



# PART A

# COMMUNITY VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## THE COMMUNITY VISION

The primary purpose of the Official Plan is to provide the basis for managing growth that will support and emphasize the Town's unique character, diversity, civic identity, rural lifestyle, natural heritage and cultural heritage and to do so in a way that has the greatest positive impact on the quality of life in Halton Hills. The Official Plan is one of a series of municipal policies, guidelines and regulations that will direct the actions of the Town and shape growth and development. The Official Plan establishes a vision for the future land use structure of the Town and, as a result, is intended to serve as the basis for managing change until 2031, which is the planning horizon established by this Plan.

The Town of Halton Hills is comprised of several settlement areas of varying size, and a substantial rural area, with a distinctive and enviable identity that comes from the beauty and tranquility of the rural setting, rolling hills, rivers and valleys. It is a place where residents enjoy safe family living, scenic beauty and active community life. The community recognizes the unique attributes that set it apart from other places and is passionate about preserving the small town character and rural feeling while accommodating a moderate scale of growth to 2031 that is in keeping with the Town's urban and rural character, as articulated in the Town Strategic Plan. The preservation and enhancement of these features while keeping pace with the diverse needs of the community is at the forefront of the Town's Vision for its future.

The Town and its citizens view its long-term future to be more self-reliant and supports managed growth that preserves the unique features of the community, uses land wisely, elevates the quality of the built environment and provides diverse economic opportunities. The aim is to provide choices for employment, housing, shopping and services. The intent is to diversify and create a more vibrant local economy through collaborative partnerships with existing businesses and through proactive efforts to attract new industries and services.

The Town and its residents view community services as being fundamental to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for all age groups. The citizens provide vitality to the community by their committed volunteerism. Halton Hills enjoys a thriving arts community, local theatre and cultural events, which provides a balance with the abundance of passive and active recreational and leisure pursuits. The Town and its citizens recognize the need for new and enhanced community services and physical infrastructure to support the existing and changing population. This includes ensuring that schools and other similar community facilities are planned for in all new neighbourhoods and retained where possible in existing neighbourhoods in recognition of the role they play as a focus of community activity and neighbourhood interaction.

The Town has a number of significant environmental and topographical features that contribute to the 'sense of place' felt by many of the Town's residents. These features include the Credit River Valley system, the Niagara Escarpment, the Bruce Trail and the vast forest tracts, smaller woodland areas and wetland areas that support diverse wildlife communities. The protection of these attributes is a key underlying principle in this Official Plan and for this reason, this Official Plan establishes an 'environment-first' philosophy in the Town. The environment-first philosophy is a land use planning approach that is to be considered in making all planning decisions whereby the importance of maintaining, restoring and where possible, enhancing or improving natural heritage features and ecological functions is

recognized and promoted as a Town priority to be considered in conjunction with other interests in accordance with Provincial policy and legislation.

As with the Region of Halton Official Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan and the Greenbelt Plan, this Official Plan recognizes and enshrines the concept of landform permanence and the need to permanently protect certain landforms in keeping with the principles of land stewardship or where appropriate through public ownership. These include the Niagara Escarpment, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, wetlands, areas of natural and scientific interest, and streams and valley systems which are to be maintained in their current form and extent with no or as little displacement or encroachment as possible. Other lands to be preserved in large measure so that they will always form part of the Town's landscape include farms, countryside, forested areas and other open space areas.

The agricultural areas of the Town are considered to be an important component of what makes up the character of the community. These areas must be protected for future agricultural use so that they can continue to serve an important role in the local economy. The fragmentation of agricultural areas and the introduction of incompatible uses in these areas are strongly discouraged by the Official Plan.

The rural landscape provides a vital natural function as a source of oxygen, clean water and food and is considered an asset to the community. This Official Plan establishes the long-term role and function of farming and natural areas within the Town. It is the intent of the Town to only permit development that is compatible with the character, role and function of these areas. It is also the intent of this Plan to permit the continued functioning of natural systems, maintain the rural pattern of large land holdings and a landscape dominated by open fields and forests. The protection of the rural landscape is an important element of the permanent community structure.

