

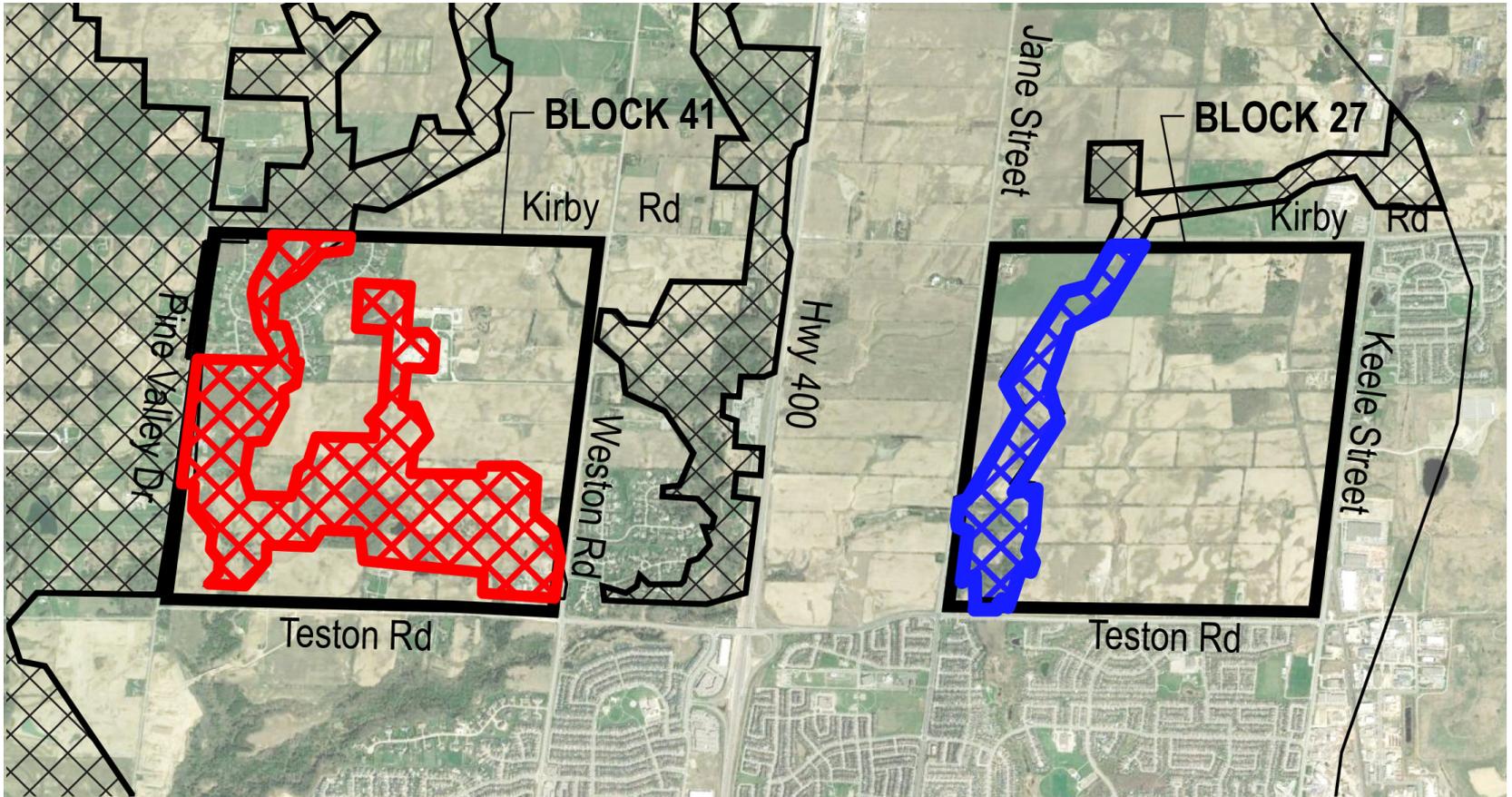
Regional Official Plan Amendment to Redesignate Greenbelt Fingers from Agricultural Area to Rural Area

