments — the role of Metro Chairman Fred

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

➡ The MTPB's transportation plan called for a mix of roads and transit, with a heavy reliance on a grid of arterial roads in the suburban areas, both within Metropolitan Toronto and beyond. This 1965 version of the plan was not significantly different from the original 1959 version but, as the note on the map reveals, major infrastructure projects for the downtown were being questioned. Neither the Queen subway nor most of the downtown expressway loop were built.



Gardiner in building Metropolitan Toronto, for example, is well recognized. So it might be more correct to view these principles as those of the Metropolitan Toronto government, rather than of the MTPB alone.

But the MTPB played a central part. Exactly *how* important it is hard to say, but surely if the Board and its planning staff had called for dispersed satellite towns, higher reliance on expressways, and patching up the old pipes rather than investing in new ones, the metropolitan area would not look as it does today.

TOP-DOWN PLANNING

As for why the MTPB was able to achieve what it did, the answer is basically that it had the authority to do so, in the sense that provincial laws gave it the formal authority to create and uphold a plan over a large area and that the public generally accepted — or at least felt it had no choice but to accept — that authority. Both types of authority are important. Both are also fundamentally at odds with present-day notions of how planning should work. But until the late 1960s few believed that local governments and local citizens' groups had to be entirely satisfied with a plan before it could be approved or acted upon. Local groups might speak out, but they did not have much power.

Construction of the Humber Valley Sewage Treatment plant is a striking illustration of this attitude. Engineering studies in the early 1950s concluded that a sewage plant was needed on the low ground at the mouth of the Humber River, where a golf course stood at the time. Beside that golf course, however, to the north and west, sat several residential neighbourhoods whose residents strongly objected to the sewage plant being built on this site. They organized and protested, and in 1955 about 3,000 people signed petitions that went to the Ontario Municipal Board, but to no avail. The plant went ahead. It was under construction within a few months of the OMB decision.[17]

It was, in short, what we now call "top-down planning." It worked, in that the Board's planning ideas were put in place, but not everyone liked it. Residents of the built-up city areas objected when the Board built infrastructure that disrupted the existing urban fabric, and residents of the unbuilt outer areas objected when the Board did not permit growth that everyone in the affected area wanted. But the Board and its professional staff acted aggressively in what they perceived to be the regional interest and in doing so, for better or worse, stepped on countless local toes.

THE END OF THE MTPB

By the early 1970s, however, nearly everything had changed. Most of Metro Toronto was built up, and the focus of development in the region had moved out well beyond its boundaries. The Province of Ontario had begun a regional planning program of its own. Extensive citizen participation had become part of the planning process — clearly evident by the late 1960s in the public opposition to urban renewal and the Spadina Expressway. Appointed boards were falling out of favour and local councils were increasingly being seen as the appropriate democratic authority for planning matters (formally, they had always been). Ideas within the planning profession about top-down planning were changing too.

The MTPB would continue to exist, officially, until 1975, but these changing circumstances were undermining its effectiveness. It simply had less and less of the authority that had made it work. In truth, the 1971 cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, which had

been a key part of the Board's metropolitan transportation plan and one of the most high-profile features of that plan, symbolized the end of the MTPB as an effective planning body.

The MTPB had operated for just 15 years. In that brief time it oversaw a remarkable 54% increase in the population of Metropolitan Toronto, and it had many notable successes.[18] Some of the most distinctive and most effective aspects of the Toronto urban region, especially within the old Metropolitan Toronto (now the City of Toronto) are rooted in the planning principles of the MTPB.

The Great Provincial Planning Endeavour

Through the mid-1960s, while the MTPB staff was still doing effective work shaping the region's growth, the Ontario government entered the Toronto regional planning scene with a program that would culminate, in 1970, in the grand regional vision called the Toronto-Centred Region concept. This ambitious scheme — the word "plan" was never used officially, though it often occurs in common usage — raised regional planning to new heights. In the end, though, its impact was negligible. Some of its elements did survive, but it never became the guiding vision that its advocates had hoped it would be. By no means has it been forgotten, however. The "TCR," as it is affectionately known, remains legendary in the local planning world.

PROVINCIAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

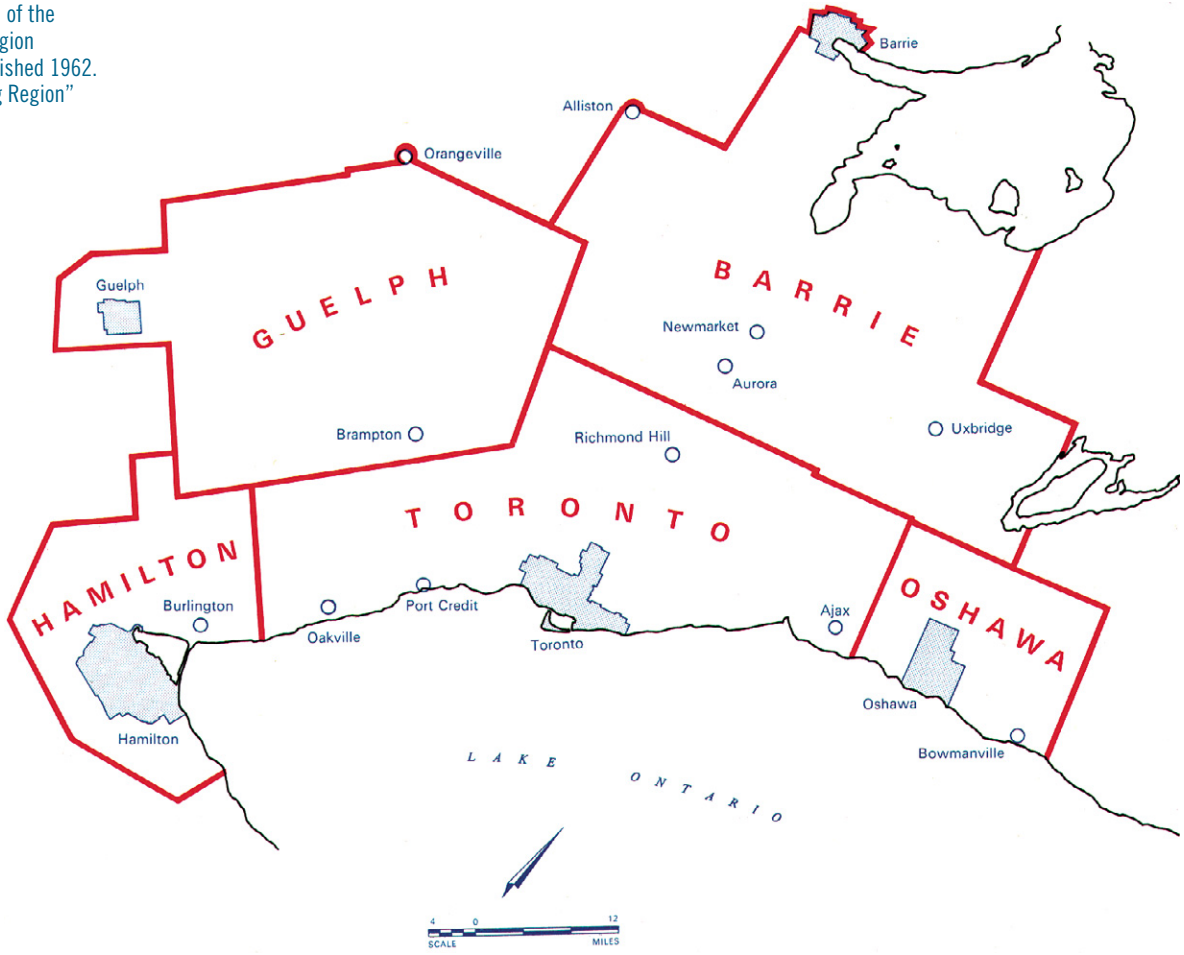
The planning program that eventually produced the TCR actually began in the Ontario Department of Highways, late in 1962. This Department had the responsibility of building and maintaining the province's highways, and with automobile use steadily rising, this was a demanding job. Problems were especially pressing in and around Toronto, where growth was strong and where private railways were on the verge of abandoning commuter rail services.

The Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board already had a solid, multi-modal transportation plan, but the region it covered was not large enough for the provincial department, which had an eye toward future growth and commuting needs much further out from Toronto. So the Department of Highways established a special Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study (MTARTS) to assess future transportation needs over a larger area.

Before the study was much more than a year old, in mid-1964, the MTARTS directors recognized that focusing on transportation alone made little sense. Together with the Community Planning Branch of the Department of Municipal Affairs, the Department formed a Regional Development Sub-Committee of notable planning consultants to work up a more general plan that would consider socio-economic trends and goals for the larger region.

In late 1966 the sub-committee completed and released its concluding report, "Choices For a Growing Region," a work so thorough that it is often mistakenly thought to be the MTARTS final report.[19] The lead author of this report was Len Gertler, a fairly young planner who would go on to play a major role in Ontario regional planning by, among many other things, serving as the first head of the planning school at University of Waterloo.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



➡ The extensive study area of the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study, established 1962. From "Choices for a Growing Region" (1967), Map 4.

CHOICES FOR A GROWING REGION

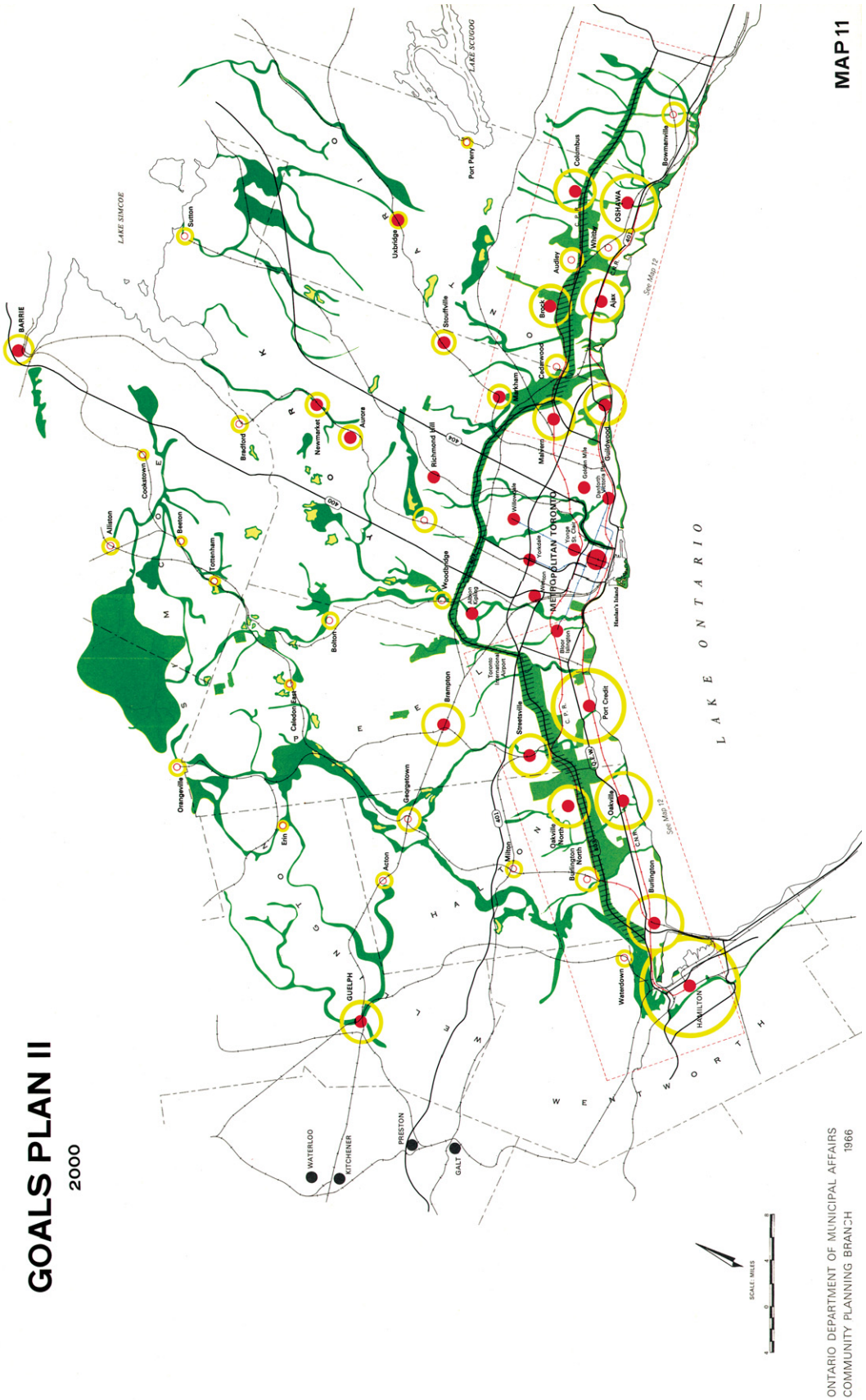
The report begins with a forecast of population and employment growth to the year 2000, then goes on to explore how the urbanized part of the region could accommodate that growth. The urbanized area could extend in the fairly unconstrained manner that current trends (and local municipal plans) were allowing, or it could expand in a different way — in an area largely confined to the lakeshore, in satellite towns far from the lake, or in some combination of the two.

