
Region of Peel
Addendum to
Agricultural Impact Assessment
Future of the Greater Toronto Area West Corridor
Conducted to inform the
Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE)

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Purpose

The Region of Peel is currently undertaking a series of studies to inform the future Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE) for growth allocated to the Region of Peel in “A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe” 2019. (Growth Plan 2019). After accounting for intensification opportunities across Peel, a municipal comprehensive review (MCR) process confirmed there will be a need for new lands to accommodate population and employment growth in the Town of Caledon to 2051.

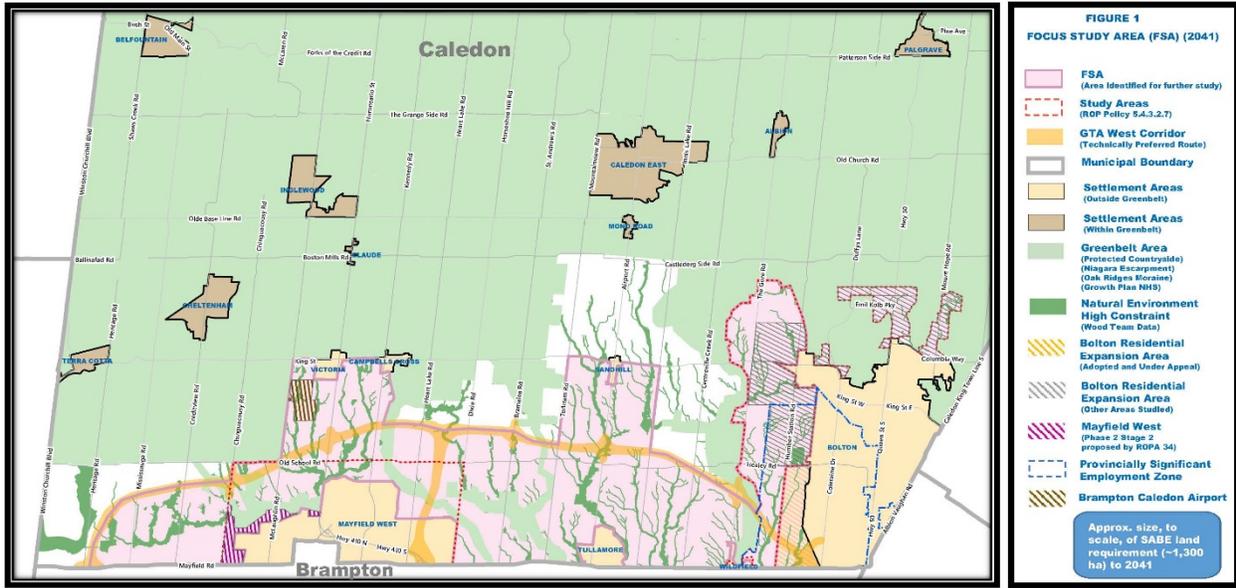
Under Provincial policy, settlement area boundary expansions are allowed at the time of an MCR, where it can be demonstrated that certain conditions as laid out in provincial policy, are addressed. Amongst the criteria to be met are a number related to the protection of agricultural land. Therefore, as input into the SABE study, a “Phase 1 Agricultural Impact Assessment (Ph.1 AIA) was completed by Planscape to assist in determining the most appropriate location for the proposed SABE, in conformity with provincial policy. This assessment was based on a focused study area (FSA) as shown on **Figure 1**.

As part of this process, a comprehensive analysis was undertaken of provincial policies. The FSA was divided into eight (8) areas (shown on **Figure 2**) each of which was analyzed in reference to provincial policy and the criteria in the provincial “Draft Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) Guidance Document” (2018 AIA Guidelines) dated March 2018. This analysis was completed based on growth numbers to 2041 and factored into a comprehensive analysis of a series of technical reports to identify an appropriate SABE. The Ph. 1 AIA, updated to July 23rd, 2020, documents the findings of the Phase 1 analysis.