Vaughan Committee of the Whole June 8, 2021

Presentation by Don Given

Communication : C 53
Committee of the Whole (2)
June 8, 2021
Item # 9

LOCATION



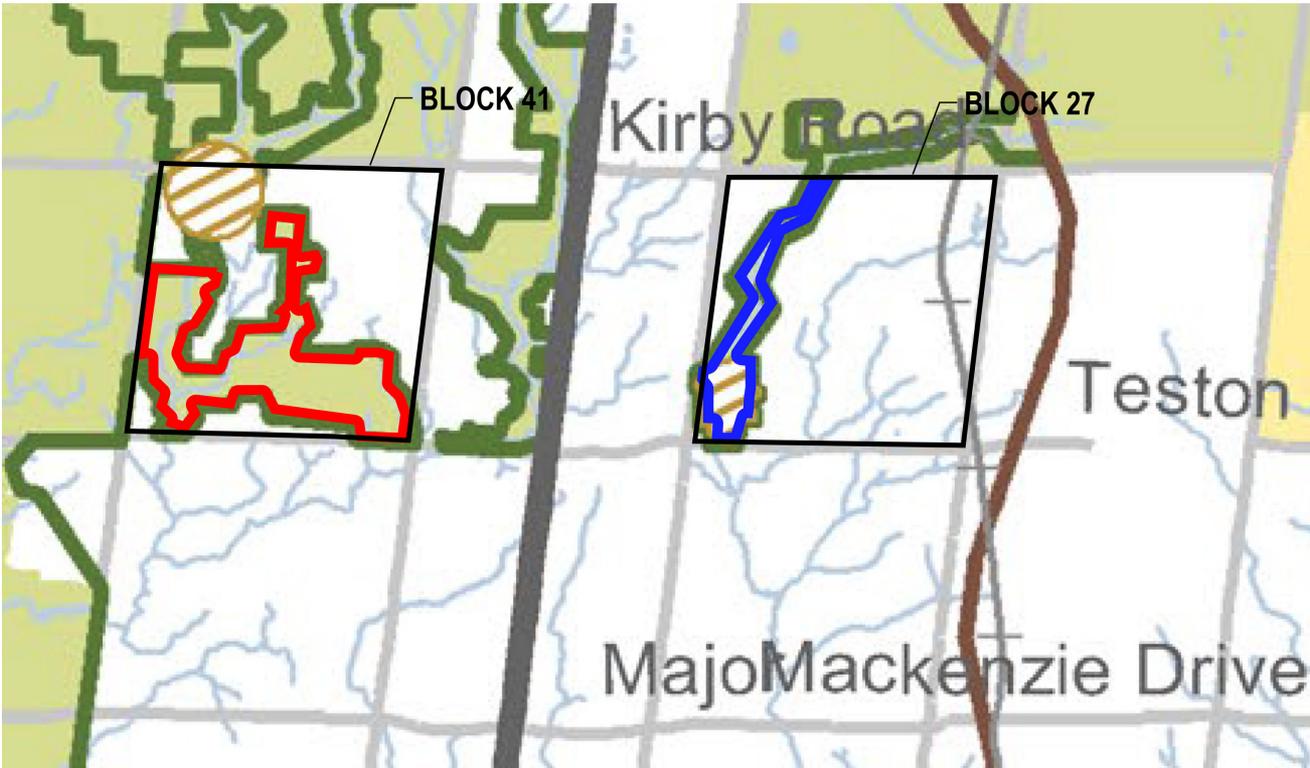
NEW COMMUNITY AREAS

-  Greenbelt Plan Area within Participating Blocks
-  Greenbelt Plan Area within Supporting Blocks
-  Greenbelt Plan Area