The Town also recognizes that mineral aggregate extraction is a rural based activity and an important component of the local economy. Mineral aggregate extraction must be undertaken in a manner that minimizes social and environmental impacts. In keeping with the 'environment-first' philosophy, this Plan requires that where a mineral aggregate extraction operation impacts the Greenlands System, the application will result in a net environmental gain to the features or functions of the Greenlands System through a combination of compensation and enhancements that are initiated prior to and/or during extraction, and the proposed progressive and final rehabilitation of the site to uses that benefit the community.

The Town has three primary urban areas and a number of rural settlement areas of varying size. This Official Plan directs the majority of new residential and employment growth to the urban areas, where lands are available for development on full municipal services.

In keeping with the Places to Grow Act (2005), municipal official plans must be brought into conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe within three years of the final approval of that Plan (June 16, 2009). Between 2006 and 2009, the Region of Halton completed a multi-year work program, entitled Sustainable Halton, to achieve Growth Plan conformity, as well as conformity with the Greenbelt Plan and 2005 Provincial Policy Statement. This planning exercise culminated in the selection of a Preferred Growth Option in June 2009, and the adoption of Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 38 in December 2009, implementing the Preferred Growth Option, as well as a number of other policy changes arising from the multi-faceted work program.

The Preferred Growth Option in the context of Halton Hills consisted of 20,000 population growth, 370 hectares of residential/mixed use area contiguous to the Georgetown Urban Area, and 340 hectares of employment land contiguous to the Premier Gateway Employment Area to the 2031 planning horizon. In addition, a minimum intensification requirement of 5,100 units between 2015 and 2031 within the Built-up Areas of Acton and Georgetown was established. Through a series of amendments to the Halton Hills Official Plan, the Town has worked to achieve conformity with the Provincial Growth Plan and the Regional Official Plan, as amended by Amendment No. 38.

Encouraging additional economic development in the Town is also a key goal of this Official Plan. The establishment of a positive business environment that provides jobs and prosperity to Town residents is a key component of this Plan. On this basis, the Official Plan promotes the development of the newly emerging Premier Gateway Employment Area for prestige industrial uses and encourages general industrial uses within employment areas located in Acton and Georgetown. This Plan also encourages, through a flexible policy regime, opportunities for additional development in the urban areas, particularly in a *Community Node* designation that is focused at the intersection of Guelph Street and Mountainview Road in Georgetown and the Acton and Georgetown *Downtown Areas*.

The new Official Plan assumes that the high quality of life now enjoyed by the Town's residents can be maintained and enhanced if the Town's distinct urban and rural character is maintained and enhanced. However, change is inevitable and it must be managed in an efficient and orderly manner to maximize the benefits of new development and minimize the impacts. It is therefore the intent of this Plan to provide Council with the tools to consider and mitigate the impacts of change on the qualities that make the Town a desirable place to live.

Through a variety of successful initiatives, the Town is taking numerous steps towards achieving a sustainable community characterized by cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being. Sustainable development is an important component of achieving this objective. Sustainable development is often defined as development meeting the needs of the present generation, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The benefits of sustainable development include a reduction in the environmental footprint through a variety of measures that include reducing water, energy and land consumption, minimizing construction waste and contaminants, and improving air quality and the natural environment. Additional benefits include improved community design, support of active transportation, efficient infrastructure use, stormwater management and lower long-term building operating costs.

As part of achieving a sustainable community there has been recognition of the need for sustainable building and development practices to use fewer resources during the construction process, and to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions and long-term operating costs of buildings.

## A1A

### POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

This Plan provides a land use planning framework to direct and manage growth to the 2031 planning horizon based on the population and employment targets contained in Table A1A.

**TABLE A1A: POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT TARGETS**

Year	2006	2031
Population	58,000	94,000
Employment	20,000	43,000

**Note:** Population numbers are Total Population including approximately 4% undercoverage from the official Census Population reported by Statistics Canada.

## **A2 GOALS AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

### **A2.1 NATURAL HERITAGE AND WATER RESOURCES**

#### **A2.1.1 GOAL**

To protect, enhance and where possible restore, significant natural heritage features and related ecological functions in the Town for present and future generations.