Shortly after the technical studies were completed, Schedule 3 to the Growth Plan was amended to extend the required growth horizon to 2051. In response to this amendment, a revised land needs assessment was completed. This resulted in an increase in the size of the SABE that would be required to accommodate the projected growth for the extended timeframe. A draft SABE concept as shown on **Figure 3** was prepared and presented to Regional Council in December 2020.

Once this draft SABE was identified, a Phase 2 focused agricultural impact assessment (AIA) was conducted to address the most appropriate location for the proposed SABE, in conformity with provincial policy. This assessment built on the analysis of the eight study areas identified in the July 23rd, 2020 Ph. 1 AIA, but factored in the expanded growth projections to 2051. The assessment is documented in a draft report entitled “Phase 2 Agricultural Assessment” (Ph. 2 AIA).

Figure 1 – Focus Study Area (FSA)



Disclaimer: This map has been developed for the Settlement Area Boundary Expansion (SABE) Study and represents an area to be studied for the purpose of identifying a SABE. For additional information, please refer to the *Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Study Phase A: Focus Study Area* report.

Note:

- (1) There may be opportunities to expand rural settlements outside the FSA as part of the SABE Study.
- (2) Other natural environmental constraints not identified on this map, including features not captured through existing mapping and potential buffers, will be identified through further analysis and may further limit development.
- (3) ROP Policy 5.4.3.2.7 as it relates to the area surrounding Bolton is under appeal.
- (4) The ~1,300 ha SABE is based on a draft land needs assessment which is under review.