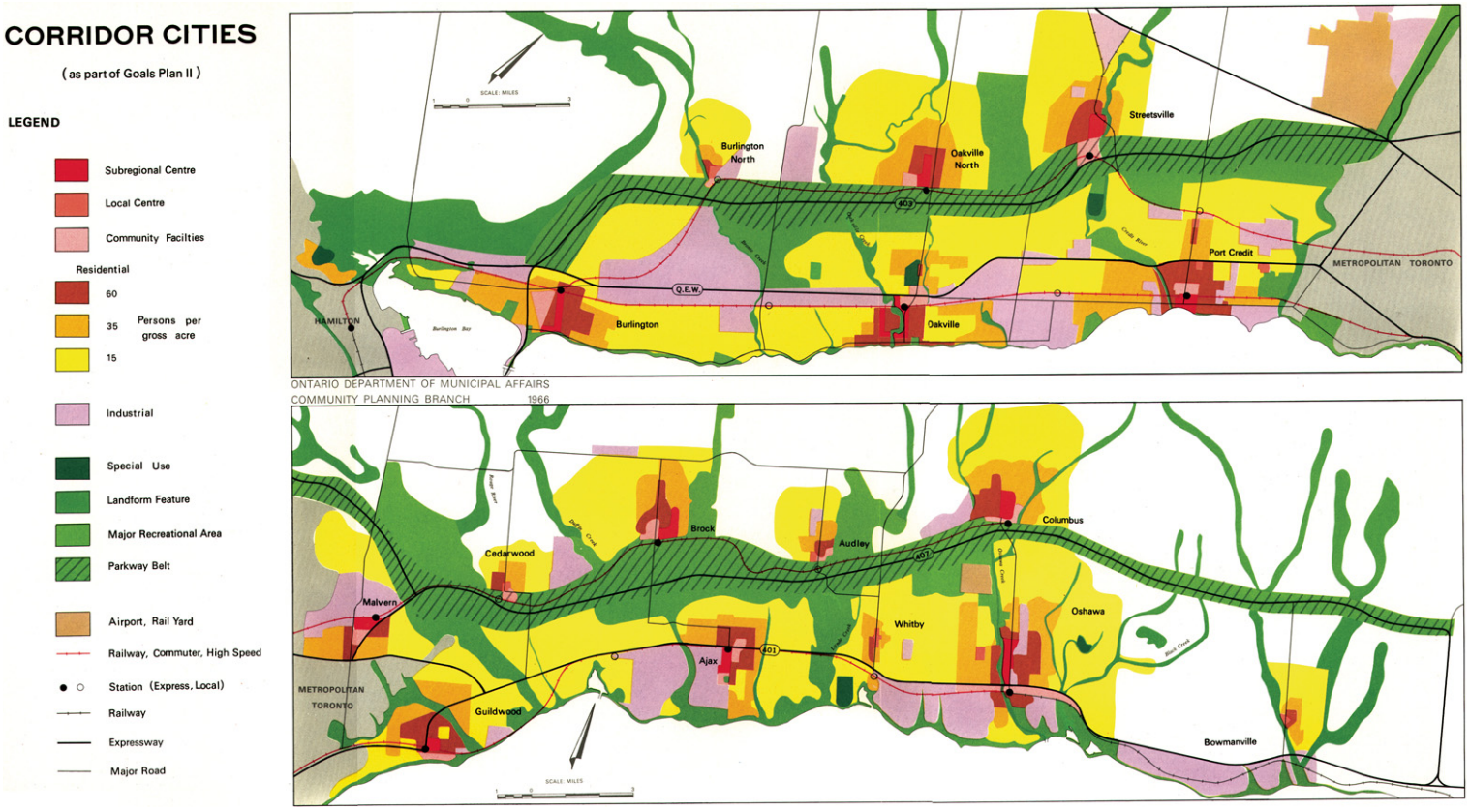
These different forms had their advantages and disadvantages, and the report offers no single recommendation. It does, however, take the position (consistent with the MTPB's earlier principles) that confining urban development mostly to a broad band along the lakeshore — as opposed to permitting dispersed growth or satellite towns — appeared to offer the greatest benefits, though what specific form the urban area should take was not yet clear. The analysis suggested that a two-tiered urban structure, with a range of "new towns" just north of, but directly adjoining, the existing urban area, would be best. But more research was needed.

The report also introduced, for the first time, the intriguing notion of a regional "Parkway Belt" — a narrow corridor of protected land running through the urban area that would provide the route for a future parkway-style expressway. It would also separate the

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

➡ The regional form considered most desirable by the MTARTS regional development sub-committee. Urbanization was to be kept primarily to the lakeshore, and the urban area was to be bisected by a long "Parkway Belt" in which would be built a parkway-style highway. From "Choices for a Growing Region" (1967), Map 11.





⬆ Detailed map of the MTARTS Parkway Belt to the west (above) and east of Metropolitan Toronto. The Belt was to act as an urban separator between two tiers of cities. Both tiers would include areas with high- and moderate-density residential development. From "Choices for a Growing Region" (1967), Map 12.

two tiers of urbanization, and possibly offer space for recreational activities. This element was the brainchild of Humphrey Carver, an English-trained architect with a fondness for rural landscapes who was a member of the regional development sub-committee.

The actual MTARTS final report, from the study's Technical Committee, is a much less striking piece of work, being nothing more than a few pages of principles and recommendations, and perhaps for this reason it has generally been overlooked.[20] It is important, however. It explicitly recommends that the Province enhance and encourage public transit, establish and integrate a permanent commuter rail service (trials conducted during the study had been successful) into the existing transit system, and concentrate development at certain centres, or nodes, and along the future transportation corridors of the region.

FROM CHOICES TO A PLAN

Both MTARTS reports were unveiled in Toronto on 13 June 1968 at a theatre on the Canadian National Exhibition grounds. More than a thousand invited guests were treated to upbeat speeches by the Ontario Premier John Robarts and his Ministers. It was the regional growth options in "Choices for a Growing Region" that attracted all the attention, not the transportation principles. The work of the regional development sub-committee, in fact, had evolved into the heart of the study, something the provincial government seems to have been happy to go along with.

But the report offered only "choices" for the region, not an actual regional plan, so the next step was to study and assess these choices in order to devise a true regional plan. Premier Robarts immediately assigned the task to his new Minister of Municipal Affairs, Darcy McKeough, who, among other things, began soliciting and receiving dozens of written responses to the MTARTS reports from development industry lobbyists, professional associations, municipal councils, local business associations, and others. The work of refining the MTARTS options into a government-sanctioned regional plan was well under way by 1969.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Into this process, however, came a new force that transformed the plan-making process — the Ontario government's regional development program.

It is important to recognize that regional *development* and regional *planning* are not the same thing. Regional development refers to government programs, usually in the form of subsidies or financial incentives, that assist economically disadvantaged or declining regions. Regional planning — which is generally done in growing regions — refers to government controls or regulations that shape a region's growth into the most efficient and socially beneficial arrangement.

Although regional development and regional planning share certain goals, and both require government intervention in economic activity, they can exist without each other. Regional development programs can be implemented without being part of a regional plan, while regional plans need not include government subsidies or growth promotion programs. The metropolitan plan of the MTPB is an example of the latter, for although it proposed intervening to shape the new growth in the region, it made no effort to promote growth where it was not happening. The growth options in "Choices for a Growing Region" were similar.

Regional development, however, became *de rigueur* among governments across the country in the 1960s. The federal government began promoting economic growth in rural areas, especially in Atlantic Canada, early in the decade, and the Ontario government offered aid to disadvantaged parts of eastern and northern Ontario. In 1966 the Robarts government took a bold step into regional development with a program it called "Design for Development," and created a new Regional Development Branch in the provincial bureaucracy, staffed with well-educated social scientists, to devise and expand regional development programs.[21]

This forms part of the regional planning story because Premier Robarts, a few months after putting Municipal Affairs Minister Darcy McKeough in charge of refining the MTARTS recommendations, shifted responsibility for the whole regional planning file from the Community Planning Branch of McKeough's Department to the much newer Regional Development Branch of the Department of Treasury and Economics.

THE TORONTO-CENTRED REGION CONCEPT

So it was that the Toronto-Centred region concept, or, to use its proper name, *Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region*, was born in May 1970.[22] Within a year of the work being moved from one Department to another, the MTARTS recommendations had been assessed, the most desirable regional form had been determined (a blend of two MTARTS concepts), and a new conceptual plan for the region had been drawn up. The regional *planning* initiative had clearly become part of a regional *development* program – the new name of the scheme being the first and most obvious indication of what had occurred.

The key planning principle in the TCR concept is the division of the region into three zones: an inner urban Zone 1; an intermediate Zone 2, which was to remain largely rural and in which urban development would be strictly controlled; and an outer Zone 3, far enough out that commuting to the central urban zone would be impractical, where economic development was to be promoted.

The first two zones followed the concepts in the MTARTS report fairly closely. The third zone was a complete novelty, and it is here that one finds the clearest expression of regional development goals, for the MTARTS report had explicitly opposed the notion of promoting peripheral development. What had happened, in fact, is that the Regional Development Branch had grafted its program of fostering growth in the northern and eastern parts of central Ontario into the regional plan. Promoting development in the southern Georgian Bay region had been a favourite project of the Branch's director, Dick Thoman, even before he entered government.[23]

TCR AND THE CITY

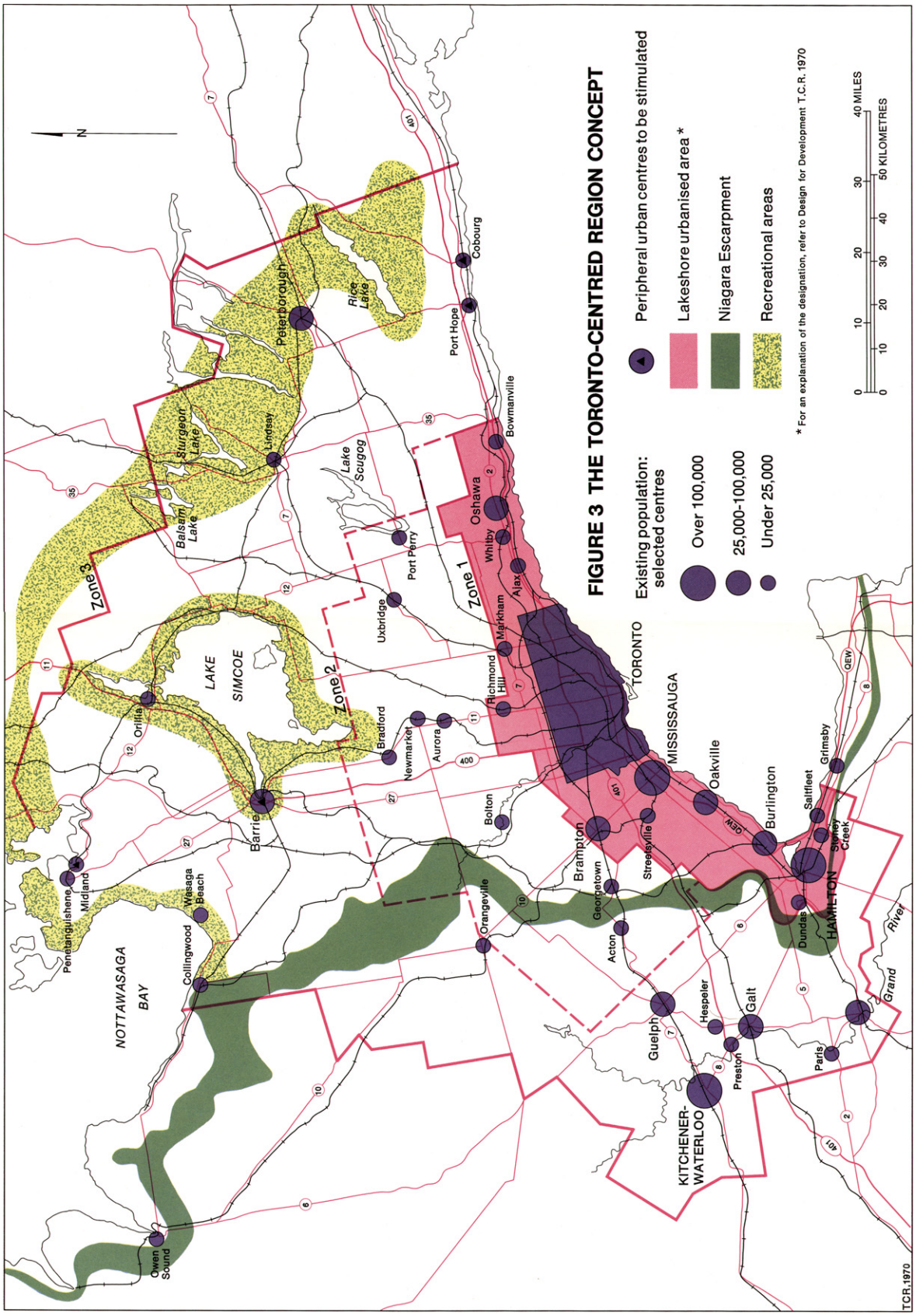
Within the urban zone, the new TCR concept also followed the principles in MTARTS. It affirmed that the urban area should be confined mostly to the lakeshore, with some development north along Yonge Street, and that it should be in the form of two distinct urban tiers separated by a Parkway Belt. But the TCR concept now included the idea of promoting development east of Metro Toronto. Too much economic growth had been occurring to the west, in what is now Mississauga, and the TCR sought to rectify this imbalance.

