

Protect Markham's Foodbelt and Quality of Life, Stop Sprawl



What will Markham's Future Be?



Only 16% of Markham Remains Protect our Irreplaceable Foodbelt



Proposed 50% Growth for Markham is Unsustainable

Forecasted Town Growth

Regional Forecasts for the Town of Markham

	2006	2031	Increase 2006-31
Population	272,500	423,500	151,000
Households	77,200	139,300	62,100
Employment	144,800	248,500	103,700

Backward Planning & Rapid Growth

Threaten our Food Security, Health & Quality of Life

- The province established population projections for some communities subject to the Growth Plan, *before assessing* the related water and wastewater infrastructure needs, their associated costs and **environmental impacts**.

This puts the cart before the horse.

- Ontario Environmental Commissioner 2006/07 Report



Serious Ratepayer Concerns about York's Growth Plans for Markham

- increased traffic, crowding of schools and hospitals;
- permanent loss of the finest foodland in Canada;
- increased pollution, flooding and property damage from upstream development;
- damage to community values and property values;
- over-intensification near existing communities.



50% Growth is Unsustainable

- the landscapes of many parts of Southern Ontario have **reached their capacity to accommodate additional infrastructure, housing and human populations.**
- Current land development pressures are **gobbling up valuable greenspace and agricultural lands.**
- Infrastructure corridors for highways and utilities are bisecting wetlands and other natural heritage areas.

Environmental Commissioner of Ontario 2006/2007 Annual Report



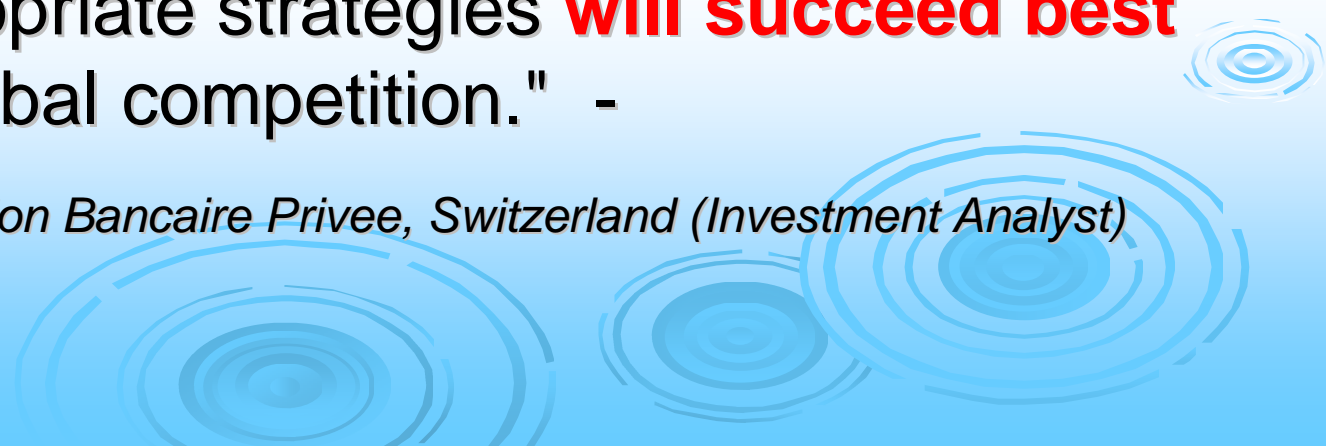
Accepting Ecological Limits

- "The world will no longer be divided by the ideologies of 'left' and 'right,' but by those who accept ecological limits and those who don't."