Figure 2 – FSA Assessment Units

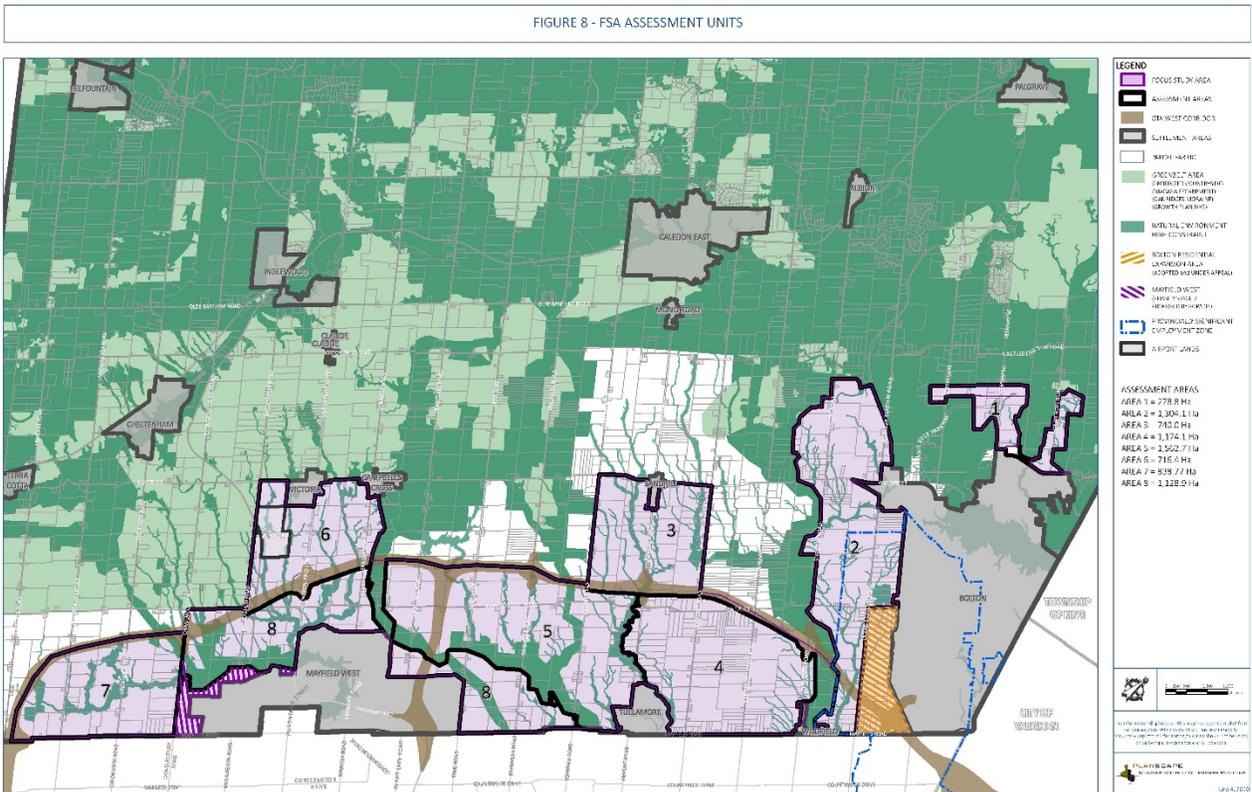
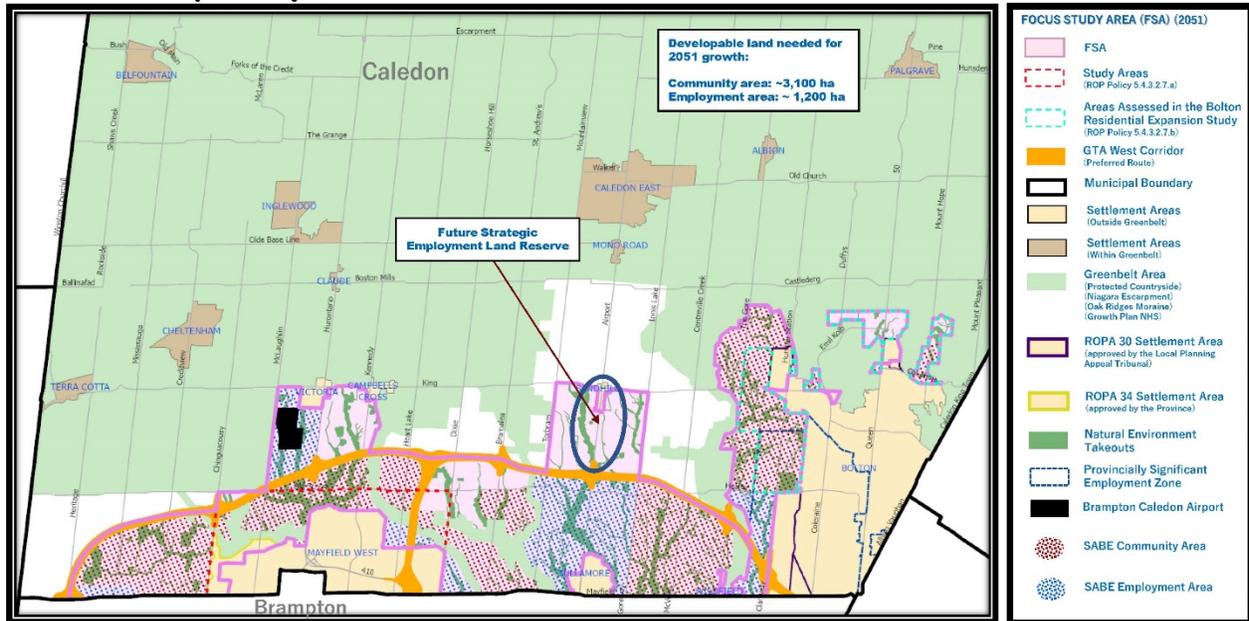


Figure 3 – SABE Concept Map December 2020

SABE Concept Map (December 2020 version updated with ROPA 30 LPAT Settlement & Approved ROPA 34)



WARNING TO USERS: This map represents a conceptual area for the Settlement Area Boundary Expansion and is being provided for information purposes only. Users are advised that this mapping is currently in draft and may change. The Region of Peel does not certify the accuracy of the information provided nor does it provide any assurance that the mapping will remain unchanged. Any reliance placed by the user on the information provided herein is strictly at the risk of the user, and the Region of Peel does not assume responsibility for any loss or damages resulting to the user or any third party by reliance on this information.