#### **A2.1.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To protect significant natural heritage and hydrologic features and their associated ecological functions;
- b) To ensure that a comprehensive understanding of the natural environment, including the values, opportunities, limits and constraints that it provides, guides land use decision-making in the Town;
- c) To require that land use planning contributes to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of water and related resources and aquatic ecosystems on an integrated watershed management basis;
- d) To maintain and enhance significant woodland features and the habitats and ecological functions they provide;
- e) To recognize that a healthy community is made up of an interconnected system of open spaces and natural heritage features;
- f) To promote the retention of natural heritage features so that they can be enjoyed by future generations and serve as a legacy of the community's desire to protect their role and function;
- g) To increase awareness of the role natural heritage features play in establishing the character of the community;
- h) To minimize negative changes to the water quality and hydrological and hydrogeological characteristics of watercourses, lakes, aquifers and wetlands;
- i) To prohibit development that will result in a negative impact to the critical functions and processes of watercourses, lakes, aquifers and wetlands;
- j) To prohibit the loss or fragmentation of provincially significant wetlands and significant habitat of endangered and threatened species;
- k) To maintain and enhance significant areas of natural and scientific interest, significant valleylands, escarpment slopes and related landforms, and significant wildlife habitat areas;
- l) To maintain and enhance surface and groundwater resources in sufficient quality and quantity to meet existing and future needs on a sustainable basis;

- m) To promote land use decisions that incorporate water conservation measures and the efficient use of water resources on a watershed and sub-watershed basis;
- n) To encourage the establishment of a greenspace network that links environmental and recreational resources both within and beyond the boundaries of the Town as part of the development of a Natural Heritage Strategy;
- o) To encourage the development of a safe, convenient, affordable, efficient and energy-conserving transportation system that minimizes impacts on the natural environment;
- p) To encourage the municipal acquisition of valleylands and other Environmentally Sensitive Areas within the Town, particularly in the urban areas; and,
- q) To consult with the Region, the Conservation Authorities, the Town Environmental Advisory Committee and, where appropriate, neighbouring municipalities when making land use decisions that may impact on natural heritage features and related ecological functions.

## **A2.2 GROWTH AND SETTLEMENT**

### **A2.2.1 GOAL**

To direct most forms of development to urban areas where full wastewater and water services are available and to support the efficient use of land in these areas.

### **A2.2.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To direct the majority of new residential and employment growth to Urban Areas, where full services exist;
- b) To permit a limited amount of development, in the form of infilling or plans of subdivision, within the Rural Clusters;
- c) To permit development within the Hamlets that maintains and enhances hamlet character and scale in accordance with the policies contained within this Plan and approved Secondary Plans;
- d) To ensure that new country residential subdivisions are not established outside of the *Hamlet Area* and *Rural Cluster Area* designations;
- e) To reinforce the function of the two downtown areas as cultural, administrative, entertainment, retail and social focal points of the community;
- f) To encourage the establishment of a new and enhanced community focus point at the intersection of Guelph Street and Mountainview Road in Georgetown;
- g) To encourage development and redevelopment in the Town's commercial corridors that incorporates excellence in urban design and complements the *Community Node* and the two *Downtown Areas*;
- h) To encourage the establishment of an optimum balance between residential and non-residential assessment in the Town; and,
- i) To ensure that all urban development is appropriately phased and in conjunction with required infrastructure improvements where appropriate.



## **A2.3 URBAN CHARACTER**

### **A2.3.1 GOAL**

To protect and enhance the character of existing urban areas and to maintain them as diverse, livable, safe, thriving and attractive communities.