-Wolfgang Sachs, "Globalization and Sustainability", Wuppertal Institute

- "In a world of shrinking resources, those who first recognize the need for **sustainability** and adopt appropriate strategies **will succeed best** in future global competition." -

-Yves Manfrini, Union Bancaire Privee, Switzerland (Investment Analyst)



York Region's Growth Plan would pave 7.27 km² of Markham's Prime Foodland

2031 Community Land Requirements in the Whitebelt by Local Municipality

	2031 Whitebelt Units	Density	2031 Area Requirement (ha)	Major Retail Area Requirement (ha)	2031 Total Area Requirement (ha)
East Gwillimbury	7,360	20	368	56	427
Markham	12,140	20	607	120	727
Vaughan	9,930	20	497	120	617
Total	29,430	20	1,472	296	1,771

Source: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008

Draft Key Ratepayer Recommendations to Markham Council

- 1. Ask York Region to conduct further public consultation before passing the Regional Official Plan;
- 2. Limit growth to less than 25% over the next 22 years by working with all levels of government;
- 3. Place a moratorium on Urban Expansions
- 4. Protect Markham's Foodbelt – expand the Greenbelt to protect the farmland north of Major Mackenzie Drive;
- 5. Better protect residential communities from over-intensification by enacting height restrictions near residential communities.

Markham Council's Power to Halt Urban Expansion without OMB Appeal

- The Province has given Municipalities the right to refuse urban expansions and developers cannot appeal such a decision to the Ontario Municipal Board.



Markham Council's Power to place a a Moratorium on Sprawl

➤ Provincial Policy Statement

1.1.2 - Sufficient land shall be made available through intensification and redevelopment and, if necessary, designated growth areas, to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of employment opportunities, housing and other land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of **up to 20 years.**



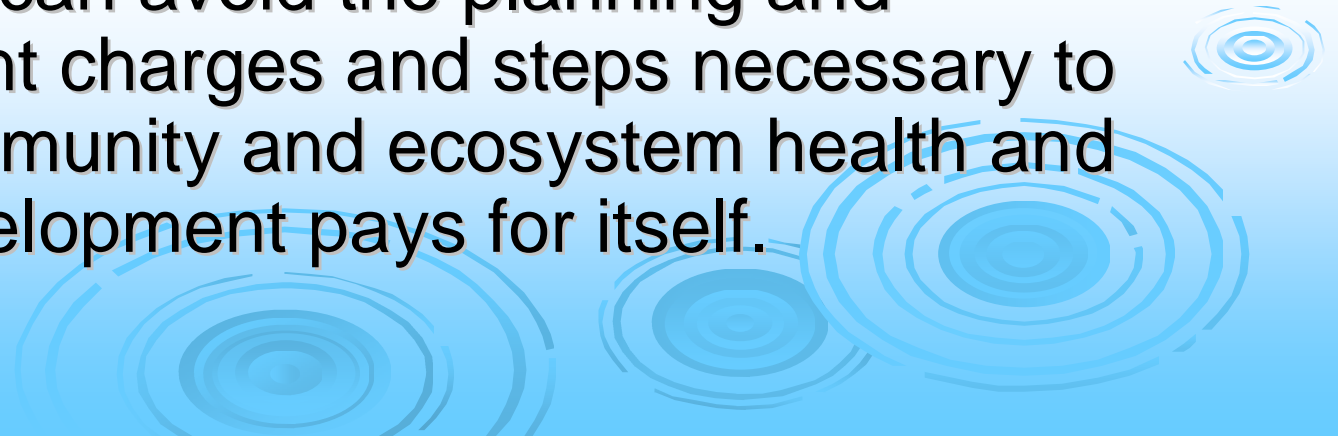
Figure 3-3: Proposed and Draft Approved Plans of Subdivision

Markham's Mayor and Council should ask York Region and the Province to:

- **Stop ratcheting forward** the unsustainable Regional Growth Plan and give Markham time for **better public consultation and planning**;
- Ask York Region and/or the Province to **remove or amend** any draft Regional Plan objectives, policies, maps or schedules which would promote urban expansion in Markham
- e.g. the urban expansion mark (asterisk) on the draft Regional Map north of Major Mackenzie;

Expanding the Urban Envelope Allows Developers to “Drive” Planning

- Once the urban envelope is expanded, developers can “drive” the planning process through their deep-pocketed ability to beat municipalities with consultants and lawyers and OMB hearings.
- Once the urban envelope is expanded, developers can avoid the planning and development charges and steps necessary to protect community and ecosystem health and ensure development pays for itself.



