

OAK RIDGES MORaine

Why is the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan important to the study?

A portion of the GTA West Corridor Preliminary Study Area falls within the area designated under the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

WHAT IS THE OAK RIDGES MORaine?

The Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) is one of Ontario's most significant landforms - an irregular ridge stretching 160 kilometres from the Trent River in the east to the Niagara Escarpment in the west. Together with the Escarpment, the ORM forms the foundation of south-central Ontario's natural heritage and greenspace systems.

The ORM is a unique concentration of environmental, geological and hydrological features, vital to the ecosystem integrity / health of south central Ontario that includes:

- clean and abundant water resources,
- healthy and diverse plant and animal habitats,
- attractive and distinct landscapes,
- prime agricultural areas, and
- sand and gravel resources.

LEGISLATION

The Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Conservation Plan clarifies the long-term protection and management of the 190,000 hectares within the Moraine. All decisions made under the Planning Act, the Condominium Act, or other prescribed matter must conform to the ORM Plan.

The Ministry of Transportation is required to comply with Environmental Protection Requirements for the ORM in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of all highways located in ORM Conservation Plan areas.

The Plan divides the ORM into four land use designations: Natural Core Areas, Natural Linkage Areas, Countryside Areas and Settlement Areas.

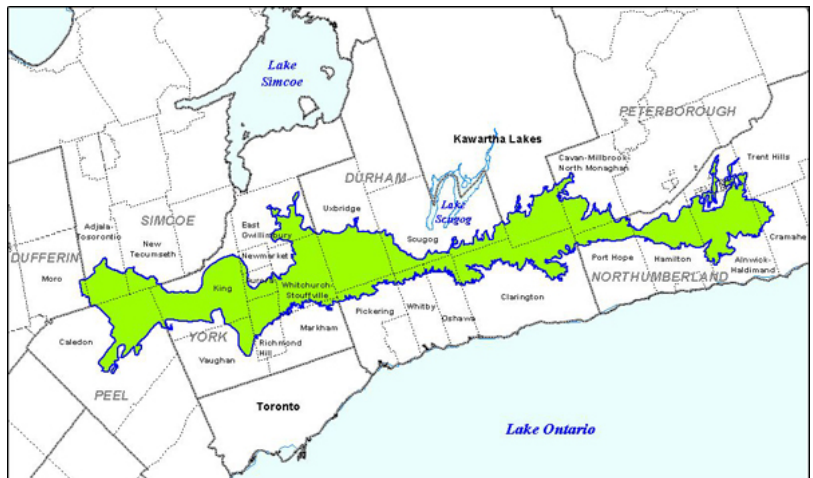
LAND USE DESIGNATION

Natural Core Areas (38%) – are lands with the greatest concentrations of key natural heritage features, which are critical to maintaining the integrity of the Moraine as a whole. Only existing uses and very restricted new resource management, agricultural, low-intensity recreational, home businesses, transportation and utilities are allowed.

Natural Linkage Areas (24%) – are critical natural and open space linkages between Natural Core Areas and along rivers and streams. Allowed uses are consistent with those of Natural Core Areas, plus some aggregate resource operations.

Countryside Areas (30%) – are agricultural and rural transitions /buffers between the Natural Core Areas / Linkage Areas and the urbanized Settlement Areas. Allowed uses are those consistent with those of agricultural and other rural areas.

Settlement Areas (8%) – are a range of existing communities planned by municipalities to reflect community needs and values. Allowed uses: urban uses and development as set out in municipal official plans.



Source: <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Asset1873.aspx>

More information on the Oak Ridges Moraine is available at:

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page322.aspx>

Contact Information

GTA West Project Team

www.gta-west.com

Email: project_team@gta-west.com