Notes:

- 1) Other natural environmental constraints not identified on this map, including potential restoration lands, will be identified through further analysis and may further limit development.
- 2) The ~4,300 ha SABE is based on a draft land needs assessment which is under review.

DISCLAIMER
Mapping is DRAFT
only for further study
and discussion.

1 cm = 1 km

In both the Ph. 1 AIA and the Ph. 2 AIA, the preferred location of the Greater Toronto Area West Corridor (GTAWC) as identified in the provincial environmental assessment process, was addressed. It formed much of the boundary of the proposed SABE.

At their March 11, 2021 meeting, Regional Council passed several resolutions, including a resolution opposing construction of any transportation corridor traversing the Region of Peel, and specifically the currently proposed GTAWC Highway and Transmission Corridor. Given that this corridor had been proposed as the northern boundary of the FSA and preliminary SABE concept in December 2020 the implications of the Council direction require further analysis. This addendum report provides additional insights into the assessment of agriculture within and adjacent to the GTAWC, taking into account the Region’s position.

In providing this addendum it is acknowledged that the MCR is required to address the provincial interest which includes plans for the GTAWC. That requirement is addressed in the Ph. 1 AIA and Ph. 2 AIA, as submitted. This addendum report provides additional insight into the implications for agriculture should the Regional position prevail.

Implications of the “No Transportation Corridor” Option

It was noted in the Ph. 1 AIA that the “technically preferred route” for the GTAWC bisects the initial FSA in certain portions and forms its northerly boundary in others. The future link to the 410 is proposed in the area between Dixie and Heart Lake Roads. All these factors have the potential to negatively impact the ongoing agricultural activities in the FSA and were considered in the detailed analysis providing input to and commenting on the draft SABE concept presented to Peel Regional Council in December 2020.

The draft SABE, presented in December 2020, was established along the route of the GTAWC. Given the conclusion in the Ph. 1 AIA report that:

“the proposed GTAWC defines much of the boundary of the FSA and divides many agricultural properties. The extension of the 410 and related interchanges and connecting routes will also have an impact which must be considered”.

The implication of this route not being developed must be reconsidered. In doing so, the implications for each of the 8 assessment units identified as the basis for the AIA analysis have been reviewed.

In addition to the physical location of the corridor, other implications of the corridor not being built also need to be considered. The Peel Federation of Agriculture (PFA) has been monitoring the provincial EA process for the GTAWC and expressed support for the route as a solution to traffic congestion on local roads. Comments submitted by the Peel Federation as part of the provincial EA process for the GTAWC and subsequent discussions with the PFA members, confirmed the challenges of farming and moving equipment and product on congested roads. The traditional grid road pattern in Peel, and lack of other transit options leads to congested roads with through traffic competing with local traffic especially in proximity to or on the route to urban areas. The growing focus of logistics facilities adds to the congestion. The PFA concluded that although the transportation corridor would disrupt and divide the agricultural area, there were also benefits, specifically reduced congestion, to be realized.

Implications for Assessment Units

As shown on **Figure 2** the boundaries of most of the eight assessment units that formed the basis of the AIA analysis incorporate portions of proposed GTA West Corridor (GTAWC). Therefore, there are implications for the previous analysis if the corridor is not developed. To understand these implications, the analysis of the assessment units where the GTAWC had a potentially significant impact are reviewed in this report.