Consequences of 'Business as Usual'

Golden Horseshoe Population Growth
7.8 million to 11.5 million within 25 yrs



Golden Horseshoe Consequences of 'Growth as Usual' by 2031

Potential Loss of Farmland

- 3000 ha/year (30 square kilometres/yr)
- 92% prime agricultural land (69% Class 1)

Potential Area of Sprawl

- 1000 square Km total by 2031
- 2x size of existing City of Toronto



Markham's Prime Foodbelt Going, Going ...

Markham Farmland Loss 12,085 acres (2001 - 06)

Markham Farmland Loss 43% between (2001 - 06)

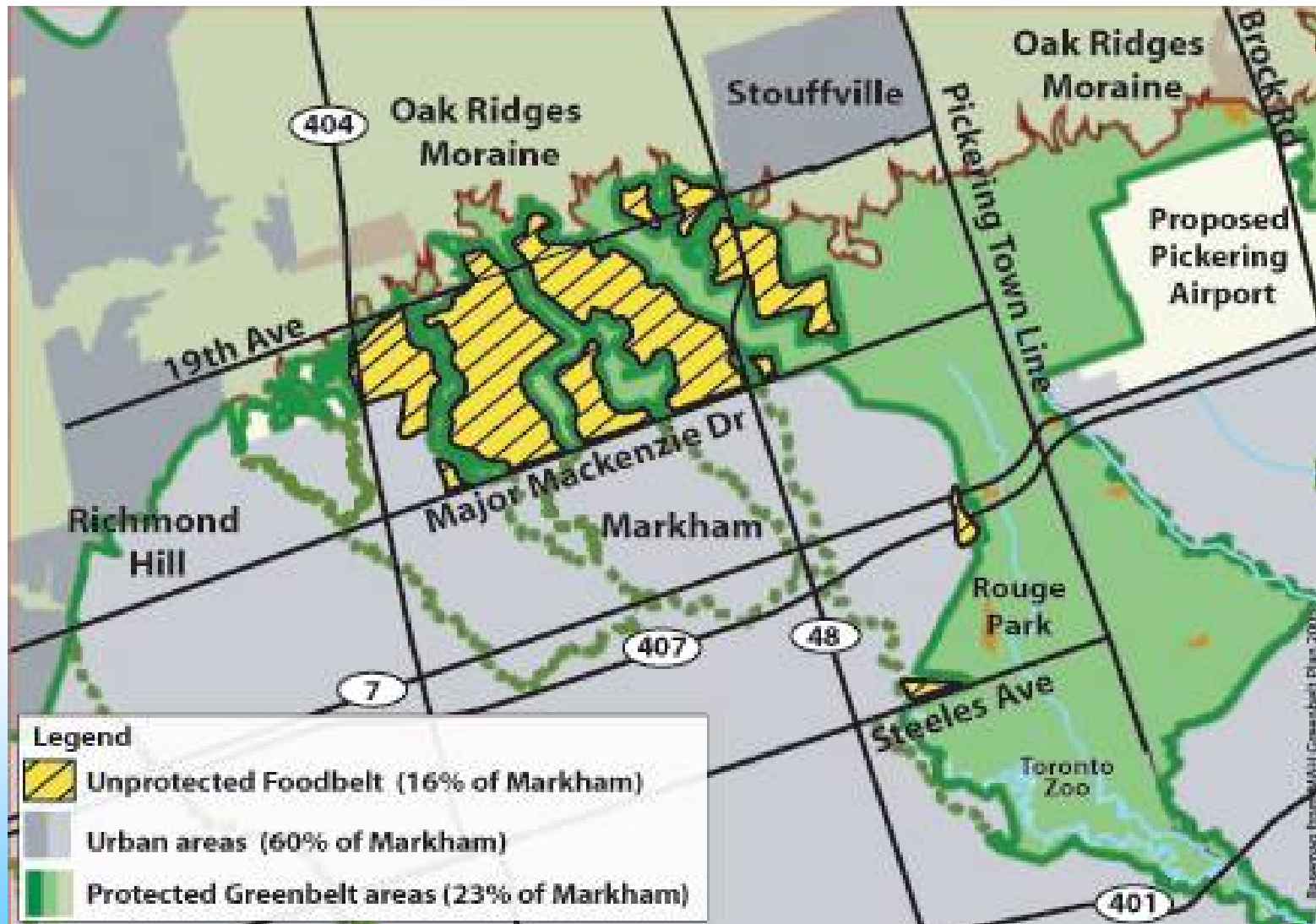
York Region Farmland Loss 5% between 2001 and 2006