### **A2.3.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To encourage the further intensification and use of the lands within the *Downtown Areas*, as appropriate;
- b) To ensure that all new urban development has a positive contribution on urban life in the Town;
- c) To ensure that the character and stability of existing and well established residential neighbourhoods is maintained and enhanced by ensuring that development and redevelopment is compatible, in terms of built form, with the character of adjacent buildings and neighbourhoods and the scale and density of existing development;
- d) To ensure that all urban streets are defined by buildings and public spaces wherever possible and appropriate;
- e) To encourage a high quality of site and building design for all forms of development within the Town;
- f) To exercise appropriate municipal development control in order to achieve a consistently high standard of site, building and landscape design;
- g) To ensure that new development areas are integrated into the fabric of the existing community;
- h) To ensure that neighbourhoods are compact and pedestrian-friendly with a mix of housing types, community facilities, public schools, commercial centres and open spaces; and,
- i) To foster a sense of civic identity and pride through a high standard of urban design in all future developments.

## **A2.4 RURAL CHARACTER**

### **A2.4.1 GOAL**

To protect, maintain and enhance the open space character of lands outside of the Urban Areas and the *Hamlet Areas* for enjoyment by present and future generations.

### **A2.4.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To preserve and enhance the Niagara Escarpment as a unique and important feature of the Town;
- b) To protect the open and natural character of the existing rural landscape;
- c) To require that aggregate extraction operations are designed to minimize visual impact;
- d) To restrict development that requires the expansion of urban services into the rural area; and,
- e) To discourage the intrusion of land uses that are incompatible with the rural character and/or resource activities of the area.

## **A2.5 AGRICULTURE**

### **A2.5.1 GOAL**

To preserve areas demonstrating high capability for agricultural production for that purpose.

### **A2.5.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To ensure that agriculture remains an integral part of the economy of the Town and the Region;
- b) To ensure that non-agricultural uses which may have an impact on the viability of farm operations are not permitted;
- c) To prohibit the further fragmentation of good agricultural lands and encourage consolidation of farming parcels to improve efficiencies and productivity where possible;
- d) To encourage the maintenance of the character of agricultural areas by maintaining farm buildings and other elements of the built and natural landscapes that contribute to that character;
- e) To encourage the establishment of small-scale secondary uses on farm properties to improve the livelihood of area farmers;
- f) To encourage the establishment of uses and activities on farm properties that highlights the importance of agriculture and its history in the Town;
- g) To preserve the farm community as an important part of the Town's rural fabric;
- h) To work with all levels of government and the agricultural community to promote and enhance the agricultural industry through marketing;
- i) To encourage the participation of the agricultural industry and community in dealing with concerns of an agricultural nature; and,
- j) To promote environmentally sensitive and sustainable farm practices.

## **A2.6 CULTURAL HERITAGE**

### **A2.6.1 GOAL**

To identify, conserve and enhance the Town's cultural heritage resources and promote their value and benefit to the community.

### **A2.6.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To enhance the character of the Town by protecting and maintaining the Town's cultural heritage resources;
- b) To encourage the retention of cultural heritage resources wherever possible to provide continuity between the past and the present;
- c) To foster civic pride by recognizing the contribution that cultural heritage resources make to the rural and urban fabric of the Town;
- d) To use the preservation of cultural heritage resources as a tool to enhance the character and vitality of neighbourhoods and districts;
- e) To educate the public on the Town's history and achievements;
- f) To ensure that the nature and location of cultural heritage and archaeological resources are known and considered before land use decisions are made;
- g) To pursue the designation, or other means of protection, under the Ontario Heritage Act, of significant cultural heritage resources;
- h) To prevent the demolition, destruction, inappropriate alteration or use of designated cultural heritage resources;
- i) To promote the conservation of significant cultural heritage resources on lands that are adjacent to proposed development and to encourage the adjacent development to be of an appropriate scale and character;
- j) To continue to develop a comprehensive inventory of the Town's built heritage and cultural heritage landscape resources; and,
- k) To consult with Heritage Halton Hills and other established heritage organizations when making decisions regarding the conservation of cultural heritage resources in the Town.

## **A2.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **A2.7.1 GOAL**

To provide opportunities for economic development in a manner that fosters competitiveness and a positive business environment.