A central point about the TCR concept that is not well understood today, perhaps because of the plan's name, is that it was a *decentralizing* plan. Overall population of the region was expected to rise from 3.6 million to 8.0 million by the year 2000, and a substantial proportion of this growth was to go into Zone 3, whose population was expected to rise from just over 1 million to 2 million, and from just under 20% to 25% of the regional population. Growth was to be encouraged in Midland, Barrie, and Port Hope–Cobourg to transform these towns into substantial peripheral urban centres. The Toronto-Centred Region concept did not call for a very Toronto-centred region.

Also, even within Zone 1, population growth was to be accommodated mostly through suburban expansion, not intensification of the existing urban area. Zone 1 included most of Markham and Vaughan Townships, within which there was plenty of agricultural land beyond the urban edge for this purpose. For the planners who shaped the TCR concept, the existing urban area was already suffering from what they called urban "congestion" — traffic delays, parking shortages, crowds and line-ups, insufficient fresh air and open space — so squeezing more people into the city was not seen as a desirable option.[24]

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

➡ The complete TCR Concept, showing the three zones, the growth centres, and the large areas of protected recreation lands, as depicted in a 1974 report. From the "Report of the COLUC Task Force" (1974), Figure 3.



➡ The urban zone of the TCR Concept, showing the Parkway Belt adapted from MTARTS. From the "Report of the COLUC Task Force" (1974).

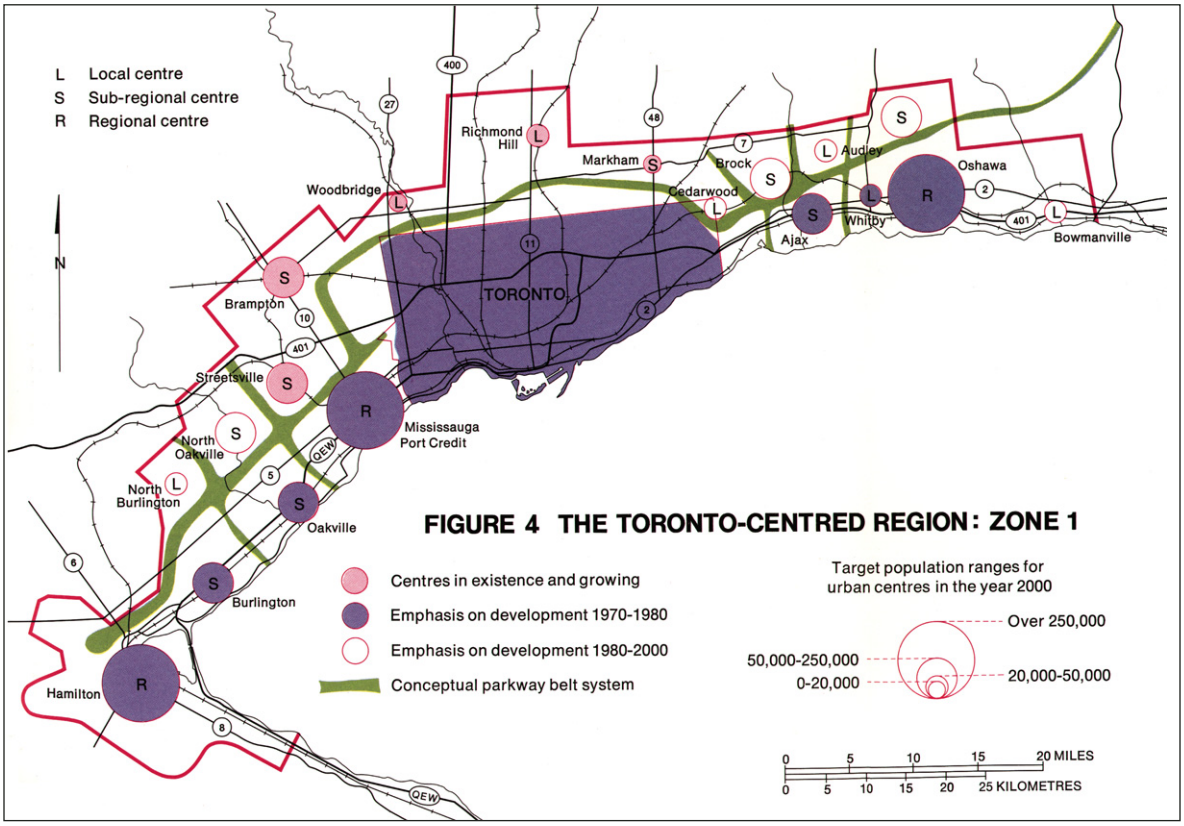


FIGURE 4 THE TORONTO-CENTRED REGION: ZONE 1

TCR AND OPEN SPACE

The concept also called for the protection of substantial land for conservation and recreation purposes — the entire Lake Simcoe shoreline, portions of the Georgian Bay shore, a broad swath in the northeast that included the Kawartha Lakes, and the Niagara Escarpment to the west. It also played up (somewhat misleadingly) the "park" function of the Parkway Belt.[25] This aspect of the TCR was an important addition to MTARTS and it reflects a growing concern for the protection of natural open space in these early years of the environmental movement. But it never became a central element of the plan.

ASSESSING THE TCR'S LEGACY

The TCR concept was never actually implemented. Planners and researchers with the Province did begin refining the concept, but within a few months public opinion had turned against it and the government started to lose its resolve. Before long, implementation quietly wound down. The concept was not actually rescinded, and occasionally a public statement relating to it would appear. In 1974 the government made a major attempt to refine plans for the urban zone, by that time referred to as the Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex, or COLUC, and as late as 1976 it issued a statement on the concept's overall status.[26] But in fact, within a year of its release, the TCR concept was no longer being used as a basis for planning decisions.

Assessing the influence of the scheme is a little more complex than its non-implementation would suggest, however, for some aspects, particularly those pertaining to the inner zones, appear to have been put into place. Zone 2 remains largely rural, as it was supposed to, and the current population distribution by zone is not far from what the concept projected. As well, large sections of the Parkway Belt were established by the late 1970s. Admittedly, this is a complex matter, but a close look suggests that the key goals of the plan were never realized.

First, the lack of population growth in Zone 2 — perhaps the most striking "success" of the plan — should not really be attributed to the TCR. It is due mostly to policies in effect before the TCR concept was devised, notably the longstanding provincial policy requiring adequate piped services for any urban development and the related MTPB principle of prohibiting leapfrog development, which was adopted and retained by the municipalities within that zone through the 1980s and 1990s (see below). The Province had also had its own UDIRA (Urban Development in Rural Areas) guidelines, in place since the 1960s, to control what we now call exurban development.

Second, the similarity between the proposed and actual population distribution is not as significant as it might first appear. The difference between the two Zone 3 figures — 19% and 25% — may look small, but when one recalls that decentralization to the outer zone was a central tenet of the plan, a difference of this size can not be easily dismissed. Even more pertinent, however, is the distribution of growth *within* the zones, for the concept called for an eastward shift in population for both Zone 1 and 3. The TCR did not make population projections at the municipal level, but for Zone 1 it called for 13% of the population (some 750,000) to be living east of Metro Toronto by the year 2000. In the 2001 census that figure was about 9% (about 460,000 people). In Zone 3, where the goal was to promote growth in the north and east (although no target figures were given), much of the growth, with the exception of Barrie, has occurred to the west, in the Grand River corridor.

Zone in TCR	TCR Projections for 2000 (in millions)[27]	2001 Census (in millions)[28]
One	5.7 (71%)	5.21 (75%)
	Metro Toronto & northern fringe[a] 3.1 (39%)	Metro Toronto & northern fringe[b] 3.0 (43%)
Two	0.3 (4%)	0.39 (6%)
Three	2.0 (25%)	1.31 (19%)
Total	**8.0**	**6.91**

a. Given in TCR Plan[29]
b. Current City of Toronto plus Vaughan, Richmond Hill, and Markham

North Oakville, 1994. Urbanization had still not reached the Parkway Belt lands north of Dundas Street.

As for the Parkway Belt, although the western half was established, much of it by government purchase of the lands, without the overall plan of which it was to form a part, it can hardly be described as a successful implementation. That is not to say it has been debased by Highway 407 having been built through it. The Parkway Belt was never a greenbelt. It was always meant to be a corridor for a parkway-style expressway, so in that sense it is serving as planned. But its function as an urban separator has not been realized, for the simple reason that there are not two tiers of cities. In some places, urbanization has not yet reached the Parkway Belt lands, in which cases it has no separation function to perform, but even in places where development has extended north of the belt, such as Markham and Vaughan, urbanization is not occurring in separate "communities" as the Parkway Belt concept prescribed. Nor has its function as natural open space worked out very well; keeping roadside lands in a natural state, whether for recreational purposes or to provide bucolic vistas for drivers, has become a difficult principle to defend where the lands are surrounded by urban development.