Ontario Farmland Loss 1.5% between 2001 and 2006

Source: Markham 2009 Agricultural Assessment



Protect Markham's Foodbelt



Provincial Policy Statement

2.3.1 *Prime agricultural areas* shall be protected for long-term use for agriculture.

Prime agricultural areas are areas where *prime agricultural lands* predominate.



Markham

Canada's Best Farmland

- Markham's rural area is predominantly the top category of Class 1 farmland according to the Canada Land Inventory;
- The Greenbelt study completed by the Province also indicated that the rural area in Markham is prime agricultural land;
- Markham's rural area qualifies as prime agricultural land under the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS);
- Less than 0.5% of Canada is Class 1 farmland.

Markham Source: Markham 2009 Agricultural Assessment



Markham's Ideal Growing Conditions

- **Markham's moderate climate, fertile soils and good rainfall and water sources support high foodland productivity;**
- **Markham enjoys a flexible and diverse food production profile which includes cash crops, fruit and vegetables;**
- **Climate change will increase the diversity of crops which can be grown in Markham;**
- **With climate change and population growth, it is imperative to protect foodlands with good rainfall, like Markham.**



Farming has “Growing” Economic Potential

- **Markham farmers want to keep farming;**
- **Markham farming is diverse, flexible and productive;**
- **With growing demand for fresh, healthy, local food, Markham farms have growing economic potential.**

Source: Markham 2009 Agricultural Assessment



Farming is Economically Important

In Canada, agriculture and the agri-food sector:

- **provide 1 in 8 jobs;**
- **account for approximately 8% of GDP;**
- **provide good food at one of the lowest costs in developed countries.**



Economic Benefits of Farming in Markham

- **2006 Markham Agri- related Revenues \$62 million**
- **Markham's Gross Farm Receipts / hectare (\$1,272):**
 - **28% higher than the average for GTA farms (\$999/ha)**
 - **63% higher than the average for Ontario farms (\$777/ha)**
 - **Continuing their trend of year to year increases.**

Source: Markham 2009 Agricultural Assessment



Urban Expansion and Development Increases Flooding and Erosion

- Markham has **533 areas (including homes and businesses)** and **129 roads which would be flooded** during the Regional Storm and a number of roads and homes which would flood in flows as low as the 2-year flood event.

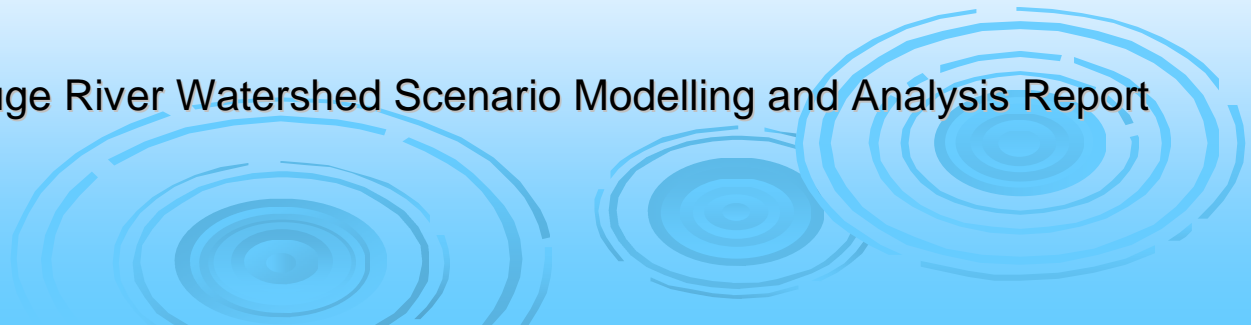
Source: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Page 5-25 Rouge River State of the Watershed Report