### **A2.7.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To ensure that the quality and character of life in the Town is sustained and improved in context of the Greater Toronto Area and the global economy;
- b) To facilitate opportunities to provide a range of goods and services to the public within Halton Hills through the use of a flexible policy regime;
- c) To facilitate the establishment of a competitive business environment that is able to easily adapt to changing circumstances and priorities;
- d) To encourage the development of the business infrastructure required to attract uses that will contribute to the quality of life in the Town;
- e) To promote the establishment of more live-work relationships that reduce commuting;
- f) To establish, maintain and enhance employment areas that provide a range of job opportunities and a broad range of commercial and service facilities that meet the needs of residents of the Town and the wider area;
- g) To encourage wherever possible through the land use planning process the retention and expansion of existing businesses in the Town;
- h) To ensure that a sufficient supply of serviced employment generating lands is available for development at all times;
- i) To carefully monitor local and regional trends with respect to the supply of land for employment to ensure that an adequate supply in appropriate locations is available at all times;
- j) To encourage further industrial development in the Acton Urban Area on the basis of full or partial services, as appropriate;
- k) To protect lands that have the potential of being used for agricultural purposes from incompatible development to ensure that farming operations can operate with the maximum degree of flexibility and efficiency;
- l) To encourage the development of home-based businesses provided the proposed use is compatible with adjacent uses;
- m) To encourage the protection of the Town's natural attributes, such as its rural character and its natural heritage features in order to maintain and enhance recreational and tourism opportunities that rely upon these attributes;

- n) To encourage the protection of the Town's cultural heritage resources in order to maintain and enhance economic development and tourism opportunities;
- o) To protect and recognize the Town's mineral aggregate resource industry as an important component of its economic base;
- p) To encourage the continued revitalization of the *Downtown Areas*, which reflects their heritage significance and promote a mix of uses and attractions for community activities both in the commercial core and in immediately adjacent areas; and,
- q) To improve the aesthetic quality of the retail corridors in the Town to ensure that they function as attractive destinations for shoppers from the Town and the surrounding area.

## **A2.8 INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **A2.8.1 GOAL**

To provide infrastructure that meets the needs of present and future residents and businesses in an efficient, environmentally-sensitive, cost effective and timely manner.

### **A2.8.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To consider the economics of providing services to the people of the Town as part of the review of any development proposal to ensure that the development pattern is efficient and does not lead to a decline in the level of municipal service;
- b) To ensure that all necessary infrastructure required to serve the urban area is built as necessary prior to, or coincident with, urban development;
- c) To establish an integrated transportation system that safely and efficiently accommodates various modes of transportation including trains, automobiles, trucks, public transit, cycling and walking;
- d) To establish a street pattern within new development areas that is based on a permeable grid pattern of arterial, collector and local roads;
- e) To ensure that the construction of all infrastructure, or expansions to existing infrastructure, occurs in a manner that is compatible with adjacent land uses and with a minimum of social and environmental impact;
- f) To encourage the provision of infrastructure that is energy efficient, promotes water conservation and water efficiencies, and supports improvements to air quality; and,
- g) To ensure that public school facilities and other community infrastructure are provided in both older and newer neighbourhoods and that these facilities are available for all current and future residents of the Town.

## **A2.9 HOUSING**

### **A2.9.1 GOAL**

To provide an adequate housing supply and range of housing choices to meet the needs of present and future residents.

### **A2.9.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To ensure that there is an adequate supply of land for residential development subject to the availability of water and wastewater capacity;
- b) To assist in the achievement of residential intensification and affordable housing by encouraging opportunities for mixed-use development in appropriate locations;
- c) To encourage the use of surplus public lands for affordable housing only if the site is appropriate for such a use and located where the use would be compatible with adjacent uses;
- d) To ensure that a full range of housing opportunities are available for residents in the Town in accordance with the Town's Municipal Housing Statement;
- e) To encourage the development of seniors housing in the Town;
- f) To carefully control the conversion of rental housing to ownership housing to ensure that a viable amount of rental housing continues to be available;
- g) To encourage the provision of additional rental housing, within the financial capabilities of the Town, through the use of incentives to the private sector and the entering into of public/private partnerships;
- h) To support the Region in its responsibilities as the provider and manager of assisted housing;
- i) To participate in Regional, Provincial and/or Federal housing programs that support appropriate housing development in the Town;
- j) To support the provision of an adequate supply of residential care facilities and emergency housing, subject to appropriate senior government level funding, the provision of adequate community services for future residents of these facilities, and proper land use planning principles; and,
- k) To support universal physical access and encourage the building industry to incorporate such features in new residential structures.