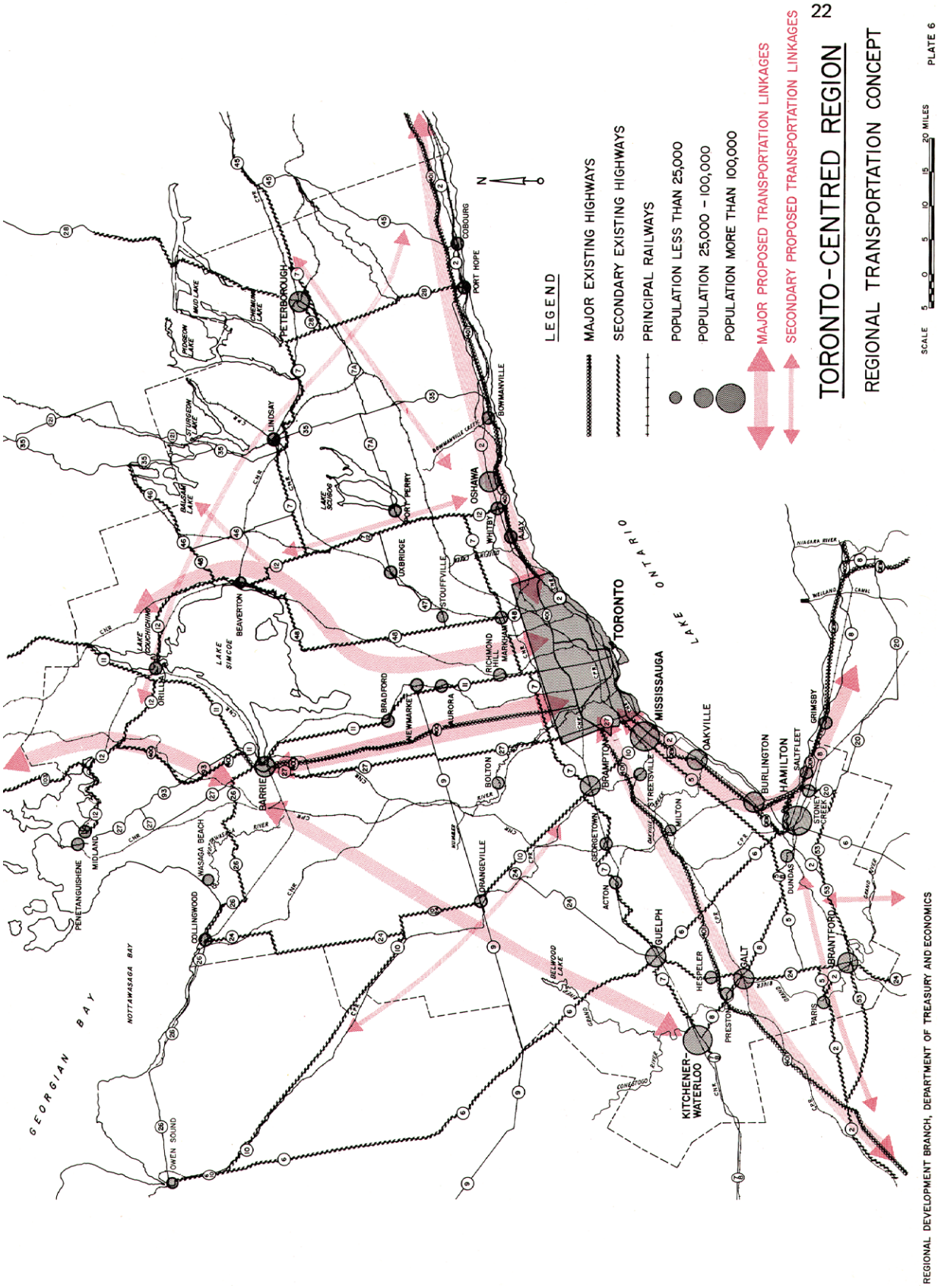
REASONS FOR FAILURE

Perhaps the most fundamental reason the TCR fell short is that it simply tried to do too much. This is particularly true of its decentralization and regional development goals, which would have required a degree of intervention that few in Ontario could have accepted. Whether a more modest scheme of this sort would have worked, however, must remain an unanswered question. Government-sponsored regional development programs, particularly those that rely on growth points to act as stimuli for further growth, fell out of favour years ago. But it is conceivable that a less aggressive regional development scheme could have met with some success. (Whether decentralization of economic activity to peripheral areas serves the public interest is another matter.)

Equally important, though, is that the plan's ambitious regional development goals swamped its regional planning goals. Then, in backing away from aggressive regional development, the Province backed away from everything, leaving more conventional planning matters like coordinating regional growth and transportation — the very things the regional planners were addressing before the project was taken over by the regional development advocates — in the hands of sub-regional bodies. It appears that blending together regional development and regional planning did not advance the work of either.

A related problem was the absence of an accompanying plan for regional transportation infrastructure. The original TCR scheme proposed transportation corridors, but they are highly conceptual, and it made no mention of public transit. The fact is that by the time the TCR was conceived, transportation planners were no longer involved. Perhaps the cultures of the regional development planners and the transportation engineers were incompatible, or perhaps the lack of a transportation plan was due to the haste with which the TCR concept had been put together. Whatever the reason, the absence of a regional transportation plan from the TCR scheme made its successful implementation unlikely.

➡ Conceptual transportation corridors in the TCR Concept. From "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region" (1970).



Another important weakness was the lack of public consultation in the development of the TCR. If ever there was a top-down plan, this was it. The MTPB had practised top-down planning too, and had done so fairly successfully, but at least it was guided by a citizen board, and it paid some heed to local councils. The provincial Regional Development Branch seems to have done little of either. And by the time the TCR concept was being developed, about 1970, citizens had come to expect a substantial degree of participation in the planning process. No wonder the public found the TCR difficult to accept.

The Age of Non-Planning

From the mid-1970s to the introduction of Places to Grow in 2004, the Toronto metropolitan region had no regional planning body and no regional plan. Yet if one takes a close look at this period — and admittedly we do not yet have much historical perspective — one finds that regional planning, as an idea, did not entirely disappear and that the governments of the regional municipalities did observe some regional planning principles. Regional planning thus did survive, in a sense. It is a confusing period, marked by steps and counter-steps in different directions.[30]

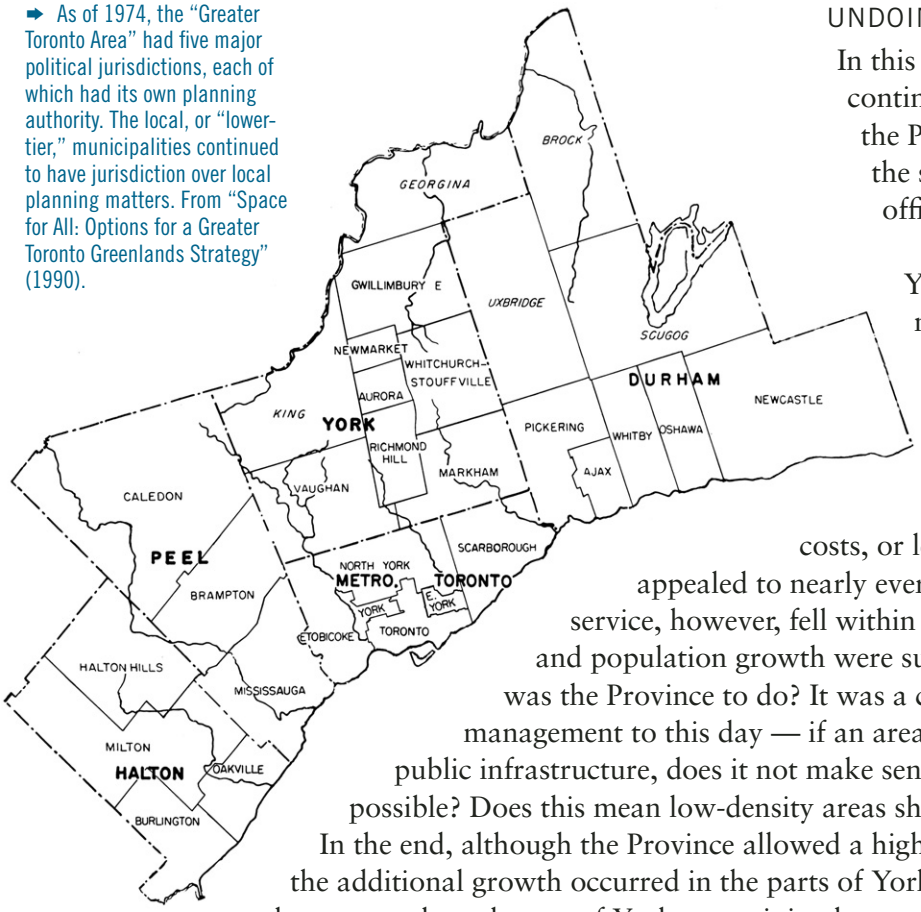
PLANNING TRANSFORMED

What makes this period particularly difficult to understand is that local events were being played out amid changing international circumstances. The early 1970s were a time of transformation in the planning profession all over the industrialized world — a fascinating and complex phenomenon, the causes and consequences of which cannot be adequately explored here. Citizen participation in planning increased, environmentalism and anti-growth thinking took hold, and a politicized faction of the profession emerged that saw itself as advocates for the socially disadvantaged. Altogether, an entirely new professional world took shape for urban and regional planners in the 1970s.

Against this backdrop, several important changes in local circumstances marked the start of a new political era for Ontario. Premier Robarts resigned and was replaced as Conservative party leader and Premier by William Davis, a more circumspect politician. The Province endured an economic recession and a resulting decline in growth and government revenues, which altered the political landscape and made debt-financing of public infrastructure next to impossible. Suddenly the government had to curb its own expansion, something it had not had to do for more than a generation.

Perhaps the most important outcome of this complex transformation, both in Ontario and elsewhere, is that the planning profession lost much of its authority. Whether this loss was to the development industry, to elected politicians, or to the citizenry at large is hard to say — answers to this question are highly political — but there is little doubt that authority was lost. This was particularly true for regional planning, but urban planning was affected too. By the late 1970s any large-scale solution proposed by professional planners — from an inner-city slum clearance to a distant new town — would immediately be challenged and most likely dismissed.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



➡ As of 1974, the "Greater Toronto Area" had five major political jurisdictions, each of which had its own planning authority. The local, or "lower-tier," municipalities continued to have jurisdiction over local planning matters. From "Space for All: Options for a Greater Toronto Greenlands Strategy" (1990).

UNDOING REGIONAL PLANNING

In this context, the Province's TCR concept continued to disintegrate. Interestingly enough, the Province itself had a hard time upholding the scheme, even while it was still considered official policy.

Faced with the need to build the costly York-Durham Sewer System into the area north of Metropolitan Toronto, largely for public health reasons, the provincial government agreed to increase the population allotments beyond what the TCR had proposed for the area. Greater population meant lower user costs, or less subsidy, for the sewer, and this appealed to nearly everyone. Much of the area the sewer would service, however, fell within TCR Zone 2, where urban development and population growth were supposed to be strictly controlled. What was the Province to do? It was a conundrum that bedevils growth management to this day — if an area is to receive the benefits of expensive public infrastructure, does it not make sense to put as many people there as possible? Does this mean low-density areas should not be given public infrastructure? In the end, although the Province allowed a higher population for York Region, most of the additional growth occurred in the parts of York that fell into TCR Zone 1, so impact on the protected rural areas of York was minimal.

The Province also had to make room for some important municipal government reforms. For several years it had been considering how to improve its handling of financial transfers to municipalities, and in 1968, mostly to address this issue, it resolved to merge municipalities in certain areas into larger "regional governments." This did not mean complete amalgamation. The municipalities affected survived as "lower-tier" governments in a two-tier, federated system, but a new "upper-tier" government was established with which the Province could do most of its business. York Region was the first such government in the Toronto region, created in 1971, followed by Halton, Durham, and Peel Regions in 1974.

The government also opted to make each of these new regional municipalities its own "planning area" — a decision that changed the region's planning regime. The more southerly parts of these suburban areas had, since the 1950s, been included in the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area of the MTPB, but as each new regional municipality was formed and defined as its own planning area, it was removed from the Metropolitan Planning Area. By 1974, the MTPB was left with planning jurisdiction over nothing except Metro Toronto itself. A large part of the Board's original purpose had been lost, so it was abolished and its staff became the Planning Department of Metropolitan Toronto. This move also reflects the shift, prevalent in the 1970s, from quasi-independent appointed planning bodies to planning departments under the more direct authority of elected politicians, a step that was considered progressive and democratic at the time, but that undoubtedly contributed to putting the politics back into planning.

There was also some question about how the new regional governments would relate to the TCR which, when York Region was created, was still government policy. The minister in charge of both the TCR and the regional government program, Darcy McKeough, saw no difficulty. He believed that the regional governments would simply be the agents of provincial policies such as the TCR. It turned out not to be so simple. One of the first major actions by the new government in York Region, in 1972, was the push for higher population in the service area of the new trunk sewer. So as it turned out, the new regional governments — whether they intended to or not — did contribute to the TCR's demise.

LOCALISM

One important development that undermined regional planning in these years was the rise of what might be called "localism": the belief that local people, or local interests, have the right to determine what is best for a given locality. This notion — which is obviously troublesome for regional planning — had always existed. Even during the heyday of the MTPB, local councils and citizens' groups had objected to certain actions taken by the metropolitan board. Until the 1970s local objections of this sort could usually be successfully "managed" by the regional authorities. After the 1970s that was no longer the case.

Where this powerful new belief came from, and from what it drew its energy, is hard to say. It appears to have been related to a general decline in the authority of professions in society. It was also connected to the growing belief in citizen empowerment (on the political left) and the growing distaste for government intervention (on the political right). It may even have been a reaction to the aggressive actions of regional planners a few years earlier. But exactly what caused what is a subject that could benefit from more research.