Urban Expansion Increases Damage to Existing Downstream Properties

- Urban expansion *increases the magnitude and duration of erosive flows in receiving watercourses*
- ***middle tributaries (Markham communities) would be subject to major hydrological impacts*** if the urban envelope is expanded
- ... development-induced changes to the flow regime **cause uncontrolled erosion, enlargement, and habitat degradation**

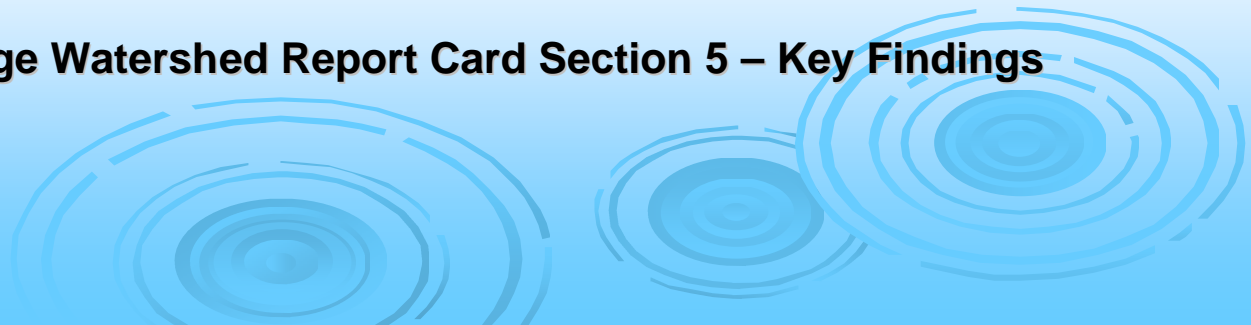
Source: 2007 TRCA Rouge River Watershed Scenario Modelling and Analysis Report



Main Rouge Watershed

well above threshold for “severe” impacts

- the **maximum impervious** cover that a watershed can withstand before experiencing **severe hydrologic changes and consequent geomorphic and ecological impacts** is approximately 10%.
- The **Main Rouge subwatershed** has significant urbanization and an approximate **total impervious cover of 18%** as of 2002.
- Source: TRCA Rouge Watershed Report Card Section 5 – Key Findings



Flooding Damage is Increasing with Climate Change



Costly Infrastructure Damage

- Canadians spent more than \$3 billion in 1998 to repair damages caused by extreme weather.
- Disaster recovery payments by insurance companies and taxpayers have been doubling every five years throughout the 1980's and 1990's, an alarming trend that cannot be allowed to continue" (IBC National Strategy, 1999).



Provincial Policy Statement

- **PPS 2.2.1** Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the *quality and quantity of water* by:
- minimizing potential *negative impacts*, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts;



Urban Expansion Pollutes our Streams & Drinking Water Sources

- “meeting water quality targets will become an increasingly distant goal as the footprint of development expands”
- **Source: Rouge River Watershed Strategy and Implementation Plan
Water Quality Section 4.2.9 Summary and Conclusions**