## **A2.10 MINERAL AGGREGATE RESOURCES**

### **A2.10.1 GOAL**

To protect mineral aggregate resource areas for long term use while ensuring that extraction occurs in a manner that minimizes environmental and social impacts.

### **A2.10.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To ensure that as much of the mineral aggregate resources in the Town as is realistically possible shall be made available to supply mineral aggregate needs as close to markets as possible provided the extraction can occur in a manner that minimizes environmental and social impacts;
- b) To ensure the proper management of mineral aggregate operations to minimize potential negative environmental and social impacts;
- c) To protect areas having high potential aggregate resource deposits from incompatible development that would preclude or hinder access to the resource;
- d) To ensure that all operations are progressively rehabilitated in an environmentally responsible fashion;
- e) To ensure that roads are appropriate and built to a standard that can accommodate truck traffic associated with mineral aggregate extraction operations;
- f) To foster a strategic partnership with all the approval agencies to ensure that the objectives of this Plan can be met;
- g) To recognize existing mineral aggregate operations and protect them from activities that would preclude or hinder their expansion or continued use; and,
- h) To promote the conservation of mineral aggregate resources through the recovery of these resources wherever feasible.

## **A2.11 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **A2.11.1 GOAL**

To promote community development in a manner that is sustainable for present and future generations.

### **A2.11.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- a) To develop an energy efficient mix of land uses in urban areas by integrating land use planning with energy conservation practices that take into account community layout, building types and densities, mix of uses and other factors that contribute to creating efficient, vibrant, compact, complete and healthy communities;
- b) To reduce the consumption of energy, water and land, and non-renewable resources;
- c) To promote sustainable site and building design and construction techniques in new development that reduce energy and water consumption, improve air and water quality, encourage alternative modes of transportation, provide for enhanced natural environment conditions, and improve waste management; and,
- d) To promote a total and per capita reduction in energy and water consumption in all sectors by encouraging retrofitting of existing buildings and facilities.

## A3 LANDUSE CONCEPT

The land use designations in this Plan are divided into three broad categories. The Environmental and Open Space Area applies to lands throughout the Town that are considered to be significant from a natural heritage and/or open space perspective. The Urban Area applies to the three primary urban areas in the Town - Georgetown, Acton and the Premier Gateway Employment Area, as well as the Mansewood employment area at the northeast corner of Regional Road 25 and 5 Side Road. The Agricultural/Rural Area applies to lands outside of the Urban Area excluding the Environmental and Open Space Area and includes lands that are subject to the Greenbelt Plan.

The land use designations in each category are intended to implement the Vision, Goals and Strategic Objectives of this Plan.

### A3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OPEN SPACE AREA

The land use designations within the Environmental and Open Space Area are described below:

#### A3.1.1 GREENLANDS SYSTEM

The Greenlands System is where the majority of the natural heritage features within the Town are located. Designations within this classification include *Greenlands A*, *Greenlands B*, *Greenbelt Greenlands*, *Escarpment Natural Area*, and a single-tier *Greenlands* designation within the Urban Areas of Georgetown, Acton and the Premier Gateway Employment Area.

#### A3.1.2 MAJOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE AREA

This designation applies to lands, which are the site of large land holdings owned by a public authority that are used, or have the potential to be used for passive or active recreational uses.

#### A3.1.3 PRIVATE OPEN SPACE AREA

This designation applies to lands in private ownership that are maintained in a natural state or accommodate manicured open space uses such as golf courses and private cemeteries.