Google Earth, July 2018

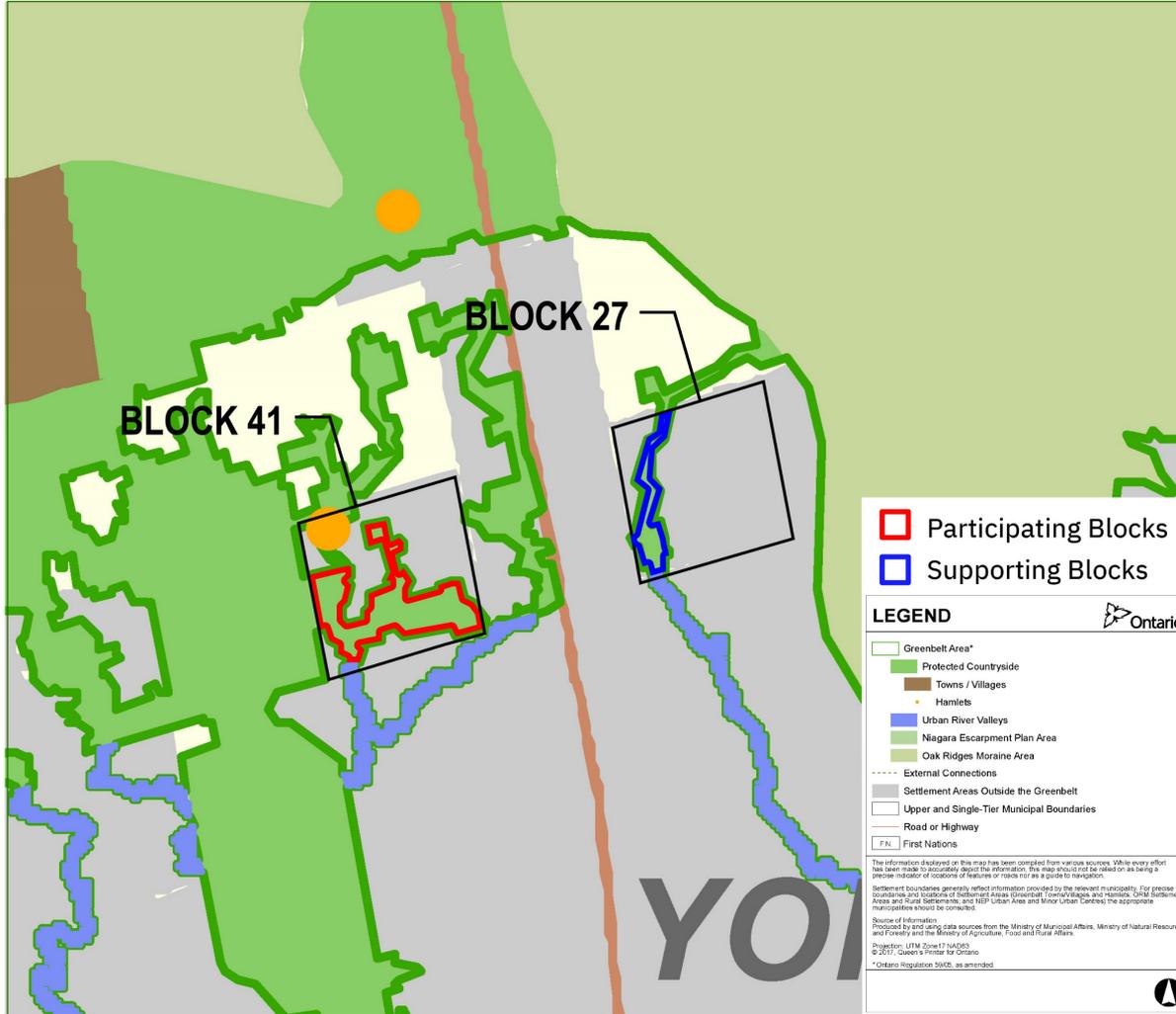
AREAS FOR REDESIGNATION TO RURAL AREA



MAP 8
AGRICULTURAL and RURAL AREA

- Rural Area
- Agriculture Area
- Holland Marsh Specialty Crop Area
- Towns and Villages
- Greenbelt Plan**
 - Greenbelt Plan Boundary
 - Hamlet
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP)**
 - ORMCP Boundary
 - Hamlet
- Provincial Highways**
 - Controlled Access Highways
 - Controlled Access Highways (Under Construction)
 - Other Provincial Highways
- Municipal Boundaries**
 - Regional Municipal Boundary
 - Local Municipal Boundary
- Participating Blocks
- Supporting Blocks

GREENBELT PLAN, 2017



greenbelt

PLAN 2017

**Schedule 1:
Greenbelt Area**

GREENBELT PLAN, 2017

3.3 Parkland, Open Space and Trails

3.3.1 Description

*A system of parklands, open spaces, water bodies and trails **across the Greenbelt** is necessary to provide opportunities **for recreation**, tourism and appreciation of cultural heritage and natural heritage. They serve as an important component of complete communities and provide important benefits to support environmental protection, improved air quality and climate change mitigation. This system currently supports a variety of **passive and active uses** as well as health, economic and other quality of life benefits within the Greenbelt.*

[...]