Polluted Water entering Robinson Creek Trout Stream, Markham



Dead Rainbow Trout in Polluted and Eroded Robinson Creek, Markham



E. Coli Bacteria in Streams at Markham / Toronto Border (Oct. 2, 2009)

➤ Little Rouge River at Steeles

E. Coli bacteria level 250

➤ Main Rouge River

E. Coli bacteria level 380

MOE Standard - less than 100 for swimming



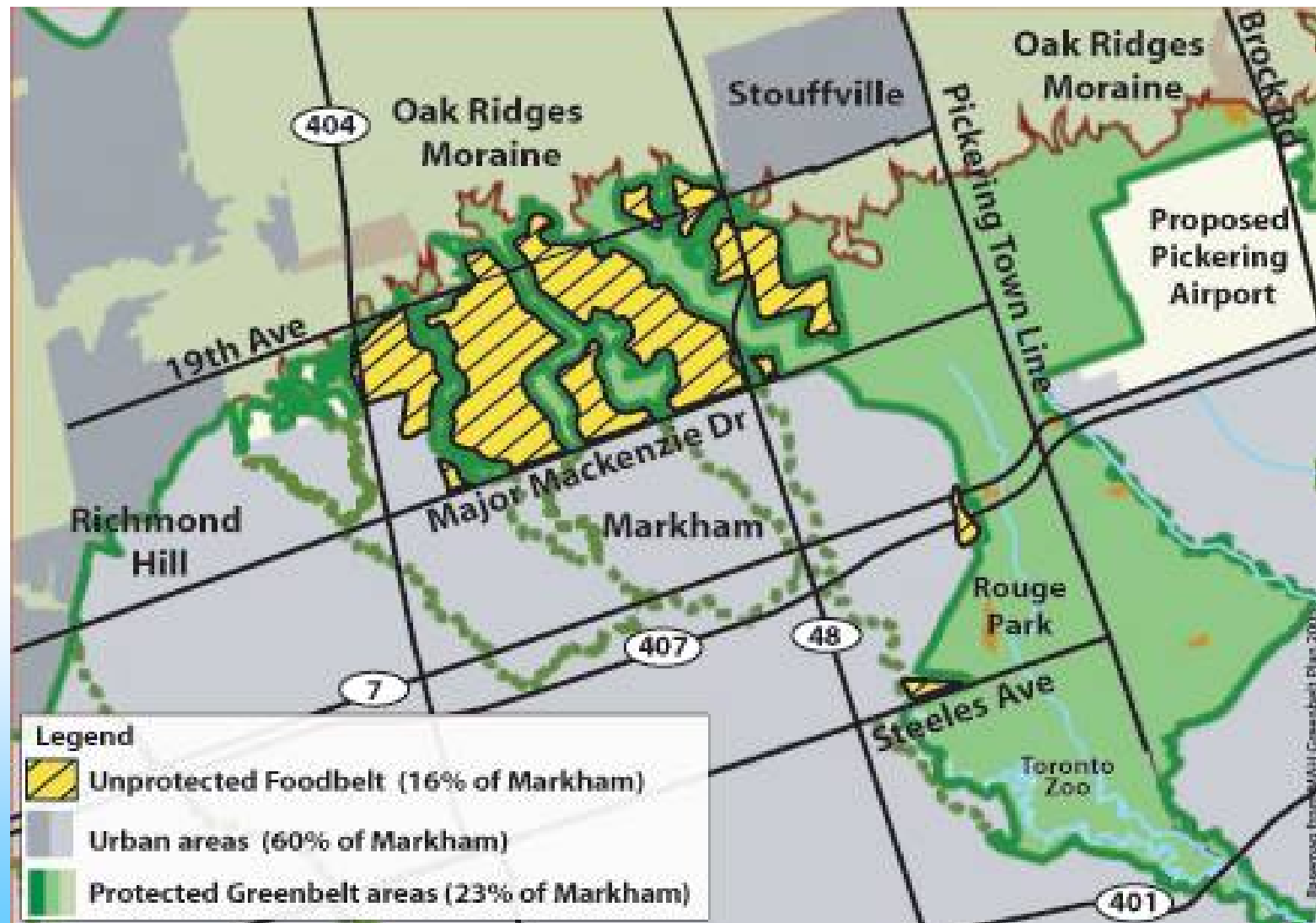
L. Ontario, Markham's Water Source already polluted from too much human waste



What will your Markham Legacy be?



Protect Markham's Foodbelt and Quality of Life



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Additional Information

- Website: protectmarkham.wordpress.com
- Email: markhamfoodbelt@gmail.com