#### A3.1.4 NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLAN AREA

This area, which bi-sects the Town in a north-south direction, is the subject of the Provincially-approved Niagara Escarpment Plan. This Plan applies three primary land use designations to the area consisting of *Escarpment Natural Area*, *Escarpment Protection Area* and *Escarpment Rural Area*. Lands within the *Escarpment Protection Area* and *Escarpment Rural Area* designations below the escarpment brow are considered by this Plan to be part of the Town's Prime *Agricultural Area*. Pits and quarry operations licensed under the Aggregate Resources Act are designated by the Niagara Escarpment Plan as *Mineral Resource Extraction Areas*. In addition, the Rural Clusters of Henderson's Corners, Limehouse and Silvercreek are designated as Minor Urban Centres by the Niagara Escarpment Plan. The policies in this Official Plan comply with those in the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

## **A3.2 URBAN AREA**

The land use designations within the Urban Area are described below:

### **A3.2.1 LIVING AREA**

This designation applies to lands that are primarily used for residential purposes in the urban areas of Acton and Georgetown. A number of sub-designations, including *Low Density Residential Area*, *Medium Density Residential Area* and *High Density Residential Area* are applied as appropriate to all of the lands that comprise the Living Area of the Town of Halton Hills.

### **A3.2.2 COMMUNITY AREA**

This designation applies to lands that serve primarily as community focal points in Acton and Georgetown. The following sub-designations are included within this designation: *Downtown Area*, *Community Node*, *Secondary Node*, *Corridor Commercial Area*, *Local Commercial Area*, *Major Institutional Area* and *Civic Centre Area*.

### **A3.2.3 EMPLOYMENT AREA**

This designation applies to lands that are primarily used for industrial uses that are on or eligible for full municipal services within Acton, Georgetown, the Premier Gateway Employment Area, and the Mansewood area.

### **A3.2.4 SPECIAL STUDY AREA**

This designation applies to undeveloped lands located within the Urban Area for which a specific land use has yet to be determined. On this basis, special policies have been established to ensure consideration of a range of land use options prior to development occurring.

## **A3.3 AGRICULTURAL/RURAL AREA**

The land use designations within the Agricultural/Rural Area category are described below:

### **A3.3.1 AGRICULTURAL AREA**

This designation applies to lands that are predominantly utilized for agricultural purposes and which have an agricultural character. The *Agricultural Area* primarily consists of lands that are classified as Class 1, 2 or 3 soils according to the Canada Land Inventory. The lands within this designation are considered by this Plan to form a major component of the Town's Prime *Agricultural Area*.

### **A3.3.2 PROTECTED COUNTRYSIDE AREA**

This designation applies to lands that are within the Greenbelt Plan established by the Province of Ontario. Lands within the *Protected Countryside Area* designation that are located south and east of the *Niagara Escarpment Plan Area* are considered by this Plan to be part of the Town's Prime *Agricultural Area*. Much of the land within the *Protected Countryside Area*

designation is within the Natural System, which is an overlay designation, identified by the Province of Ontario in the Greenbelt Plan. The Natural System is comprised of the Natural Heritage System and the Water Resources System. Within the Natural System are lands that are identified as *Greenbelt Greenlands* on the Schedules.

### **A3.3.3 HAMLET AREA**

This designation applies to the Hamlets of Glen Williams and Norval.

### **A3.3.4 RURAL CLUSTER AREA**

This designation applies to the Rural Clusters of Ashgrove, Ballinafad, Bannockburn, Crewsons Corners, Henderson's Corners, Hornby, Limehouse, Silvercreek and Terra Cotta.

### **A3.3.5 COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL AREA**

This designation only applies to lands that have been developed, Draft Approved or approved through a site-specific Official Plan Amendment prior to the adoption of this Plan for Country Residential development.

### **A3.3.6 MINERAL RESOURCE EXTRACTION AREA**

This designation only applies to lands that are currently licensed for aggregate extraction by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Once the license has been surrendered or revoked in accordance with the Aggregate Resources Act, the Town will take the necessary steps to redesignate the subject lands from the *Mineral Resource Extraction Area* designation to another appropriate land use designation.

### **A3.3.7 MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL AREA**

This designation only applies to one area of land in the broader Agricultural/Rural Area that is the site of a major institutional complex that undertakes educational/religious instruction and produces, stores and distributes literature and programs along with accessory uses including a place of worship and residential accommodation for employees.