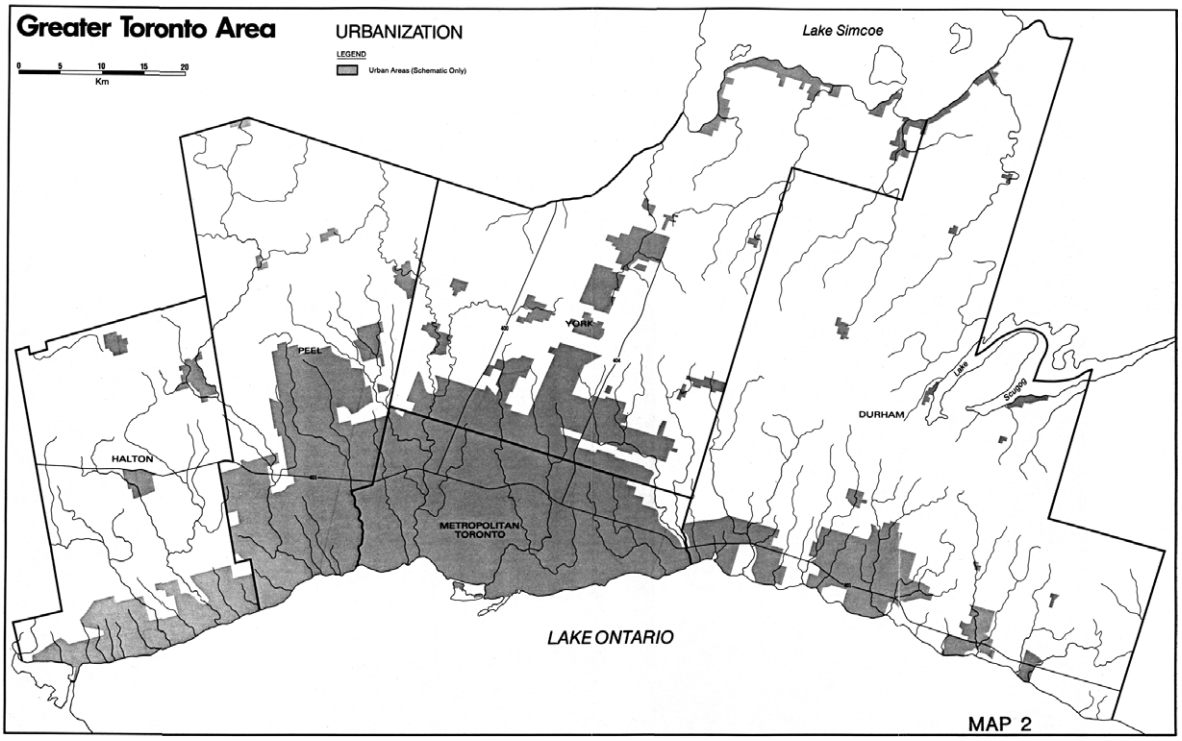
Probably the clearest indication of how widespread this new idea had become — apart from the Province's reluctance to press on with its regional planning program — is that the Liberal opposition in the Ontario legislature, which had generally supported the government's regional planning program a few years earlier, had by 1975 explicitly turned against it.[32] The Liberals called instead for local councils to prevail in all planning matters, although admittedly their opposition to regional *planning* was often mixed up with opposition to regional *government*, the name given to the government's program of creating new regional municipalities. This latter program had become highly political and extremely unpopular.

PLANNING ACT REFORM

Another manifestation of localism was the 1977 Report of the Planning Act Review Committee (PARC).[33] The Province had started this review in 1975 in response to problems in the provincial planning system. Localism was not much evident in the reasons for establishing the review, but it is unmistakable in the Committee's final report.

The report — which reflected views expressed in countless public consultations all across the province — called for a near-total withdrawal of the Province from municipal planning, on the grounds that, in principle, planning belongs at the lowest, most local level of government. The report acknowledged that the provincial government had an obligation to protect certain province-wide interests, such as the Province's environment or financial security, but argued that these interests should be explicitly itemized, and that all other planning matters should be left to municipalities.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



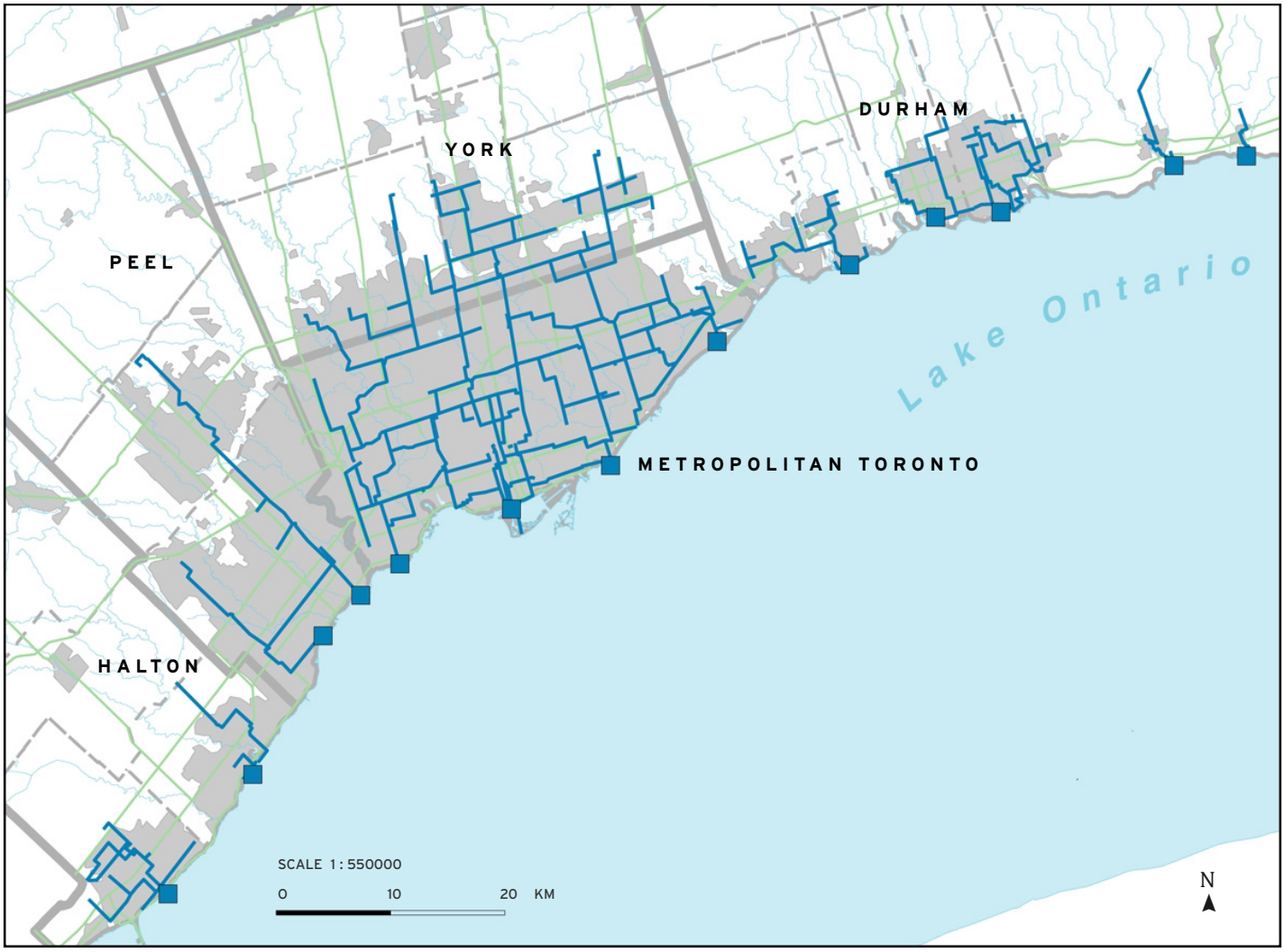
➡ By the late 1980s, urbanization had extended well beyond Metro Toronto into all the Regional Municipalities of the GTA, but planning authority was divided among the various political jurisdictions. From "Space for All: Options for a Greater Toronto Greenlands Strategy" (1990).

It took five years before the report's recommendations found their way into legislation, by which time most of its radical ideas had been watered down, including its calls for local planning autonomy. The new provincial *Planning Act* of 1983[34] gave the Province the authority to delegate planning powers to municipalities if it wished, but it did not give municipalities the right to acquire those powers. Yet the episode reminds us that the notion of local autonomy is not far below the surface in Ontario's political culture.

What the new 1983 Act did do is introduce the concept of "provincial interests" to the planning system. The Act specifies nine areas of interest that the provincial government was obliged to protect, and states that the Province could, at any time, issue "policy statements" to carry out this protection. The Act did not really need to introduce this notion. The spelling out of provincial interests had been recommended only to counter-balance a shift of planning responsibility to the municipalities, which as it turned out the Act did not do. The idea appeared nonetheless, and has been part of the provincial planning scene ever since.

REGIONAL PLANNING IN THE 1980S

Regional planning remained unpalatable. The TCR concept was dead. A minor recommendation in the PARC report to set up a regional planning body for the Toronto–Hamilton region had been unequivocally dismissed in the initial government review of the Report.[35] The provincial interests itemized in the 1983 *Planning Act* included "co-ordination of planning" and "equitable distribution" of services among municipalities — both of which show hints of regional planning — but the Province never once acted to protect this interest. Regional planning for the Greater Toronto Area consisted of planning by five separate jurisdictions, and for many people that was just fine.



There was no single region-wide water supply system, but the principle of processing Lake Ontario water on a large scale and piping it up to the urban areas — introduced in the 1950s by Metro Works and the MTPB — remained in place. From "Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study: Summary Report" (1990).

Still, the *idea* of broad regional planning had not entirely disappeared. The fact that the 1983 *Planning Act* included coordination among municipalities in its list of provincial interests reveals that someone, somewhere, thought regional planning important. And the Regional Municipalities created in the early 1970s were now carrying out something that might be called supra-municipal planning, even if only within their own planning areas; they were having little success developing Official Plans, but most managed to maintain their urban boundaries and minimize exurban development. Working planners and administrators, it would seem, still pursued their professional principles, even though elected politicians were reluctant to establish highly visible planning bodies.

In the late 1980s a new, fairly serious regional planning thrust appeared within the Liberal government of David Peterson. Why this should have occurred when it did is not immediately obvious. Peterson may have been responding to the growing public concern over the rate of suburban sprawl after several years of feverish housing growth. And one should not overlook the many planners and scientists in the civil service who for some years had been struggling to enhance provincial custodianship of the region's lands and resources, exemplified in the program of designating provincial "ANSIs" (Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest) that began in the late 1970s. It may have been that their efforts were finally having an effect.

In 1988 Peterson's government formed the Office of the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA), which in 1990 commissioned a major study by the Toronto consulting firm IBI Group on how the region's future urban growth might be shaped. The final reports in this Urban Structure Study provided a comprehensive picture of the region and its future prospects, the likes of which had not been seen since MTARTS in the 1960s.[36] Peterson's government also produced an important report on the region's "greenlands" and their lack of protection, which drew particular attention to the Oak Ridges Moraine.[37] It appeared that a new round of regional planning was about to begin. But the fall of the Peterson government to the NDP in the 1990 election brought the whole endeavour to an end.

THE NDP IN POWER

The NDP government of Bob Rae was simply not as interested in regional planning as the Liberals had been. One might have expected otherwise, given the party's commitment to government intervention. But the Rae government had other pressing matters to deal with, and being relatively inexperienced, it could take on only so much.

The NDP did not actually oppose regional planning. The new government allowed the momentum of the OGTA initiatives to continue for a time. It set up working groups to consider how the findings of the 1990 Urban Structure Study might be implemented, and this led to some important follow-up reports, which in turn influenced some aspects of local planning.[38] The NDP also followed up on the Peterson government's Greenlands report, conducting some technical studies on the Oak Ridges Moraine and declaring the Moraine an area of provincial interest. But after about 1992, the provincial government's file on regional planning in the Toronto metropolitan region was largely inactive. Later, in what turned out to be its final few months in office, the government set up a task force to study the GTA, stacked fairly heavily with regionalists, but the task force's mandate was focused mostly on regional governance and taxation rather than planning.[39]

What the NDP government did do, perhaps surprisingly, was reform the province's municipal planning system. The existing *Planning Act* was barely a decade old, and one might wonder why the system needed yet another complete overhaul. But many in the planning profession, particularly those on the political left, had not been satisfied with the earlier reforms, and were anxious to do the job properly. The result was a year or two of hearings and consultations, an impressive report by Commissioner John Sewell, and a new *Planning Act* that became law in 1994.[40] This new Act was more ambitious than its predecessor, and it came with an expanded set of provincial interests and a "comprehensive set of policy statements" (not to mention a thick binder of "implementation guidelines") that empowered the Province to intervene in municipal planning for a host of reasons.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

⬆ The principle of permitting urban development only within a strict urban boundary, in place since the 1950s, continued to be one of the defining features of the region, as this 1989 aerial view of Bathurst Street on the western boundary of Aurora, north of Metropolitan Toronto, clearly shows.

RE-REFORM

It was a major shift in policy, no doubt, but it was extremely short-lived. In the election of July 1995, in one of the most abrupt political turnarounds in Ontario's history, the NDP government was swept out of office and a new Conservative government led by Mike Harris took office. Harris's right-wing populism stood for local self-determination, government deregulation, and free enterprise — all of which the NDP's new *Planning Act* did not — and his new government wasted no time in re-reforming the planning system.