***Maintaining and expanding the supply of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails is encouraged through strategic planning activities that identify, plan for and protect these resources for current and future generations.** The planning and activity associated with parkland, open space and trail uses should maximize the opportunity to co-operate with all landowners. This includes measures to prevent trespassing on farm properties to avoid risks to farm biosecurity and crop damage.*

(emphasis added)

GREENBELT PLAN, 2017

3.3.2 Parkland, Open Space and Trail Policies

The Province should, in partnership with municipalities, conservation authorities, non-government organizations and other interested parties:

- 1. Encourage the development of a system of publicly accessible parkland, open space and trails where people can pursue the types of recreational activities envisaged by this Plan, and to support the connectivity of the Natural Heritage System and the achievement of complete communities in settlement areas across the Greenbelt.***

3.3.3 Municipal Parkland, Open Space and Trail Strategies

For all lands falling within the Protected Countryside, municipalities should:

- 1. Provide for a full range of publicly accessible, built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and water-based activities.***

(emphasis added)

GREENBELT PLAN, 2017

4.0 General Policies for the Protected Countryside

4.1 Non-Agricultural Uses

The rural lands of the Protected Countryside are intended to continue to accommodate a range of commercial, industrial and institutional (including cemetery) uses serving the rural resource and agricultural sectors. They are also intended to support a range of recreation and tourism uses such as trails, parks, golf courses, bed and breakfasts and other tourism-based accommodation, serviced playing fields and campgrounds, ski hills and resorts.

(emphasis added)

GREENBELT PLAN, 2017

4.1.1 General Non-Agricultural Use Policies

For non-agricultural uses, the following policies apply:

- 1. *Non-agricultural uses are not permitted in the specialty crop areas as shown on Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 of this Plan or within prime agricultural areas in the Protected Countryside, with the exception of those uses permitted under sections 4.2 to 4.6 of this Plan.***

2. *Proposals for non-agricultural uses must demonstrate that:*
 - a) *The use is appropriate for location on rural lands;*
 - b) *The type of water and sewer servicing proposed is appropriate for the type of use;*
 - c) *There are no negative impacts on key natural heritage features or key hydrologic features or their functions; and*
 - d) *There are no negative impacts on the biodiversity or connectivity of the Natural Heritage System.*

3. *With the exception of mineral aggregate operations, where nonagricultural uses are proposed on rural lands, the completion of an agricultural impact assessment should be considered.*

“Parkland Uses in the Greenbelt Protected Countryside

Parkland and recreational uses are permitted within the rural areas of the protected countryside within the Greenbelt Plan Area. *These uses can be an important and essential element of complete communities and provide important benefits to support environmental protection, improved air quality and climate change mitigation (Policy 3.3.1). They provide essential recreational opportunities for Ontarians. There are many policies in the Greenbelt Plan which permit parkland and recreational uses within Protected Countryside. These policies could permit camping, golf courses, ski hills, hiking trails and larger parks or other recreational uses.”*

(emphasis added)