**TABLE 1 – ASSESSMENT AREA
IMPLICATIONS OF THE NO GTAWC**
(Units as shown on Figure 2)

Assessment Area	Analysis
1	The analysis of this Assessment Area will not be impacted by changes to the GTAWC. This assessment unit is physically removed from the proposed route.
2	The southern portion of this Assessment Area is divided by the GTAWC. However, this division occurs in the area where the ROPA 30 boundary expansion for Bolton has been approved leaving a narrow band of rural land between the current urban boundary and a high constraint environmental feature. To the north is a Provincially Significant Employment Zone (PSEZ). The analysis in the Ph. 1 AIA and Phase 2 AIA concluded that agriculture in this area has already been compromised and that the proposed inclusion of this Assessment Area as part of the SABE is reasonable. If the GTAWC does not proceed, this conclusion would not change.
3	Area 3 is bounded to the south by the future GTAWC, which could act as a buffer helping isolate this area from existing urban development. There are active farming operations in this area and the LEAR scoring qualifies the area as PAA. If the GTAWC is not built, and the area remains part of the rural system, additional buffering should be addressed to replace the buffering function of the corridor. However, there are other factors in this area that may impact the future of agriculture more significantly than the presence of the GTAWC. The Industrial/Commercial Centre of Sandhill is located at the north end of this area at the intersection of Airport Road and King Street. Airport Road running north from Tullamore, already an active transportation corridor, bisects this area. The Region has flagged this area as a potential employment area. Once decisions regarding the status of this area and the GTAWC are finalized, if it is no longer part of the rural system, buffering of adjacent agricultural areas will need to be addressed. Drawing the boundaries between the urban and rural areas should respect property lines and factor in Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) requirements.
4	The analysis in the Ph. 1 AIA concluded that this area was already highly compromised for agriculture by fragmentation and a high incidence of non-farm ownership. It is proposed to be included in the SABE area and bounded to the north by the GTAWC. If the corridor is not built, buffering as discussed in the Ph. 2 AIA will need to be strengthened. In doing so the boundary of the SABE should be revisited. The corridor as proposed split many properties. A more appropriate boundary would be one that is based on existing road infrastructure, maximizes separation of uses, aligns to property lines, does not

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IMPLICATIONS OF THE NO GTAWC
(Units as shown on Figure 2)**

Assessment Area	Analysis
	bisect farm parcels to the greatest extent possible and factors in Minimum Distance Separation requirements.
5	As noted in the Ph. 1 AIA this area contains a significant cluster of active farm operations including large livestock operations. Area 5 is bordered to the north by the proposed GTAWC and the western portion between Heart Lake and Dixie Roads, is bisected by the proposed 410 Extension. It is the area that could be most impacted by a decision not to develop the GTAWC. If the corridor does not proceed, the integrity of this area as a farming cluster should be reconsidered. The boundary should be repositioned based on property lines and existing road infrastructure to maximize separation from urban areas. MDS requirements should be factored in. The Ph. 2 AIA contains extensive MDS analysis which must be addressed.
6	Three sides of this area are bounded by Greenbelt with the southern boundary based on the GTAWC. It is similar to Assessment Area 4 in that existing farm infrastructure in the area is limited. The western portion surrounding the Regional airport is proposed for to be part of the SABE as an employment area with an additional area east of Victoria also under consideration for employment uses. To the south, the area between the GTAWC and the boundary with Assessment Area 8 is proposed to be Community SABE. If the SABE layout as shown on Figure 3 proceeds, Areas 6 and 8 will effectively merge and the urban boundary will shift north. The boundary should be repositioned based on property lines and existing road infrastructure to maximize separation from urban areas and factor in MDS requirements. There are 3 properties at the south end that exhibit evidence of being able to house livestock which may create MDS setbacks in that area. Interfaces with the Greenbelt should be considered as per the recommendations in the Ph. 2 AIA.
7	The north and west boundaries of Assessment Area 7 were defined by the GTAWC. This is an established farming areas where fragmentation is limited, and the agricultural character is well established. Many farms have extensive infrastructure, and a number meet the criteria for potential MDS requirements. If the corridor does not proceed, adjustment to the boundary should consider these factors. The SABE boundary should be repositioned based on property lines and existing road infrastructure to maximize separation from urban areas. MDS requirements should be factored and avoid impacts to existing established livestock operations where possible. The