Within a year, the heavy hand of the Province had been lifted and the Ontario planning system had been returned largely to what it had been under the Liberals. The *Planning Act* was revised and a new, far less prescriptive set of provincial policies was put in place (although many of the NDP's changes to the Act were left intact). The Harris government also finally implemented the now 20-year-old recommendation from the Planning Act Review Committee that the Province leave the approval of Official Plans (and Official Plan amendments) to Regional Municipalities, resulting in large reductions in provincial government staff.

The impact of all these changes on regional planning in the GTA, however, was minimal. One might think that the NDP's increase in provincial powers would have permitted a regional interest to be more effectively asserted, and, correspondingly, that the Conservatives' reforms to the *Planning Act* would have reduced the power of the Province to act in the regional interest. But that was not the case. These reforms may have altered the *potential* for provincial actions, but provincial powers were not really the issue. Regional planning has been absent in the GTA since the 1970s, not because the Province lacked the authority to impose it, but because municipalities were unwilling to accept it and the Province lacked the political will to challenge that municipal position. Nothing in these reforms changed that political reality.

THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND REGIONAL PLANNING

After a few years in office, in 1998, the Conservative government took what appeared to be a major step into regional planning by creating a region-wide board of elected municipal politicians called the Greater Toronto Services Board to "promote and facilitate coordinated decision-making" — so said the Act that established it — among the region's municipalities, and to develop and manage regional public transit.[41]

This step had been recommended by the "Who Does What" panel (chaired by David Crombie) that the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach, had set up shortly after the Conservatives took office. The panel had recommended the creation of such a body — with representation based on population (meaning that Toronto would have substantial representation) — to plan and manage essentially all physical infrastructure in the region.[42] It had also recommended the elimination of upper-tier regional governments, a radical proposal indeed, comparable to the 1953 recommendation to create Metropolitan Toronto. (As it turned out, the "Golden Commission," set up by the Rae government in 1995, reported to the government at nearly the same time with nearly the same recommendation.[43])

A new region-wide government for the GTA was out of the question to this provincial government. There was next to no support for it outside Toronto, and the Conservative government's self-declared mission was to *reduce* government, not create new levels of government. But it did see the value of, and could live with, a coordinating body, so it followed the more modest recommendation of creating the GTSB — although it gave the Board less responsibility or authority than the Crombie panel had recommended. After two years, the GTSB produced a comprehensive GTA-wide transportation plan,[44] but the plan was never formally adopted and in 2001, for reasons that remain obscure, the Province shut down the GTSB. On the one hand, the demise of the GTSB offered further evidence that regional planning was simply not going to happen, but at the same time the work it accomplished showed that many politicians and consultants had come to believe in the need for regional coordination.

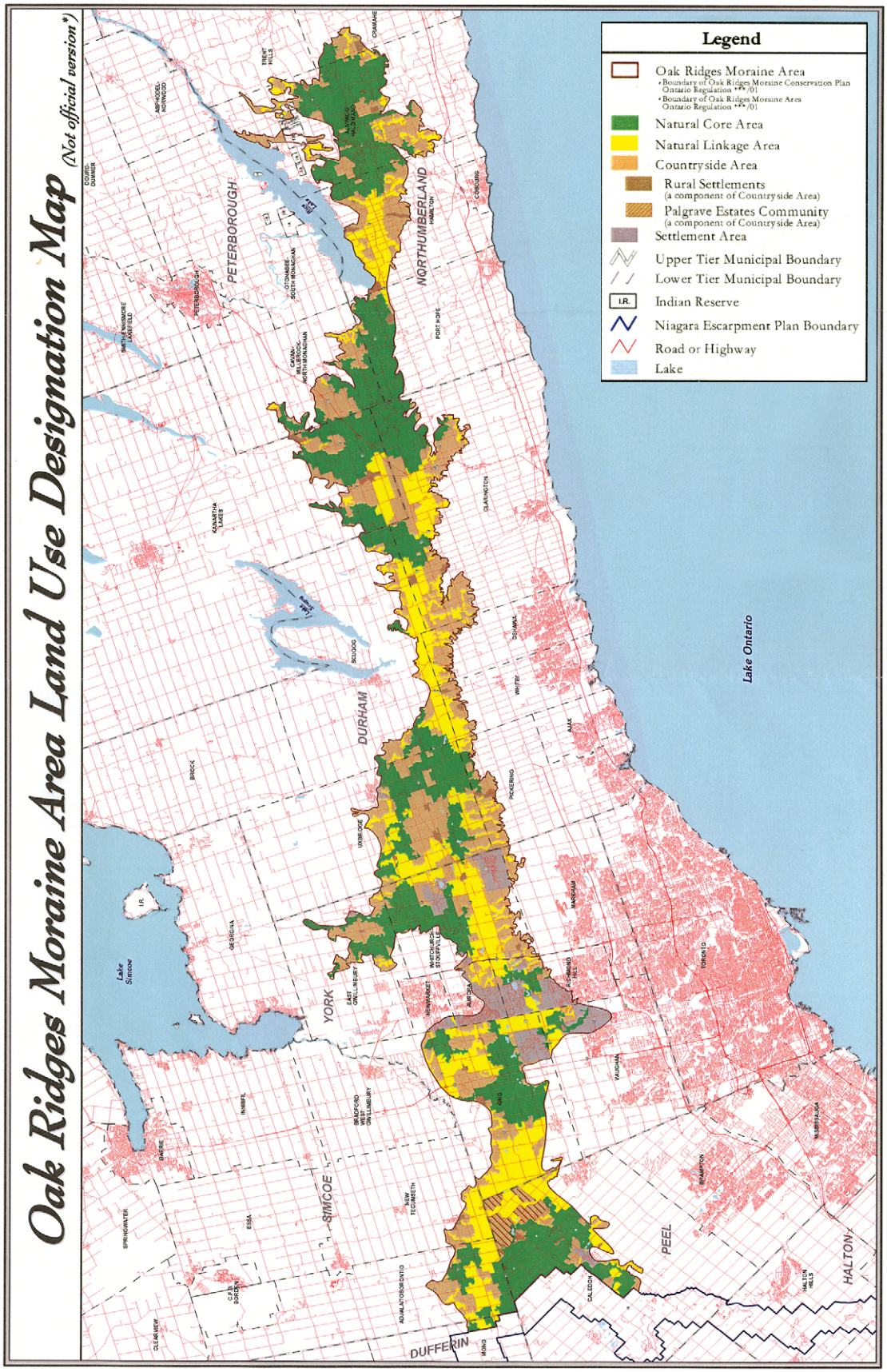
In its second term, the Conservative government took action on two important fronts, and in doing so made a lasting impact on regional planning. Though it is perhaps too early to say with certainty, it appears to have been actions by this government that established a regional planning process acceptable to local municipalities, and that initiated the process that led to Places to Grow.

The first was establishing protection for the Oak Ridges Moraine. This unusual landform north of the region's main urbanized area had been of interest for many years, but as the edge of urbanization began approaching it from the south in the 1980s, the idea of protecting it — or at least of protecting many of its natural features — assumed new urgency. The Liberal government's 1990 Greenlands report had drawn attention to the Moraine, as had the high profile 1992 report of the Crombie Commission on the Toronto Waterfront. Full protection, however, seemed most unlikely, as several interests strongly opposed such action. A large and influential aggregate industry needed access to the Moraine's sand and gravel in order to stay in business, and a burgeoning development industry was eyeing the Moraine as a source of land for future housing.

The Conservative government had little choice but to take some action. Popular opinion both in Toronto and in the suburban areas around the Moraine — the Conservatives' main constituency — was clearly in favour of some sort of protection. Yet the problem of how to resolve the competing interests remained. The government's solution was to employ the traditional populist notion of letting the people work it out for themselves. It arranged for a committee of non-government "stakeholders" — naturalists, scientists, local property owners, aggregate and development industry representatives, and others — and gave them the task of crafting a future for the Moraine that they all found acceptable.

The committee was able to achieve this in a matter of months, and in 2002 the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan came into being, dividing up the Moraine into four categories of land, each with a different degree of protection. The plan was reminiscent of the "multi-use" resource management plans used in the American West.[45] Since there is enough land for everyone — miners, environmentalists, farmers, naturalists, even speculators — rather than over-protect an area, governments should simply ensure that it is fairly divvied up among the various "interests" involved, some of whom wish to exploit its resources and some of whom wish to protect them.

➡ The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan created four categories of land protection for the Moraine. Urban development would be permitted only on land in the "Settlement Areas" category, most of which was adjacent to existing urban areas. From *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* (2002).



SMART GROWTH ONTARIO

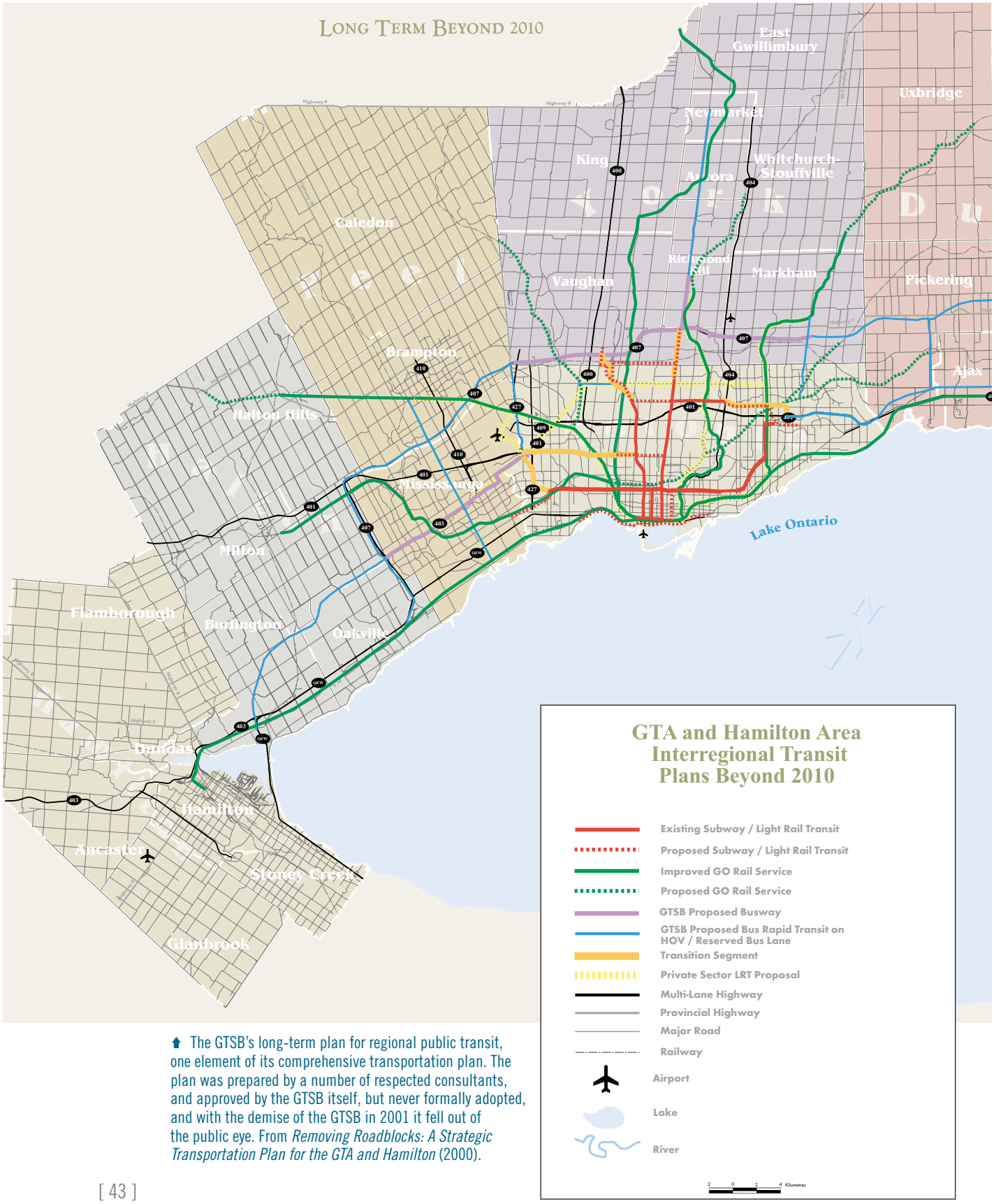
The second Conservative initiative was adopting a program of Smart Growth for Ontario. Although this government was generally opposed to telling private businesses and municipalities how to conduct their affairs, popular concern about suburban sprawl and traffic congestion reached new heights in the late 1990s — sprawl made the cover of *Time* magazine in 1999[46] — and once again the government had to take action.