YORK REGION POLICY DIRECTIONS REPORT

Dec 3, 2020

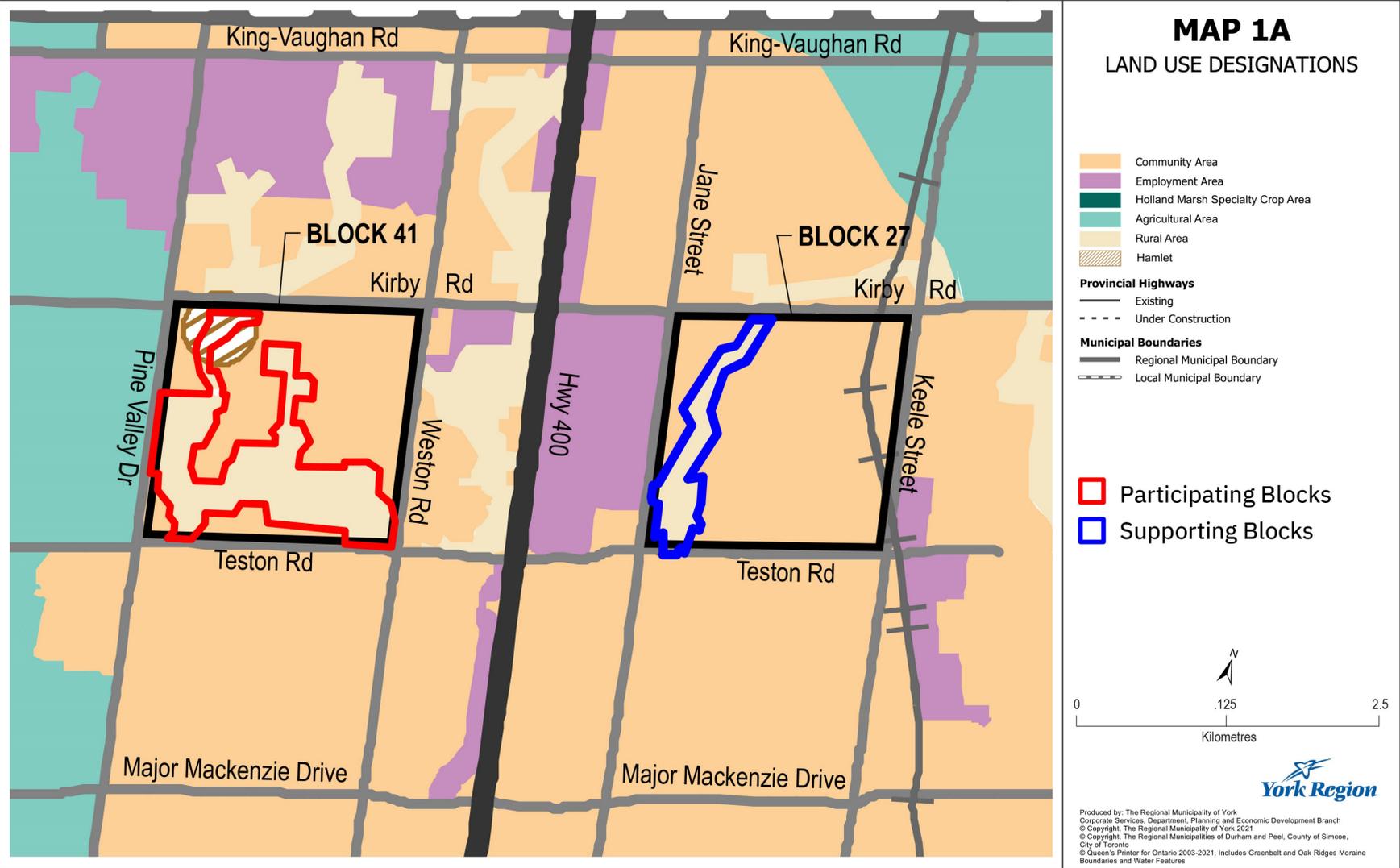
“A change to the current Agriculture policy designation is proposed for limited and narrow river valley lands that extend the Greenbelt into existing and future urban areas within Markham and Vaughan

There are a number of narrow, linear river valleys designated Protected Countryside in the Greenbelt (more commonly called Green Fingers) that extend into existing and future urban areas in Markham and Vaughan. These areas are currently designated Agriculture in the ROP (shown on Attachment 2). With the assistance of an agricultural consultant, analysis was undertaken to consider the long-term agricultural viability of these areas given their existing or future context abutting designated urban area lands.