**TABLE 1 – ASSESSMENT AREA
IMPLICATIONS OF THE NO GTAWC
(Units as shown on Figure 2)**

Assessment Area	Analysis
	integrity of the remnant farming cluster should be maintained by maximizing linkages to the Greenbelt.
8	All of Assessment Area 8, the northern boundary of which is defined by the GTAWC, is proposed to be within the SABE. The issues to be considered in adjusting the SABE boundary should the GTAWC not proceed, have been addressed in reference to Assessment Areas 5 and 6 which abut Area 8.

Minimum Distance Separation Factors

As required by provincial policy, extensive MDS analysis was undertaken for the Ph. 1 AIA and for the Ph. 2 AIA. For the Ph. 1 AIA, operations with potential to house livestock were identified within the FSA and calculations undertaken based on provincial guidelines. For the Ph. 2 AIA, a primary study area, comprised of the proposed SABE, was established with a secondary study area of 1.5 km from the SABE boundary. The results of this work are shown on **Figures 4A and B**. Detailed mapping of the results of this analysis, including the MDS arcs, are included in the Phase 2 report. If the GTAWC does not proceed, and boundary adjustments are required, reference to the MDS analysis will be important, specifically for Assessment Areas 5 and 7 where there are active livestock operations. MDS will also be a factor in adjusting the southern boundaries of Assessment Areas 3 and 6.

The issues associated with obtaining and maintaining updated, accurate MDS data are discussed in the AIA’s. As the finalization of the SABE proceeds and decisions are made about the GTAWC, adjustments will be required to the MDS analysis. However, the work done to date can provide an insight and implications of the work done to date must be factored into finalizing urban boundaries.

Conclusions

If the GTAWC does not proceed, there will be an opportunity to adjust the SABE boundary that could work to the benefit of the agricultural sector. As proposed, the GTAWC does not respect property lines or follow existing infrastructure. It is an intrusion into and will divide agricultural properties and area, isolating operations. Most farmers today farm large, physically dispersed properties. Infrastructure such as limited access expressways, can be barriers to accessing these properties. Splitting properties will reduce some to a size that will be uneconomical to farm.

Conversely, having the opportunity to adjust the boundaries to respect property ownership and factor in natural features and built infrastructure to increase buffering and separation can provide support for the sector.

There are also negative implications if the corridor does not proceed. It would, because of its nature, act as a significant separator between urban and rural communities. As the PFA indicated, the corridor could reduce the congestion on local roads making it easier for farmers to move equipment. If this easing of local congestion is coupled with provision of access under and over the expressway for farm equipment, the benefits could increase.

These factors will need to be considered as the decision about the future of the GTAWC is made. If the GTAWC does not proceed, there will still be the requirement to accommodate projected growth to 2051. Despite working with a 55% intensification target in the existing built up area, there will still be a need for an additional land base of 4200 H to accommodate that growth. Working with these numbers and assuming the GTAWC was proceeding, a preliminary conceptual SABE has been identified. If the GTAWC does not proceed the same factors will have to be re-evaluated in determining where to accommodate this growth. In doing so, consultation with the farm community and consideration of factors to support ongoing agriculture should be ongoing.

In conclusion, the criteria and principles to be considered if the preliminary conceptual SABE must be re-evaluated on the basis that the GTAWC will not be a factor, include:

- Containing growth close to existing settlement boundaries in the south area of Caledon.
- Ensuring extension of community boundaries and employment areas respects the integrity of and does not fragment farming areas.
- Considering agricultural needs when planning transportation infrastructure.
- Addressing MDS implications.
- Creating significant buffers between agricultural operations, non-farm operations and urban areas.
- Implementing effective edge planning to protect the viability of the agricultural sector.
- Having regard for the agri-food system and supporting linkages between it and farm operations.