"Smart Growth" was a rather loosely defined notion that emerged in the United States in the 1990s. It calls for the use of fairly standard planning and growth management policies to advance the public interest — to encourage, for example, higher residential densities or greater use of public transit — but at the same time accepts that growth is both good and desirable, and that planning controls should not be applied in such a way that they seriously impede growth. It is an attempt to find a common ground between planning advocates and growth advocates, or, one might say, to put a positive spin on planning for a doubting public. Smart Growth became something of a movement in the United States in the late 1990s, whereupon it caught the attention of a number of municipal politicians and planners in central Ontario, and finally that of the Harris government.[47]

Smart Growth was an odd choice for Ontario. Even in this age of non-planning, many of the Smart Growth planning principles — such as transit-supportiveness, higher residential densities, and maintaining urban boundaries — were already in place, as policies if not as reality, in local plans across the Toronto metropolitan region. But to the Harris government, many members of which leaned towards libertarianism and were dubious of what they saw as traditional planning, the concept held considerable appeal. It quickly became the government's way of addressing the region's urban growth problems.

The government followed a strategy similar to the one it had used for the Oak Ridges Moraine, setting up panels of citizens (and some elected politicians) representing different interests and asking them to find solutions to, in this case, growth-related problems. The technique was not as successful as it had been with the Moraine. The problems these panels were addressing were much more difficult, and the competing interests not so easily reconciled. As well, the panels were not as independent of the government as the Oak Ridges Moraine panel had been. Not surprisingly, the final report from the Smart Growth Secretariat was long on visions and ideals, and short on realistic strategies for achieving them.[48] But something had shifted. A new willingness to address the region's growth problems was dawning.

By the time the Conservative government left office in 2003 — at which point it was led by Ernie Eves — it had substantially changed the climate of regional planning in the Greater Toronto Area. It had not yet produced a plan. In fact, it almost certainly could never have gone that far into the realm of government intervention. But by employing the populist notion of letting citizens find their own solutions to the problems of the day, the provincial government had returned to the task of both protecting the region's natural lands and shaping the region's urban growth. The ground was prepared for another government, one more inclined towards intervention, to develop a regional plan. It is a surprising legacy for such an anti-government government.



The GTSB's long-term plan for regional public transit, one element of its comprehensive transportation plan. The plan was prepared by a number of respected consultants, and approved by the GTSB itself, but never formally adopted, and with the demise of the GTSB in 2001 it fell out of the public eye. From *Removing Roadblocks: A Strategic Transportation Plan for the GTA and Hamilton* (2000).

Regional Planning Re-Born

In early 2004, the newly elected Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty embarked on an ambitious program of regional planning. First came the creation of an extensive regional Greenbelt, then passage of the *Places to Grow Act* in 2005, and then, in June 2006, the release of the "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe," the first regional plan for the Toronto Metropolitan Region in more than 30 years. This plan promises new levels of urban intensification, revitalized downtowns, better conceived new suburbs, improved regional transportation, protected farmland — and generally a more carefully managed, more efficient, and more equitable region. Its effectiveness cannot be measured, for its implementation has just begun, but the plan itself can be placed in the context of the region's planning history.

As a preliminary point it is worth noting that the release of the Growth Plan demonstrates a simple but critical theme in this history — regional planning in the Toronto metropolitan area has occurred when the Ontario government wanted it to occur. Despite the many differences in the three major planning thrusts recounted here — the "Official Plan of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area" and related metropolitan planning activities; "Design for Development: the Toronto-Centred Region"; and the "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" — all resulted from provincial government action. For all the talk of *regional* economies and identities, the region itself has never, nor could it have, initiated a regional planning process. And when provincial politics have not favoured government interventions, the region has not been planned.

CONTINUITIES WITH THE PAST

This new Growth Plan has unmistakable continuities with the Conservative government's earlier steps into conservation and regional planning. The Greenbelt is essentially an expansion of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan — it takes the same pragmatic approach, and uses similar land use designations — and many of the Growth Plan's details are clearly rooted in the work of the Conservative government's Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel. Some key civil servants and consultants worked on both projects. The plan also owes something to earlier work by the GTSB and even earlier work by the OGTA, such as the "Urban Structures Study" by the IBI Group and subsequent reports.[49]

But it is not correct to see this new plan as simply one more chapter in a long history of successful planning in central Ontario. With all due respect to Minister Caplan and his researchers who have made this claim, such a statement oversimplifies the region's planning history and undervalues what makes the *Places to Grow Act* and the Growth Plan so different and potentially so effective.

To begin, the idea that Ontario has a deeply rooted culture of planning needs critical examination. The region has had its plans and planning, but it has also had periods without either. And the success of metropolitan planning in the postwar years arguably owes more to that generation's widespread acceptance of government action and technical authorities than to any essential traits of the nation or province. When the postwar generation passed, the acceptability of centralized comprehensive planning passed too. The citizens and smaller municipalities of the region turned sharply against regional planning in the 1970s, as they did elsewhere. Something of the planning ethos smouldered on — an important and intriguing point — but the embers were faint and incipient flare-ups were decisively extinguished.

NEW-STYLE REGIONAL PLANNING

With this more complete historical perspective, the Places to Grow initiative becomes something quite different: the first concerted attempt to counter a prevailing culture of regional *non*-planning, a novel effort to reintroduce provincially directed regional planning to doubting municipalities. The Growth Plan is not simply another in a long line of plans. It is a new-style regional plan. Unlike regional plans of the past, its goals were arrived at after hundreds, perhaps thousands, of hours of public "visioning," and its general principles will be implemented by local planning authorities, not by a provincial or region-wide body. Which is to say that growth will go where the local citizenry wishes it go. This, we are told by insightful planning historian Robert Fishman, is what 21st-century regional planning needs to be: a "regional conversation rather than a top-down exercise in power."[50]

The potential flaw in this approach might be that it simply will not work. Regional planning, almost by definition, needs some regional authority telling its subordinate jurisdictions what can and cannot be done. It is hard to imagine that planning by "regional conversation" can yield the fundamental changes that, in its goals and visions, the Growth Plan claims to be pursuing. A regional conversation looks more like a recipe for business as usual. From the experience of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board it seems clear that at some point, effective regional plans must make some people unhappy. Can the Growth Plan do this? When it comes time to decide where new development will or will not occur, what form it has to take, and where roads or pipes will or will not be built — or where the sewage treatment plant is going to be built — can a regional "conversation" get the job done?

To this objection, the plan's advocates might well counter that, although many of the plan's key principles were arrived at through a "conversation," there are now provincial regulations in place that compel compliance. Furthermore, unauthoritative as the plan might be in some ways, it still is more likely to achieve its goals than an authoritative plan that municipalities oppose and resist — a point that the region's planning history offers plenty of evidence to support.

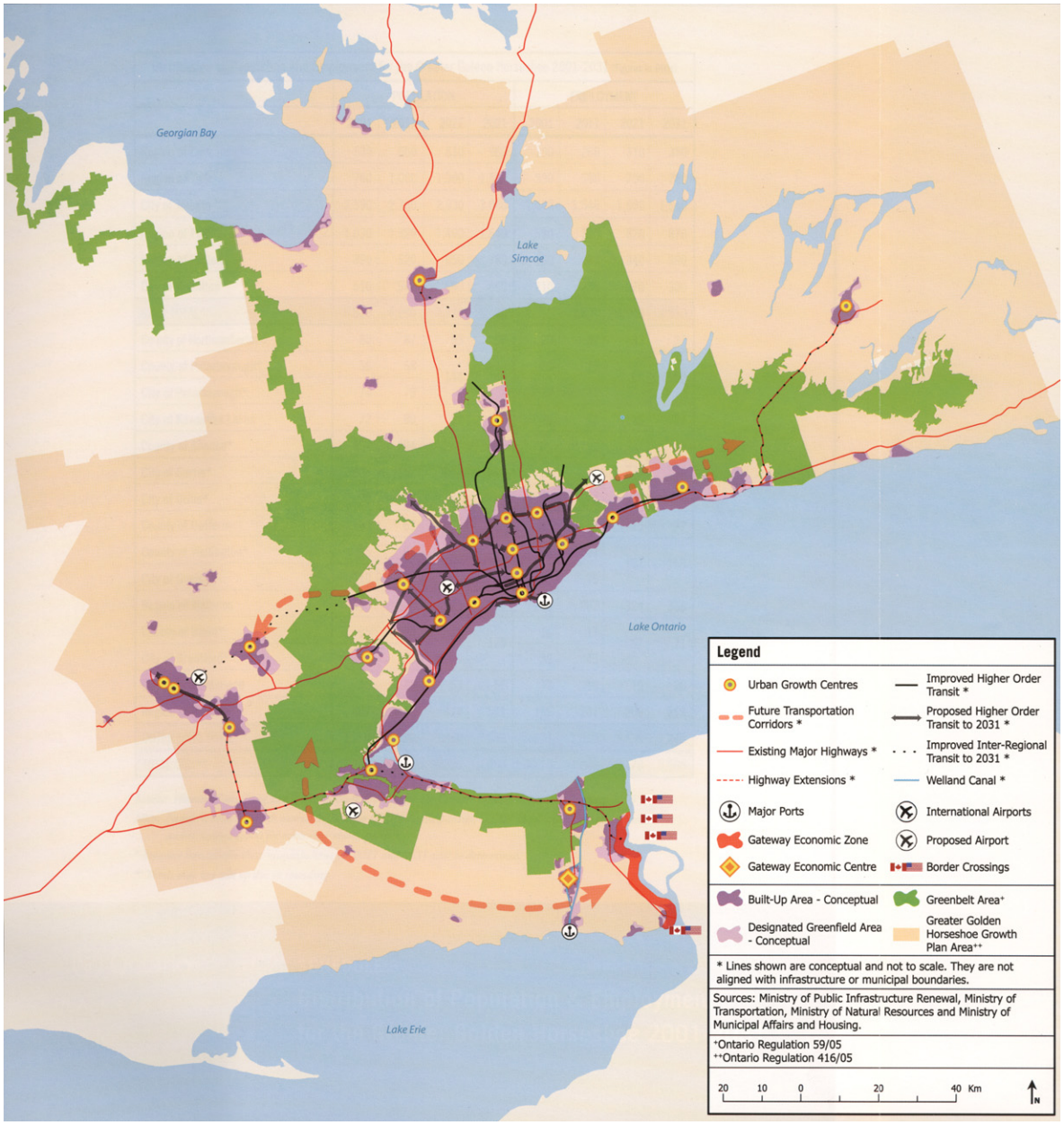
PLACES TO GROW AND THE TCR

Comparing the Growth Plan with the region's other major provincial planning initiative, TCR, two similarities immediately present themselves. One is the areal extent of the regions, which is somewhat surprising considering how much growth occurred between 1970 and 2005. But apart from the inclusion of Niagara in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and a slightly further reach to the east and the west, the regions are the same.

The other is the goals, which are unsettlingly similar. Both plans promise to enhance, promote, preserve, protect, optimize, facilitate, maximize, and minimize the region into an equally ideal state.[51] There are some minor differences in their lists, reflecting the different priorities or concerns in the eras the plans were conceived — improving public transit is spelled out as a goal in the Growth Plan but not in the TCR, while the TCR is perhaps more futuristic than the Growth Plan — but overall, one cannot help but notice, and be a little amused by, their similarities. The bogeymen of 1970 are much the same as they are now — sprawl, pollution, lack of community, poor transportation, inefficient use of infrastructure, and economic underperformance.

THE GROWTH PLAN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

➡ The basic concept of the current growth plan shows strong continuities with the prior work of the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel. From "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" (2006)



One basic difference between the two planning schemes is how they were developed — the Places to Grow program and the Growth Plan itself being a product of consultation much more than the TCR ever was. There are other important differences. Places to Grow is one of several related provincial initiatives, the others being the regional greenbelt, tighter provincial criteria for permitting urban boundary extensions, and the creation of a provincial agency to marshal capital investment into infrastructure. In fact the whole new planning endeavour is founded on its own provincial legislation, the *Places to Grow Act*. The TCR never had such supporting programs.

As well, the Growth Plan is much more developed than the TCR ever had a chance to become — the specificity of its population projections, urban intensification targets, and prescribed population and job densities for urban growth centres being the most obvious illustrations. These differences likely reflect different scales of operations within the provincial civil service. The TCR, although it was supported at the highest levels of the Robarts government, was not given the personnel or the time that the current government's Growth Secretariat has received.

But there are similarities between the two that give one pause. First is the mixing together of growth promotion and growth management. Perhaps doing so is inevitable in an extensive regional plan. But it should not be forgotten that the addition of an aggressive regional development component helped sink the TCR, both by muddying the plan's goals and policies and by opening it up to additional criticism. Admittedly, the Growth Plan is not guided by regional development priorities to the extent the TCR was, and it shows no hint of TCR-style growth promotion in distant "Zone 3" communities. Nevertheless, the similarities between the two plans in this regard are unmistakable. In both plans, some of the centres slated for growth want growth promoted, some want it controlled, and some do not want it at all. One wonders if this might be a recipe for policy confusion and politically motivated decisions.