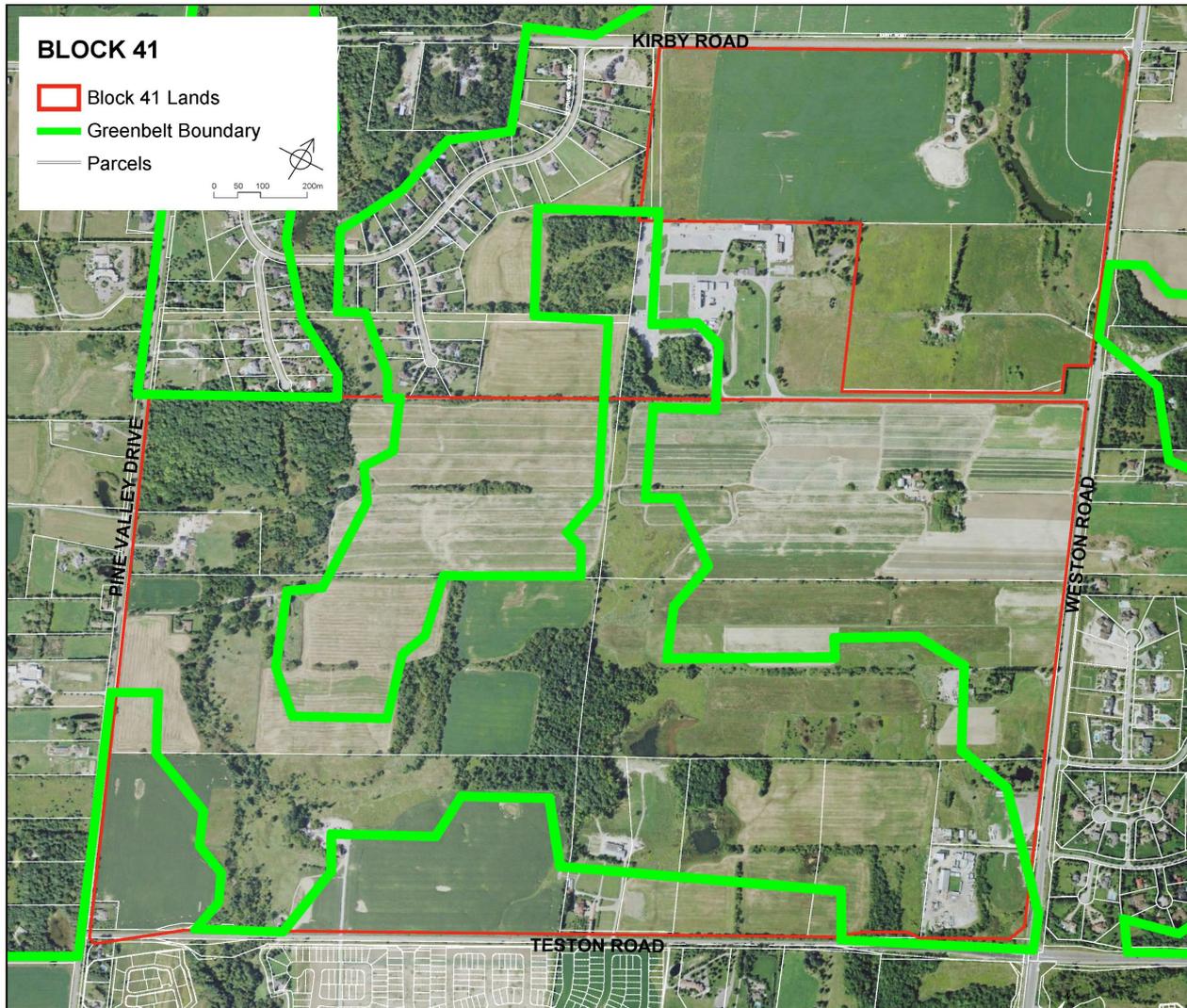
*With consideration of the consultant’s findings, which include support for a Rural designation for the majority of these areas, **staff are proposing a Rural or equivalent designation with permitted uses in line with and conforming to those permitted within the protected countryside of the Greenbelt Plan.** Policies will recognize the unique natural heritage values of these river valley features in their urban context; they are part of the Regional Greenlands System and contain key natural heritage/hydrologic features that will continue to be protected. Policy options are being assessed that balance the important environmental considerations and provide local planning flexibility within the changing context of these lands abutting new urban areas. The designation would allow for continuation of existing agricultural operations/ productive lands as appropriate for all of these river valley areas.”* (emphasis added)

YORK REGION POLICY DIRECTIONS REPORT

June 10, 2021



BLOCK 41, VAUGHAN



SUMMARY

- The Agricultural Area designation underlying the Greenbelt Plan should have been addressed as part the ROPA 2 & 3 processes.
- Greenbelt Plan policies permit parks, trails, and recreational uses within the Protected Countryside, outside of prime agricultural areas and outside of natural features and their vegetation protection zones.
- MMAH Staff have confirmed parkland and recreational uses are permitted within the rural areas of the Protected Countryside in their letter dated April 30, 2021.
- Regional Staff and the agricultural consultant have supported a Rural designation for the Greenbelt Fingers in the December 2020 and June 2021 Policy Directions Report.
- Maintaining an Agricultural Area designation within the Greenbelt Fingers will result in small fragmented parcels of land that cannot be cultivated.
- Redesignation of the Greenbelt Fingers to Rural Area would facilitate rural uses including parkland, trails, and recreational uses that support the development of a complete community.



ANY QUESTIONS?