Another important similarity is that, like the TCR, the Growth Plan does not have a transportation plan. Both schemes include "conceptual" transportation plans, but nothing concrete. This observation might be considered premature, as the Growth Plan promises a transportation plan, fully integrated with its regional growth plan, in due course. But the point can not be so easily dismissed, because the TCR promised the very same thing — a future transportation plan — yet failed to deliver it.[52] Everyone in planning knows the importance of integrating land use and transportation, but in this region, since 1970, achieving such integration has not been easy.

PLACES TO GROW AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING

The differences between Places to Grow and the activities of the MTPB are so great that any comparison between them must be done cautiously. There is simply no chance that the MTPB's successes — based as they were on expert-driven planning, a consensus in favour of growth, and public consultation primarily with elite citizens — could be emulated now, in the first decade of the 21st century, and no one would want to suggest that they could. The failure of the Golden Report and the Who Does What Panel to garner support for a new regional government structure — essentially to replicate the creation of Metro Toronto 50 years on — stands as clear evidence of how times have changed. But two points of comparison might be useful.

One is the scope of planning responsibility. The MTPB and its staff planned for the entire metropolitan area, but concerned themselves only with urban and urbanizing places in that area. What occurred in the rural townships was not their affair, unless urbanization was proposed. The Growth Plan works from a different premise (as did the TCR). It takes full planning responsibility for the entire region, and concerns itself as much with smaller cities like Peterborough and St Catharines and the use of agricultural land, as it does with the main growing urban areas.

There is certainly something to be said for the more complete approach taken in the Growth Plan — some consider it to be the only true *regional* planning — but so too is there something to be said for treating growing urban areas separately, because such places have planning problems that are very different from those in small or slow-growing towns. Faced with this situation, the TCR planners set up a special task force to study just the urban zone of the TCR, though the TCR was a spent force by this time and nothing ever came of the task force's work.[53] And one cannot help but notice that the MTPB had both the most urban-focused planning program and the most success.

The provision of capital for public works, while not strictly a planning matter, offers another useful point of comparison. One of the key policies of the government of Metropolitan Toronto was to build infrastructure with borrowed capital. Accordingly, Metro's financial managers issued debentures as needed — over $800 million worth in just 10 years — to build the roads, subways, pipes, and schools that were the foundation of urban growth. Property assessments increased as well, nearly doubling from $2.4 billion to $4.4 billion in Metro's same first 10 years, so the technique worked just as it was supposed to, allowing the debt to be serviced and ultimately paid down.[54]

The current government recognizes the importance of investing in public infrastructure, and has arranged for investment capital to be provided through the new ReNew Ontario agency. It will likely establish "public-private partnerships" rather than run up the public debt, since among elected politicians fear of public debt now seems to be greater than fear of private control over public works, but that difference might not end up being important.

What is also different, and what might matter more, is the area for which the financing agency is responsible. ReNew Ontario, as a provincial agency, will undoubtedly be facing demands for capital from Kenora to Cornwall, and decisions on what to finance will be subject to countless political pressures. Metro Toronto in the 1950s, since it borrowed its own money, was free to set its own investment priorities, and Metro Toronto certainly seems to have been better served by such an arrangement.

Concluding Comments

To return to the question posed at the outset — how does the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe look in historical perspective? In some ways, it looks quite promising. It has avoided most of the missteps of the region's past planning failures, and it has put several ideas that have been discussed in the region for much of the last generation — nodes and corridors, reurbanization and intensification, mixed-use greenfield development — into a planning program that most of the region's municipalities have accepted.

To celebrate the plan's accomplishments, however, is a little premature. The Growth Plan itself may be worthy of praise, but this history has shown quite clearly that impressive plans can quite easily become unimplemented plans — in which case their impressiveness ceases to be of much use.

History has also shown that plans can be killed if the political winds turn against them. Regional plans take years, even decades, to be successful, and for this they need to survive multiple elections, perhaps even changes of government from one political stripe to another. The one successful regional planning program in the region's history, the MTPB's metropolitan plan, lasted remarkably long, and it did so because it was, especially in its early years, outside the political fray. That the key elements of the plan have already survived a transition from Conservative to Liberal government — aided, it appears, by continuity in the civil service — is most promising. And now, in October 2007, the party that introduced the plan has won a second majority government. But it is hard to predict how this will play out. The recent election was won with scarcely a mention of Places to Grow, but urban development can quickly become highly politicized. Presumably political opposition to the Growth Plan will develop at some point, and future governments might be elected on a platform of scrapping it. Will the plan be deeply enough rooted in municipal planning authorities to withstand such opposition?

A Note on Sources

This commentary is based on extensive original research. The author has examined archival collections of correspondence and reports, plans and related planning documents, contemporary newspaper accounts of key events, and published material on local and international planning history. He also conducted several dozen interviews with participants and observers. Citing all the sources for each statement or argument seemed cumbersome and inappropriate in a pamphlet such as this, so source citations have been limited to the key primary documents and a few critical or under-recognized published works. A full bibliography and reference apparatus will be published in the book from which the contents of this Commentary are drawn.

1. The Growth Plan itself, along with a number of supporting documents, can be found on the website of the provincial Ministry of Public Infrastructure renewal — http://www.pir.gov.on.ca.
2. "A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Discussion Paper" Summer 2004, i, 1, and 5.
3. "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" 2006, 8-10.
4. These initiatives are well summarized in Wayne C. Reeves, *Visions for the Metropolitan Toronto Waterfront II: Forging a Regional Identity* (Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 1993), 2-9.
5. By-Law No. 15761 (1 June 1942), Toronto City Council Minutes, 1942, Appendix B, 115-16.
6. Most accessible is the small pamphlet, Planning Board of Toronto, "The Master Plan for the City of Toronto and Environs," December 31, 1943; much more complete is the Board's "Second Annual Report of the City Planning Board" December 31, 1943, on which the pamphlet is based. The Board's "Third Annual Report" from 1944 includes even more about their plans.
7. *An Act Respecting Planning and Development*, 1946, S.O. c. 71, s. 25.
8. The Etobicoke Planning Board, "A Plan for Etobicoke," 1946.
9. "Report of the Toronto and Suburban Planning Board," December 16, 1947.
10. A key source for Metro's perspective on this is Eli Comay's candid, "A Brief to the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto," 1966; although it is available only in typescript, copies have been preserved in several local collections.
11. Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, "Official Plan of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area," 1959.
12. "Metropolitan Plan for the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area"; and "Metropolitan Plan for the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area: Supplement," Dec. 1966.
13. See Chapter II, "General Concept of the Plan," in the 1959 version; Hans Blumenfeld's fundamental opposition to satellite towns is clearly presented in his 1948 paper "Alternative Solutions for Metropolitan Development," later published in *The Modern Metropolis: Its Origins, Growth, Characteristics, and Planning*, ed. Paul D. Spreiregen (Montreal, 1967).
14. *An Act Respecting Planning and Development*, 1946, S.O. c. 71, s. 25.
15. MTPB, "Report on the Metropolitan Toronto Transportation Plan," December 1964, 81.
16. This principle is expressed in several ways in the introductory sections of the plan.
17. Events in the neighbourhood are drawn from newspaper accounts. The final word from the technical authorities is a thorough report by the respected civil engineer Norman Wilson, "Proposed Humber Valley Treatment Plant," 1955; a copy of this 16-page typescript is in the Toronto Urban Affairs Library.
18. From 1956 to 1971, Metro Toronto's population rose from 1.358 million to 2.086 million, a 53.6% increase – James Lemon, *Toronto Since 1918: An Illustrated History* (Toronto, 1985), 194, Table I. Population growth outside Metropolitan Toronto was just starting to become regionally significant by 1971 – Mississauga, the fastest-growing outer municipality, more than doubled from 74,875 to 165,512 people between 1961 and 1971 (Table II).
19. Ontario, Community Planning Branch, "Choices for a Growing Region: A study of the emerging development pattern and its comparison with alternative concepts" 1967.
20. Ontario, Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study, "Transportation for the Regional City: Statement of principles and recommendations," 1967.
21. Ontario, "Design for Development: Statement by the Prime Minister of the Province of Ontario on Regional Development Policy," 5 April 1966.
22. Ontario, Department of Treasury and Economics, Regional Development Branch, "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 1970.

23. Evident in Richard S. Thoman and Maurice H. Yeates, *Delimitation of Development Regions in Canada (Special Attention to Georgian Bay Vicinity)*, Area Development Agency, Department of Industry, Ottawa, October 1966.
24. "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 12-13.
25. "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 19, 21.
26. Ontario, "Report to the Advisory Committee on Urban and Regional Planning of the COLUC Task Force" (1974); Ontario, "Toronto-Centred Region: Program Statement by Darcy McKeough," March 1976.
27. "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 3.
28. Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada: Population and Dwelling Counts. Catalogue number 93F0051XIE.
29. "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 18.
30. An excellent exploration of this phenomenon, which considers both the left and right of the political spectrum, mostly in England, is Jonathan R.T. Hughes and Simon Sadler, eds., *Non-plan: Essays on Freedom Participation and Change in Modern Architecture and Urbanism* (Oxford, U.K., and Boston, Massachusetts, 2000).
31. This matter is explored, and some of the key sources noted, in Richard White, *Urban Infrastructure and Urban Growth in the Toronto Region 1950s to the 1990s* (2003), 48-52.
32. This key point is made in Kenneth J. Rea, *The Prosperous Years: The Economic History of Ontario, 1939–1975* (Toronto, 1985), 237, citing a speech by J.R. Breithaupt (Liberal member from Kitchener) on 14 April 1975; R.F. Nixon makes similar, even more explicit, points on 24 June 1974 and 4 Nov. 1975 — *Ontario Legislative Debates*.
33. Ontario, Planning Act Review Committee, *Report of the Planning Act Review Committee*. Toronto, April 1977.
34. *An Act to Revise the Planning Act*, 1983. S.O. 1983, c. 1.
35. The recommendation is in *Act to Revise the Planning Act*, 1983. S.O. 1983, Sections 7.17 and 7.19; the dismissal of it is in Ontario, Ministry of Housing, "White Paper on the Planning Act," May 1979, pp. 45-46.
36. IBI Group, *Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study: Summary Report*. Toronto: June 1990.
37. Ron Kanter, *Space for All: Options for a Greater Toronto Greenlands Strategy* (1990).
38. The most significant are Ontario, Office for the Greater Toronto Area, *Shaping Growth in the GTA* (1992) [prepared by Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd.], and Ontario, Provincial-Municipal Urban Form Working Group, *Urban Form, Bringing the Vision into Focus: Report of the Provincial-Municipal Urban Form Working Group* (1993).
39. It reported after the government was out of office – Anne Golden, Commission Chair, *Report of the GTA Task Force* (1996).
40. Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario, *New Planning for Ontario, Final Report* (1993); *Planning and Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act* (1994).
41. *Greater Toronto Services Board Act*, 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 23 s. 3(1).
42. Ontario, Who Does What Panel on Local Governance, "Recommendations" [in the form of a letter from David Crombie to the Hon. Al Leach, 6 December 1996].
43. Anne Golden, Commission Chair, *Report of the GTA Task Force* (1996), 160-66.
44. "Removing Roadblocks: A Strategic Transportation Plan for the GTA and Hamilton" (2000).
45. See for example "Pike's Peak Multi-Use Plan" done in 1999 for Colorado Springs Utilities in Colorado. This is also sometimes referred to as "multi-stakeholder" resource management, although this newer label has other political implications.
46. *Time*, 22 March 1999; cited in Robert Bruegmann, *Sprawl: A Compact History* (Chicago, 2005), 159.
47. The clearest expression of its arrival in the GTA is Bohdan S. Onyschuk, *Smart Growth in North America* (Toronto: 2001).
48. "Shape the Future: Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel, Final Report" April 2003.
49. See above, note 38.
50. Robert Fishman, "The Death and Life of American Regional Planning," in Bruce Katz, ed., *Reflections on Regionalism*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, 119.
51. "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 10-11; *Places to Grow*, 9-10.
52. *Places to Grow*, 24; "Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region," 21.
53. Ontario, "Report to the Advisory Committee on Urban and Regional Planning of the COLUC Task Force" (1974).
54. Metropolitan Toronto Annual Report, 1965, 11; Carl Goldenberg, "Report of the Royal Commission on Metropolitan Toronto" (Toronto 1966), 78 and 109.

About the Author

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